



Vermont Healthy Schools Resource: Physical Education Program



SUMMARY

A. Instructional Program – Quality Physical Education

1. The physical education program is sequential, developmentally appropriate and—in alignment with the National Association for Sports and Physical Education—a minimum of 150 minutes per week for elementary school students, and 225 minutes per week for middle and high school students. The majority of physical education class time is spent in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

- [Increasing School Physical Education Time](#)
- [Increasing Class Time Spent in Moderate to Vigorous Activity](#)

2. Classes are taught by licensed physical education teachers.

- [Licensed Physical Education Teachers](#)

B. Facilities

1. The school provides a safe environment to implement the program. A safety inspection is conducted annually.

2. The school provides both functional and protective equipment for all students to participate actively and safely.

3. The school minimizes interruptions to scheduled physical education classes.

This includes interruptions due to scheduling non-physical education activities in physical education facilities.

- [Minimizing Interruptions to Scheduled Physical Education Classes](#)

C. Curriculum

1. The curriculum uses developmentally appropriate components of a health-related fitness program, e.g. Fitnessgram, Physical Best, or President's Challenge.

- [Using Developmentally Appropriate Components of Health-Related Fitness Programs](#)

2. The curriculum equips students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong physical activity.

- [Equipping Students with Lifelong Physical Activity Knowledge Skills and Attitudes](#)

3. The curriculum offers students multiple opportunities to prepare for a variety of lifetime physical activities.

- [Equipping Students with Lifelong Physical Activity Knowledge Skills and Attitudes](#)

4. The curriculum builds students' competencies in their own physical abilities and thus improves their self confidence.

- [Equipping Students with Lifelong Physical Activity Knowledge Skills and Attitudes](#)

5. The physical education program is closely coordinated with the overall school health program. Physical education topics are integrated within other curricular areas. In particular, the benefits of being physically active are linked with instruction about human growth, development and physiology in science classes, and with instruction about personal health behaviors in health education class.

- [Integrating Physical Education into Other Curricular Areas](#)

6. The physical education curriculum and assessments are aligned with standard 3.6 of Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities, and with the Vermont Physical Education Grade Expectations.

- [Aligning Physical Education Programs with Vermont Standards](#)

D. Inclusion (Adapted Physical Education)

1. The physical education program includes all students, unless otherwise contraindicated medically.
2. Suitable adapted physical education is included as part of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students with chronic health problems, other disabling conditions, and other special needs that preclude participation in regular physical education instruction or activities.
3. A student with a chronic health problem or other disabling condition is permitted to participate in any extracurricular activity, including interscholastic athletics, if the student's skills and physical condition meet the same qualifications as other students'. The school makes reasonable accommodations to allow the student to participate.

INCREASING SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE) TIME

Implementation Ideas

- Lobby for the local school board to increase the PE time and/or high school graduation requirement. Use current research data about physical activity and academic achievement to make the case for such a change.
- Explore using EPSDT (Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment) money or other grants to fund additional instructor time.
- Use creative scheduling to offer PE elective courses without increasing staff time.

Vermont Example

In the spring of 2006, as a result of federally required School Wellness Policy development, the physical education teacher at **Charlotte Central School** (K-8, 481 students) in Charlotte appealed to her administration for support to increase PE time. The principal and assistant principal worked with the PE teacher and the school board to find a creative solution. The school accessed EPSDT program monies, designated for students in need of support but uncategorized, to fund the change. As a result, PE class time was extended by hiring an additional PE teacher at .4 FTE. This created four to six twenty minute *pockets* of time in the physical education schedule, to provide extra physical activity for students identified as needing additional skill, practice or opportunities for fitness activities. The program offers opportunity for students to learn line dancing, walk a measured loop around the school several days per week, or practice skills such as catching, throwing or volleyball.

See [Additional Vermont Examples: Physical Activity/Physical Education](#) (link) for more.

Resources

Vermont

- Vermont's requirements for physical education programming at elementary, middle and high school levels are described in the Vermont Department of *Education's State Board of Education Manual of Rules and Practices*, "School Quality Standards" (pp. 10-13):
<http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/board/rules.html>

National

- For guidelines outlining recommended components of a high quality physical education program see *What Constitutes a Quality Physical Education Program? NASPE Sets the Standard*, National Association for Sport and Physical Education:
<http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/template.cfm?template=qualityPePrograms.html>

INCREASING CLASS TIME SPENT IN MODERATE TO VIGOROUS ACTIVITY

Implementation Ideas

- To decrease interruption to active time during PE, clearly inform students of procedures in advance, such as entering and exiting PE classes, warm-up, signals to stop and listen, and expectations for behaviors during group activities.
- Consider having students warm-up during attendance checks or other managerial activities.
- Keep instructions and talk time to a minimum in order to provide students with increased activity time. Make instructions quick and simple.
- Alter existing activities to encourage participation of all students and reduce waiting time for taking turns.
- Adapt traditional sports so that students who would be waiting are engaged in physical activity. For example, alter softball/baseball by having the entire team run bases after each hit.
- Avoid activities where students are eliminated from play or must wait for turns. Consider having those children who are waiting engaged in alternate activities.
- Add sport activities, such as soccer, or other games designed to increase movement and require participation by more students.
- Teach units that provide students with opportunities to perform a variety of physical activities.
- Spend a proportion of time teaching activities that can be used outside of class time and throughout life, such as aerobics, dance, jogging, Ultimate Frisbee or biking.
- Make sure you have enough equipment so that all students can be active at the same time.

Vermont Example

John Stetzel keeps PE very active at **Vernon Elementary School** (K-6, 225 students) in Vernon. Here is how he structures his class time:

- 1) **Activity** - The first two to three minutes of class is a quick active time characterized as simple, active, and little teaching (SALT) – the idea is for students to get in, get started and get active.
- 2) **Fitness** - For seven and a half minutes students participate in a variety of fitness activities that may include aerobic activities, stretching, strengthening and/or a variety of locomotor movements.
- 3) **Lesson** - The next fifteen to twenty minutes are spent teaching and practicing physical skills, with a different set of skills taught at each grade level.
- 4) **Game** - Near the end of class time, five to ten minutes are spent playing an active game. Activity needs to be repeated in order to make it beneficial, so every class ends with a fun time. It may be related to the activity of the day, or it may be completely different. The goal is to end class with something fun.
- 5) **Relaxation** - Before transitioning back to their classroom, each student engages in a short relaxation exercise so that they are calm and ready for their next academic task.

See John's Web site for more information and many great photos! <http://www.vernon.k12.vt.us/pe/index.html>

Resources

Vermont

- Vermont Department of Education's Health Education Resource Center (HERC) provides free physical education and physical activity resources on loan to Vermont educators:
http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_coordhealth/resources/herc/resource_05_09_physical.pdf
- Center for Health and Learning offers training on Pangrazi's Dynamic Physical Education. "Whether starting a new program, restructuring an established one, or working with a team in an existing system, this training provides the best combination of theoretical framework and hands-on activities available":
<http://www.healthandlearning.org/curricula/index.html>

National

- PE Central is a comprehensive Web site offering the latest information about developmentally appropriate physical education programs for children and youth. The Web site includes lesson ideas, assessments and best practice implementation ideas, as well as specific programs that can be adapted for use in your school's PE program:

<http://www.pecentral.org/>

LICENSED PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

Implementation Ideas

Vermont has specific endorsement criteria for a physical education license. See the resources listed below.

Resources

Vermont

For more information about physical education licensing requirements in Vermont, see:

- The Vermont Department of Education's *State Board of Education: Manual of Rules and Practices* physical education endorsement criteria:
http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/licensing/regulations_endorsements.html

The following are Vermont resources to enhance physical education teacher professional development:

- *Linking Health and Learning*, a monthly electronic newsletter that lists statewide trainings, events and resources relevant to school health and wellness:
http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_coordhealth/resources.html
- The Department of Education web calendar lists monthly conferences, trainings and events for educators:
<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/calendar.html>
- Vermont Department of Education Physical Education Consultant can assist with resources, curriculum development, program planning, and training opportunities: Lindsay Simpson, (802) 828-1461, lindsay.simpson@state.vt.us
- The Vermont Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (VTAHPERD) is Vermont's chapter of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD). VTAHPERD provides training, resources, fitness events, and networking opportunities for Vermont professionals: <http://www.vtahperd.org/>
- The Center for Health and Learning offers health and wellness professional development for educators. The organization also works with schools and community organizations to build capacity and sustainable strategies that connect health and learning. A resource library with health-based curricula is also available for teachers: <http://trainings.healthandlearning.org/>

National

- American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD) is the largest organization of professionals supporting and assisting those involved in physical education, leisure, fitness, dance, health promotion, and education and all specialties related to achieving a healthy lifestyle: <http://www.aahperd.org/index.cfm>
- National Association for Sports and Physical Education (NASPE) is a professional membership association that sets the standard for practice in physical education and sport. NASPE also offers position papers and recommendations related to all aspects of physical education and physical activity for children and youth: <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/>

MINIMIZING INTERRUPTIONS TO SCHEDULED PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES

Implementation Ideas

- Schedule special events so they impact all curricular areas equally.
- Give physical educators advanced notice to plan accordingly if physical education class must be interrupted due to special event scheduling in the gym.
- If physical education class is interrupted because the gym is being used for assemblies or other events:
 - Take students outside.
 - Use an empty classroom.
 - Set up a hall program with fitness stations or a walk the halls program. To do this, measure a quarter or half mile walk in the hallways, and encourage students to set distance goals and track miles.

Vermont Example

At **Leland and Gray Union High School and Middle School** (7–12, 436 students) in Townshend there is one gymnasium, which is used for physical education as well as other school programs such as drama productions and all school assemblies. In order to manage these competing priorities the PE department has worked with school administration to advocate for their needs and accommodate those of other groups. Physical educator Tammy Claussen regularly attends a gymnasium scheduling meeting to ensure that the needs of the PE program are met. In addition, Tammy and colleague Tom Russell have updated their program and facilities for implementation of a lifetime fitness-oriented PE program. They remodeled a former storage area to serve as a fitness center. The renewed space has cardio equipment, weight training equipment and an aerobics class area with a TV and DVD player. Now a second PE teaching facility, the fitness center is used for PE units of instruction such as cardio kickboxing and strength training. Furthermore, equipment has been purchased for instruction of other new units such as biking, orienteering and snowshoeing, which appropriately take place outside.

Resources

National

- *No Gym? No Problem! Physical Activities for Tight Spaces* provides teachers tools to deal with limited space. This resource includes activities that use equipment effectively and efficiently in tight spaces and are specifically designed to minimize prep time and work within tight budgets:
<http://www.humankinetics.com/products/showproduct.cfm?isbn=0736057706>

USING DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE COMPONENTS OF HEALTH-RELATED FITNESS PROGRAMS

Implementation Ideas

- Minimize comparisons between children, and emphasize personal fitness for health rather than goals based solely on performance.
- Encourage daily physical activity as a way for individual students to develop lifelong habits, obtain health benefits and maintain or improve fitness levels.
- Provide baseline fitness data to each student individually. Design follow-up lessons to teach realistic goal setting for fitness maintenance or improvement based on individual fitness assessment results. Monitor progress with students and help them to identify barriers, then solutions for change.
- Make sure programs include assessment and age-appropriate activities related to cardio-respiratory endurance, flexibility, muscular strength and endurance, and body composition.
- Fitness assessment protocols should be considered introductory activities for students under the age of ten years. Fitness testing with students under the age of ten years is more likely to measure developmental growth than true fitness gain.

Vermont Example

In the Williston School District, at both **Allen Brook School** (K–4, 482 students) and **Williston Central School** (K–8, 709 students), physical fitness is assessed to educate students about their personal well-being; it is also a way of determining potential health risks. Testing begins in the third grade using the FITNESSGRAM® assessments. Each student's fitness is then monitored for their remaining years in the Williston School District. By having their fitness tracked from grades 3–8, students can see their progress and focus on areas in need of improvement. The students are assessed in the areas of flexibility, cardio-respiratory endurance, upper-body strength and abdominal strength. Fitness reports are also sent home so that the child and their family can work together to establish healthy fitness goals and lifestyle choices.

Resources

Vermont

- Vermont Department of Education's Health Education Resource Center (HERC) provides free physical education and physical activity resources on loan to Vermont educators:
http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_coordhealth/resources/herc/resource_list_05.pdf

National

- The *Appropriate Practice* documents are booklets describing physical education practices that are in the best interest of children. They include guidelines for curriculum design, learning experience, fitness activities, fitness testing, assessment, participation levels, forming groups, competition, and many others.
<http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/template.cfm?template=peappropriatepractice/index.html>
- FITNESSGRAM® is set of health-related fitness assessment tools developed to determine students' fitness levels. Achievement is based on what is optimal for good health. This resource also provides physical educators with a tool to communicate with students and parents about results of testing the components of health-related physical fitness. These include aerobic capacity, body composition, muscular strength and endurance, and flexibility: <http://www.fitnessgram.net/>
- *President's Challenge* offers programs for educators that work with the Active Lifestyle and Presidential Champions programs. The Challenge provides extras like Fitness File, a free online tool that makes fitness testing simple for schools: <http://www.presidentschallenge.org/>
- *Physical Best* is a program designed to educate, challenge and encourage all children to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes for a healthy and fit life. Developed by the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD), Physical Best is offered through the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE): <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/physicalbest/>

EQUIPPING STUDENTS WITH LIFELONG PHYSICAL ACTIVITY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES

Implementation Ideas

- Offer noncompetitive activities that include basic skill building.
- Use engaging equipment or technology such as pedometers or heart rate monitors for students to monitor their own progress.
- Expose students to a range of physical activities they can continue to do as they get older such as dance, aerobics, walking, Yoga, Pilates, or martial arts. Arrange for outside instructors to come as guest teachers.
- Promote incremental learning and acknowledge successes at every stage.
- Celebrate individual successes, no matter how modest.
- Help students identify what activities they enjoy and encourage participation outside of school.

Vermont Example

During the Spring 2007 Fit and Healthy Kids Challenge, the **Chester Community Preschool** contacted community members who were willing to come into their classroom and volunteer to teach the students new activities each day of the week. Monday was parachute activities and an obstacle course; Tuesday was karate and yoga (half hour each); Wednesday was ballet; and Thursday was creative movement. During one class, students participated in an active scavenger hunt. In addition, all students were given handouts of age-appropriate yoga moves and other physical activities to do at home. Each fun lesson was designed to get students involved in activities they can pursue as they get older.

Resources

Vermont

- Vermont Department of Education's Health Education Resource Center (HERC) provides free physical education and physical activity resources on loan to Vermont educators:
http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_coordhealth/resources/herc/resource_list_05.pdf

National

- Physical Best is a program designed to educate, challenge and encourage all children to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes for a healthy and fit life. Developed by the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD), Physical Best is offered through the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE): <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/physicalbest/>

INTEGRATING PHYSICAL EDUCATION INTO OTHER CURRICULAR AREAS

Implementation Ideas

- During a science inquiry lesson about human body structures and functions, have students analyze fitness data collected during physical education (PE) class.
- Link math and PE lessons by collecting heart rate data in PE, then graph and analyze these data in math class.
- Design a math lesson that requires students to track and graph what they do to *Move More, Eat More Colors and Turn it Off*, part of the Governor's Fit and Healthy Kids Challenge.
- During language arts, have students write short stories or poems about the benefits of physical activity.
- Have students journal in language arts classes about how they feel after walking or running a mile.
- A PE unit could link with a social studies unit by teaching traditional dances of a specific time period and/or geographic region.
- An art lesson could require students to create drawings of themselves doing their favorite physical activity, or produce a still life drawing of healthy foods.

Vermont Example

During the spring 2006 Fit and Healthy Kids Challenge, the **JFK Elementary School** (PK–5, 361 students) in Winooski transformed their central lobby into a *Taste, Touch and Smell Exploration Zone*. Tables were set up for students to taste, touch and smell different fruits and vegetables, with a different color theme each day. In a first grade math class, students completed a *Fun with Fruits* worksheet that used math problems to figure out a code used to answer fruit and vegetable riddles. Students in a fourth grade writing class were asked to respond to the prompt, "How does exercise and eating well keep me healthy?" This writing lesson was reinforced with ten minutes of physical activity each morning such as walking, dancing, stretching and yoga. During their math class, students graphed the servings of fruits and vegetables they consumed, as well as minutes of physical activity achieved.

See [Additional Vermont Examples: Physical Activity/Physical Education](#) (link) for more.

Resources

Vermont

- Vermont Department of Education's Health Education Resource Center (HERC) provides free curricular resources, on loan to Vermont educators, that integrate health topics into school subjects: http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_coordhealth/resources/herc.html

National

- CATCH (Coordinated Approach To Child Health) is designed to promote physical activity, healthy food choices, and prevent tobacco use in elementary school-aged children. By teaching children that eating healthy and being physically active every day can be fun, the CATCH Program has proved that establishing healthy habits in childhood can promote behaviors that carry into adulthood: <http://www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/catch/>
- Maine's *Take Time!* School Resource Packet helps fit in small bits of movement during the school day. The resource packet includes sample classroom physical activities and games that are linked to academic content areas and lesson plans, and includes ideas for quick physical activity breaks during the school day: <http://www.maine-nutrition.org/Projects/TTPacket.htm>
- *WinterKids Outdoor Learning Curriculum* is designed to engage students with active and scholastically challenging outdoor winter lessons. This resource provides interdisciplinary lessons in a variety of subjects for grades K–12 with a complete adapted component for children with special needs: <http://www.winterkids.org>

ALIGNING PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS WITH VERMONT STANDARDS

Implementation Ideas

- Review the *Vermont Physical Education Grade Expectations*, which provides specific learning outcomes for each domain at each grade cluster.
- Use resources below to evaluate current PE programs; identify areas to be improved and set goals for change.
- Talk with colleagues – join professional associations such as VTAHPERD to learn new ideas on how others have aligned their programs with Vermont standards.
- Advocate for needs such as time, meeting space, resources, or a consultant to work on grade expectation alignment and coordination of the PE curriculum across a district.

Vermont Example

Lead by Chris O'Brien of **Mettawee Community School** in West Pawlet, the physical educators of **Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union (BRSU)** (K–8, 986 students) have been working to align their curricula with the *Vermont Physical Education Grade Expectations* and to develop a local assessment system. Jean Ward, BRSU Curriculum Coordinator, has secured support, meeting time and space to do this work. When meetings are scheduled outside of the contract calendar, participating teachers have been provided a stipend to work on this curriculum alignment project.

Resources

Vermont

- Vermont School Quality Standards:
<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/board/rules.html>
- *Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities* provides structure from which standards-based district, school and classroom curriculum can be developed, organized, implemented and assessed. This resource is the basis for development of a state, local and classroom comprehensive assessment system, and makes explicit what may be included in statewide assessments of student learning: <http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pubs/framework.html>
- *Vermont Physical Education Grade Expectations*: In Vermont, physical education curricula are to be aligned with the grade expectations (GEs). The GEs are organized into four content domains: knowledge/motor skills, physical fitness, affective qualities and social interaction. A GE is a stated student learning objective that relates directly to a Vermont standard and associated evidence. A GE differentiates performance on content, knowledge or skills from adjacent grade levels and describes clearly what students need to know or be able to do. As a set, GEs should lead to focused, coherent and developmentally-appropriate instruction without narrowing the curriculum. Finally, GE-based student learning outcomes are to be assessed:
http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_curriculum/physical_ed.html
- An online database of Vermont standards-based aligned assessments for physical education is available at: <http://www.vermontinstitutes.org/assessment/data/physed/index.htm>
- An online, searchable database of curricular resources called *Riverdeep Learning Village* will soon be available for all Vermont educators. For more information contact Lindsay Simpson at 802-828-1461 or lindsay.simpson@state.vt.us

National

- *Moving into the Future: National Standards for Physical Education, 2nd Edition*: The National Standards for Physical Education are an essential tool for everyone involved in developing, implementing and evaluating K–12 physical education programs. This text establishes content standards that clearly identify what students should know and be able to do as a result of a quality physical education program. It includes the most current research and theory about physical education:

<http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/template.cfm?template=publications-nationalstandards.html>

- The *Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool* (PECAT) is a tool for analyzing written physical education curricula to determine how closely they align with national standards for high-quality physical education. The tool is customizable to include local standards. Results can help school districts enhance existing curricula, develop their own curricula or select a published curriculum for the delivery of quality physical education in schools: <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/PECAT/index.htm>