# **Recommendations and Research on Physical Education**

*The following recommendation is made to the State Health Services Council by the Texas School Health Advisory Committee in order to provide assistance in establishing a leadership role for the Texas Department of State Health Services in the support for and delivery of coordinated school health programs and school health services.*

## EXISTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OR PHYSICAL EDUCATION MANDATES

### Elementary School, Physical Activity

In accordance with Texas Education Code (TEC) §28.002(l), a school district shall require students enrolled in kindergarten or a grade level below sixth grade to participate in moderate or vigorous daily physical activity for at least 30 minutes throughout the school year as part of the district’s physical education curriculum or through structured activity during a school year as part of a school campus’s daily recess. To the extent practicable, a school district shall require a student enrolled in prekindergarten on less than a full-day basis to participate in the same type and amount of physical activity as a student enrolled in full-day prekindergarten.

If a school district determines for any particular grade level below grade six, that requiring moderate of vigorous daily physical activity is impractical due to scheduling concerns or other factors, the district may as an alternative require a student in that grade level to participate in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 135 minutes during the school week.

### Middle or Junior High School, Physical Activity

In accordance with TEC §28.002(l), a school district shall require students enrolled in grade level six, seven, and eight to participate in moderate or vigorous daily physical activity for at least 30 minutes for at least four semesters during those grade levels as part of the district’s physical education curriculum. Additionally, a school district may as an alternative require a student enrolled in a grade level for which the district uses block scheduling to participate in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 225 minutes during each period of two school weeks.

### High School, Physical Education

The Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Chapter 74, Subchapters B and D-G, state that students at the secondary level are required to have one state graduation credit of physical education. Permissible substitutes include athletics, JROTC, drill team, marching band, cheerleading and Commissioner of Education-approved private or commercially-sponsored activity programs that are held on or off the campus.

All allowed substitution activities above must include at least 100 minutes per five-day school week of moderate to vigorous physical activity. Credit may not be earned for any Texas Essential Knowledge (TEKS) based course more than once and no more than four substitution credits may be earned through any combination of substitutions.

### Students with Disabilities

In accordance with TAC §28.002(d), public schools must adapt physical education curriculum to accommodate the needs of students with mental disabilities

### Private or Commercially Sponsored Physical Activity Programs

TAC, Chapter 74, Subchapters B and D-G, state that in accordance with local district policy, graduation credit for any of the state approved physical education courses may be earned through participation in appropriate private or commercially-sponsored physical activity programs that are conducted on or off campus.

There are two categories of private or commercially-sponsored physical activity programs:

(I) Olympic-level participation and/or competition includes a minimum of 15 hours per week of highly intensive, professional, supervised training. The training facility, instructors, and the activities involved in the program must be certified by the superintendent to be of exceptional quality. Students qualifying and participating at this level may be dismissed from school one hour per day. Students dismissed may not miss any other class than physical education.

(II) Private or commercially sponsored physical activities include those certified by the superintendent to be of high quality and well supervised by appropriately trained instructors. Students participation of at least five hours per week must be required. Students certified to participate at this level may not be dismissed from any part of the regular day.

All allowed substitution activity listed above must include at least 100 minutes per five-day school week of moderate to vigorous physical activity. Credit may not be earned for any Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) based course more than once and no more than four substitution credits may be earned through any combination of substitutions.

### Goals and Objectives for Physical Education Programs

The TEC 11.253 (a) states that each school district shall maintain current policies and procedures to ensure that effective planning and site-based decision-making occur at each campus to direct and support the improvement of student performance for all students.

The TEC 11.253 (d) (10) states that if the campus is an elementary, middle, or junior high school, each campus improvement plan must set goals and objectives for the coordinated health program at the campus based on:

(A) student fitness assessment data, including any data from research-based assessments such as the school health index assessment and planning tool created by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;

(B) student academic performance data;

(C) student attendance rates;

(D) the percentage of students who are educationally disadvantaged;

(E) the use and success of any method to ensure that students participate in moderate to vigorous physical activity as required by Section 28.002 (I); and

(F) any other indicator recommended by the local school health advisory council.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/PHYSICAL EDUCATION AS PART OF COORDINATED SCHOOL HEALTH MODEL

Quality physical activity is an essential part of creating a successful, comprehensive Coordinated School Health (CSH) system within schools. Coordinated School Health consists of eight interrelated components: health education; physical education; health services; nutrition services; counseling, psychological, and social services; healthy and safe school environments; health promotion for staff members; and family and community involvement. CSH focuses on improving the quality of each of these components and expanding collaboration among the people responsible for them. This coordination allows for a planned, organized, and comprehensive set of courses, services, policies, and interventions that meet the health and safety needs of all students from kindergarten through grade 12. Effective CSH increases the adoption of health-enhancing behaviors, improves student and staff health, as well as student academic performance, and uses resources more efficiently.

### Physical Education Curriculum

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Physical Education are required standards for instruction, however, the system of delivering these standards are flexible. Thus, the method for providing the required physical activity for students in all grade levels should address these components: <http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/tacctx$tacctx.actionquery>.

### Physical Education Guidelines and Best Practices

The following guidelines, from the Centers for Disease Control, outline the factors that a successful physical education program will encompass:

* Physical education: Implement physical education curricula and instruction that emphasize enjoyable participation in physical activity and that help students develop the knowledge, attitudes, motor skills, behavioral skills, and confidence needed to adopt and maintain physically active lifestyles.
* Provide planned and sequential physical education curricula from kindergarten through grade 12 that promote enjoyable, lifelong physical activity.
* Use physical education curricula consistent with the national standards for physical education.
* Use active learning strategies and emphasize enjoyable participation in physical education class.
* Develop students’ knowledge of and positive attitudes toward physical activity.
* Develop students’ mastery of and confidence in motor and behavioral skills for participating in physical activity.
* Provide a substantial percentage of each student’s recommended weekly amount of physical activity in physical education classes.
* Promote participation in enjoyable physical activity in the school, community, and home.

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education publishes a guide for developmentally appropriate and inappropriate physical education practices for elementary, middle and high school. A comprehensive grid organizes the practices into five components, including: http://www.shapeamerica.org/standards/guidelines/paguidelines.cfm

1. The Learning Environment
2. Instruction Strategies
3. Curriculum
4. Assessment
5. Professionalism

## EVALUATION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMS

The following are examples of research based skill assessment tools that can be used to evaluate motor development and fitness of students:

### PE Metrics

PE Metrics, developed by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education is a standards-based, cognitive and motor skill assessment that has been established as a valid and reliable evaluation tool

PE Metrics will help to:

* Assess critical outcomes that all students should achieve as they progress through the grade levels
* Create reports that teachers can use to assess, compare and improve the quality of instruction and programs
* Provide information to parents that show them that teaching and learning are happening in physical education: <http://www.pemetricsonline.com/mxweb/>

### SOFIT (System for Observing Fitness Instruction Time)

Using direct observation to assess physical activity permits the simultaneous collection of contextually-rich data in settings in which it occurs, and helps explain how physical activity is influenced by both physical and social environments. SOFIT (System for Observing Fitness Instruction Time) has been used to assess physical activity in physical education classes in over 2000 schools and 30 published papers. It uses time sampling to obtain simultaneous recordings of student activity levels, the lesson context in which they occurred (i.e., how lesson content was delivered, including time for fitness, skill drills, game play, knowledge, and management), and teacher interactions relative to promoting physical activity and fitness. [www.activelivingresearch.org](http://www.activelivingresearch.org)

### FITNESSGRAM®

Created more than 31 years ago by The Cooper Institute, FITNESSGRAM® is the only health-related fitness assessment to use criterion-referenced standards, called Healthy Fitness Zones, to determine students' fitness levels based on what is optimal for good health. FITNESSGRAM® was developed by The Cooper Institute in an effort to provide physical educators with a tool that would facilitate communicating fitness testing results to students and to parents. The assessment measures three components of health-related physical fitness that have been identified as important to overall health and function:

* aerobic capacity;
* body composition; and
* muscular strength, endurance, and flexibility.

FITNESSGRAM® helps you achieve your goals by applying easy-to-use technology to

* conduct fair and accurate fitness assessments and easily record the results,
* set individualized goals for students,
* give students responsibility for managing and recording their own activities,
* create detailed reports of progress and results for students, parents, and administrators,
* help students and parents understand the value of physical activity.

Public schools will use *FITNESSGRAM*® for the Physical Fitness Assessment Initiative (PRAI). The PFAI is a program designed to gather physical fitness data from Texas students for analysis to determine the relationship between academic achievement, attendance, obesity, disciplinary problems, and school meal programs.

All Texas students in grades 3-12 who are in physical education classes or physical education substitutes are required to take the assessment on a yearly basis.

[www.fitnessgram.net](http://www.fitnessgram.net)

## REFERENCES

1. Texas Education Agency : <http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/tacctx$tacctx.actionquery>
2. National Association of Sport and Physical Education <http://www.shapeamerica.org/>
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov/>

This document was developed by the Texas Department of State Health Services, Texas School Health Advisory Committee. For additional information about the committee, go to <http://www.dshs.texas.gov/shadvise.shtm>.  
  
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