



What Grade Would The Schools in Your District Earn in Physical Education?

REPORT CARD for Alabama Public Schools

School Year: 2009–2010

TOPIC	CRITERIA	STATUS	SCORE
New Teacher Certification	The State Department of Education (SDE) requires newly hired physical education teachers to have undergraduate or graduate training in physical education or a related field. Requires newly hired physical education teachers to be certified, licensed, or endorsed by the state. ¹	<i>Mandate is being enforced.</i>	C2
State Standards	The SDE requires or encourages schools to follow state set physical education guidelines. ²	<i>Schools are encouraged to follow the Course of Study, however schools are not held accountable.</i>	C2
Curriculum	The SDE recommends that districts or schools use one particular curriculum for physical education. ¹	<i>The SDE is currently working on a framework to help systems develop a physical education curriculum.</i>	C0
	The SDE requires the one physical education credit for graduation to be the Lifelong Individualized Fitness Educa-	<i>The LIFE course has been a SDE required course since 1997, however, most high schools do not offer the course.</i>	C0
Class Requirement	The SDE requires that all public schools teach physical education. ¹	<i>The SDE mandate is being enforced.</i>	C2
Required Daily Physical Education for Students in K-8 Schools	The SDE requires daily physical education for at least 30 minutes in grades K-8: No exceptions, no substitutions. ^{13&15}	<i>In the 2009-2010 school year, 151,757 students who were in grades K-8 were not enrolled in physical education classes.³</i>	C1
Exemptions/Waivers	According to State Board of Education Policy, until funding is obtained for K-8 physical education teachers at every school within a school system, there will be no exception to the required one-credit course in Grades 9-12. ¹	<i>Although, some schools are granted exemptions by the state, other schools allow exemptions without permission.^{2&4}</i>	C0
Class size	A reasonable pupil-teacher ratio for quality physical education classes is 30:1. ^{2&15}	<i>The SDE is not enforcing this recommendation, therefore many elementary schools have ratios much higher than 30-1.</i>	C0
FINAL GRADE	Although the state of Alabama is making strides in the right direction for physical education requirements, there is still a long road ahead. Most importantly, Alabama must focus on ensuring that all students attend quality daily physical education programs.		7 out of 16 points

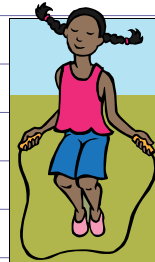
C2 = Criteria Met, C1 = Criteria Partially Met & C0 = Criteria Not Met

Why is Promoting Physical Activity so Important?

- Alabama has the 2nd highest rate of adult obesity in the nation, at 31.2 percent and the 6th highest of overweight youths (ages 10-17) at 36.1 percent.¹²
- In the US, 16.3% of children and adolescents ages 2 to 19 are obese.⁵
- 31.9% of children and adolescents are obese or overweight.⁵
- The obesity rate for children ages 6-11 has more than *quadrupled* over the past four decades.⁵
- The obesity rate has *tripled* for adolescents ages 12 to 19 over the past four decades.⁵
- Children who are overweight or obese are at a greater risk for serious medical conditions, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, and even cancer.⁵

Physical Education: Quality and Quantity

<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Quality</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Association of State Boards of Education recommends elementary students receive at least 150 minutes per week of physical education and secondary students receive at least 225 minutes per week of physical education.¹⁰ In <i>Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn</i>, a document published by the National Association for State Boards of Education, exemptions are specifically addressed: "Physical education teaches students essential knowledge and skills; for this reason, exemptions from physical education courses shall not be permitted on the basis of participation on an athletic team, community recreation program, ROTC, marching band, or other school or community activity."¹⁶ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taught by qualified personnel who are certified in physical education.¹³ Include physical education in school accountability measures.⁸ Base physical education on precise national standards to ensure that all students are learning the same basic information from participation in physical education classes.⁷ Provide adequate facilities and manageable class sizes.⁷



“I think we’ve made a serious error by not requiring physical education. We are paying a tremendous price for this physical activity epidemic affecting this country...

Physical Education should be mandatory in kindergarten through 12th grade.”⁶

- David Satcher

Former Surgeon General of the United States

The Academic Impact of Increased Physical Activity

Academic Achievement

- With a growing emphasis on test scores, many schools have opted to cut back physical education time.⁷ However, several studies have shown that physical education serves as a great tool for improving several factors that affect learning, including: concentration, memory, classroom behavior, self-esteem, mood, motivation, attentiveness, stress and anxiety.⁵
- Texas recently completed a study of 2.4 million students and found higher levels of fitness are associated with higher levels of academic performance.¹¹

- A study published in the American Journal of Public Health found a “small, but significant benefit for academic achievement in mathematics and reading...for girls enrolled in higher amounts...of physical education.”⁸, pg. 721



Emotional/Health Effects

- Overweight students are more likely to miss school due to several emotional issues related to the school environment, including: depression, bullying/teasing and poor self-esteem⁵

Absenteeism

- Learning is undoubtedly inhibited when students are not in school regularly. A recent study conducted in Philadelphia elementary schools found obesity to be the number one factor for predicting absenteeism. Most absences were attributed to the numerous health issues associated with obesity.⁵

Physical Education is Required in Grades K-8: NO EXCEPTIONS

Requirements

- In May 2009, Governor Riley declared, “the Alabama State Department of Education requires every child enrolled in public school to participate in physical education classes from kindergarten to eighth grade.”
- The Alabama Course of Study : Physical Education clearly states :**Daily physical education is required in Grades K-8: No exceptions, no substitutions.** Recess or lunch time activities should not be substituted for the physical education program .. A minimum daily instructional period of at

least 30 minutes in elementary physical education is required.¹³

- According to the 2008 SDE *Paving the Way for Healthier Students* flyer, one recommendation states that Alabama schools should have a “Strict adherence to at least 30 minutes of physical education per student per day”.¹⁴

Reality

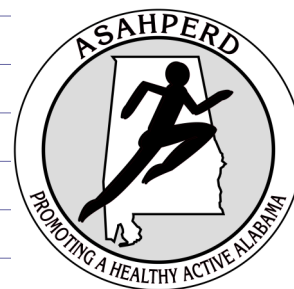
- Many schools are not requiring students to take physical education daily. In some schools, students are taking physical education every other day.

Students in K-8th grade		
Not Enrolled in Physical Education Classes ³		
School Year	Percentage	Number of
2008-2009	12%	60,279
2009-2010	29%	151,757

- In other schools, students are taking other subjects in the place of physical education.
- Some schools are not providing quality physical education for those students in class.

Legislator's Corner: How YOU Can Make a Difference

1. **Encourage the schools in your district to have quality physical education programs.** Contact ASAPERD to help you know what a quality physical education program should look like.
2. **Visit the schools in your district to see if they have quality programs.** Contact ASAPERD if a school in your district needs help becoming a quality physical education program.



www.asahperd.org

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