

## Benefits of an effective physical education program:

- » Increased knowledge and skills that will support involvement in lifetime physical activity and healthy lifestyles
- » Enhanced academic performance, including better grades and test scores
- » Improved attendance and work skills, including goal setting and planning
- » Better mental health and emotional well-being
- » Prevention of chronic diseases including obesity, hypertension and type 2 diabetes

THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S CHOOSE HEALTH LA INITIATIVE is supporting teachers in providing evidence-based physical education in schools with high levels of childhood obesity. Choose Health LA is a local initiative to prevent and control chronic disease in Los Angeles County. This initiative is a 5-year grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Community Transformation Grants program. Choose Health LA is working with community partners to develop innovative strategies aimed at reducing youth access to tobacco products and exposure to secondhand smoke; improving nutrition and opportunities for physical activity; and increasing access to high-quality, clinical preventive services.

[CHOOSEHEALTHLA.COM](http://CHOOSEHEALTHLA.COM)

Learn more about what students should know and be able to do in each grade level in the Physical Education Model Content Standards for California Public Schools:

[www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/pestandards.pdf](http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/pestandards.pdf)



County of Los Angeles Public Health Working For You. Made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

*Growing a Healthier  
Generation of Students with*

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION**



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The need for high-quality physical education and physical activity has never been greater. Schools, parents and community members play an important role in making sure each student has the opportunity to develop the motor skills, knowledge, confidence and social skills needed to perform a variety of physical activities. These skills lay a foundation for a lifetime of health and well-being. Never has this been more important than in today's digital age where students are spending more time sitting and engaging in 'virtual' communication.

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION** is an academic subject, like science. It teaches students specific skills and knowledge and equips students with the attitudes and behaviors they need to establish and sustain physical activity as a key component in their life as children, adolescents and adults. Because the learning that takes place includes skill development, students are often moving during instruction. This can lead to the incorrect conclusion that physical education is the same as physical activity; it is not.

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY** is any type of bodily movement, and may include recreational, fitness and sport activities such as jumping rope, playing soccer or lifting weights, as well as daily activities such as walking to the store, taking the stairs or raking leaves.

Importantly, in addition to teaching motor skills and providing physical activity during the school day, quality physical education provides students with critical "real world" skills, such as:

- » **setting goals**
- » **making decisions**
- » **solving problems**
- » **working as a team**
- » **sportsmanship**
- » **planning personal programs**
- » **self-monitoring and assessment**

## State Laws Regarding Physical Education:

- » **All students in grades 1-6 must be provided at least 200 minutes of physical education instruction each 10 school days (EC 51210),\* not including lunch or recess because those are not instructional opportunities.**
- » **Students in grades 7-12 must be provided at least 400 minutes of physical education each 10 school days (EC 51210)\*.**

## Who can teach physical education?

Teachers who hold a Single Subject Credential in Physical Education (middle and high school teachers) or a Multiple Subject Credential (elementary school teachers) may provide instruction in physical education. Instructional aides, coaches, paraprofessionals and volunteers may only assist an appropriately credentialed teacher (EC 45340-43567).

## Grading

As with other subjects, physical education grades must be based on how well a student learned the skills (like throwing or catching) and knowledge (like game rules or how activity affects their health) taught by the instructor. Class (subject matter) grades should not be based on dressing, effort, participation, work habits, or citizenship (EC 49066 (c)).

## What are the physical education requirements for high school students?

Students must take a physical education class each year of high school unless they have passed 5 of the 6 items of the California Physical Fitness Test (Fitnessgram®) in 9th grade. School Boards establish the physical education curriculum and may require more than the two years regardless of students' Fitnessgram test results. A minimum of two years of physical education is required for a high school diploma.

High school students must receive instruction and evaluation of their learning in each of these eight content areas (Title 5, Section 10060):

**Effects of physical activity upon dynamic health / Mechanics of body movement / Aquatics / Gymnastics and tumbling / Individual and dual activities / Rhythms and dance / Team activities / Combatives**

Some school districts have approved courses such as JROTC (Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps), marching band, cheer and athletics because some physical activity is involved. However, unless these courses cover the eight content areas, they generally do not prepare students to meet grade- or course-level standards in physical education.