

March 2013

REQUEST: *Help to ensure our nation's future by supporting legislation related to the requirement of health education and physical education as "core" subjects, and federal programs that contribute to both health and academic achievement.*

Specifically, Congress should:

- Ensure that schools *have the option to use* ESEA Title I and Title II funds for physical education and health education programs and teacher professional development.
- Support legislation that would elevate both Health Education and Physical Education to core subjects.
- Support an FY2014 budget request to fund the CDC School Health Branch at \$18.6 million.



Legislation:

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

- ☑ The goal of the ESEA Act of 2001, also referred to as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), was to provide accountability for the education of American students. It focused on illuminating the growing achievement and attainment gaps and the need to place high-quality teachers in classrooms. The law requires ESEA to be reauthorized every 5 years, which is now long past due.
- ☑ Currently, health education and physical education are not included in the Common Core State Standards. Federal categorical grant programs that specify health instruction vary widely in adoption between and within states. State and local laws and regulations for comprehensive school health education also vary widely between states as well as within states.

Promoting Health as Youth Skills in Classrooms and Life Act (PHYSICAL Act)

- ☑ Introduced as ESEA reauthorization bills in 2012 by Congresswoman Marcia Fudge of Ohio (H.R. 2816) and by Senators Tom Udall and Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico (S. 392).
- ☑ It is anticipated that similar legislation will be introduced in the 113th Congress that will make health and physical education core subjects (like civics, arts, and geography), in order to make these subjects eligible for federal funding under Title I and Title II.

Healthy Lifestyles and Prevention America Act (HeLP America Act)

Introduced as S.39 by Senator Tom Harkin in January 2013, the bill proposes to expand prevention efforts in schools, communities, and workplaces, discourage companies from marketing unhealthy food to children, increase access to nutrition information, promote physical activity, and discourage tobacco use. Specifically related to schools, the bill:

- ☑ Directs the Department of Education to provide oversight, guidance, and technical assistance to ensure that schools provide equal opportunities for students with disabilities for Physical Education (PE) and extracurricular athletics.
- ☑ Includes in annual state report cards a set of indicators describing the physical activity environment in schools including measures of the time, quality, teachers, and facilities devoted to PE. Adds PE to the existing set of "core subjects," bolsters nutrition and physical activity in community learning centers, and engages parents and teachers in physical activity and healthy eating opportunities.

Elevating Health Education and Physical Education Recommendations for Elevating Health and Physical Education

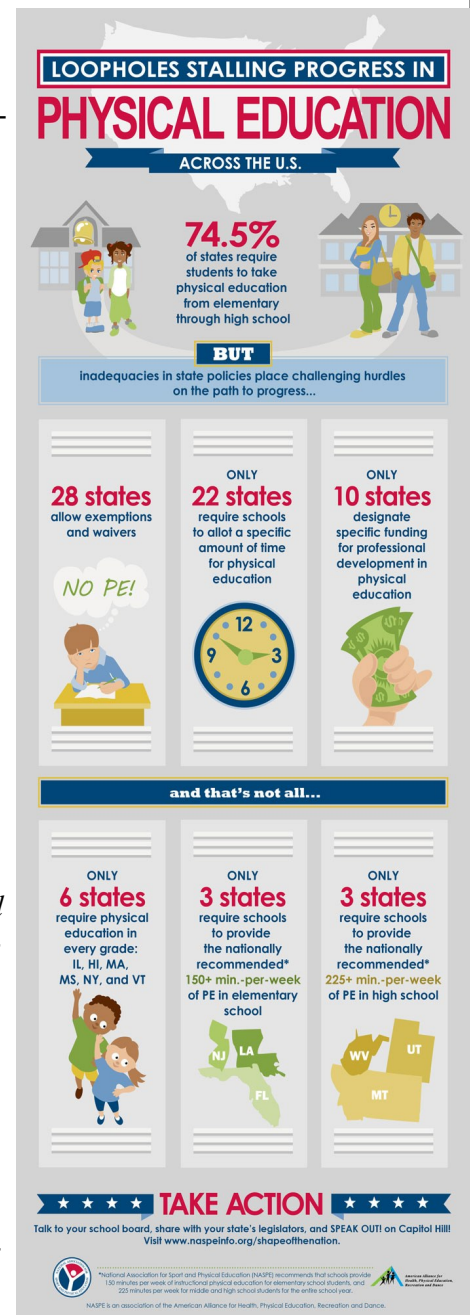
Federal Programs:

CDC School Health Branch

- ☑ Funding for CDC’s School Health Program provides a catalyst for collaboration between state education and health agencies to improve the health of children and remove barriers to students’ academic success.
- ☑ Coordinated school health programs use a holistic approach by addressing eight key components: health education, physical education, school meals, health services, healthy school environments, staff health promotion, and family/community involvement.

School Health Education Facts:

- ☑ Only 6.4 percent of elementary schools, 20.6 percent of middle schools, and 35.8 percent of high schools required health instruction, according to the latest CDC 2006 *School Health Policies and Programs Study*.
- ☑ Among 38 states that participated in the CDC’s *School Health Policies and Programs Study* (2006), the percentage of schools that required a health education course decreased between 1996 and 2000, as did the percentage of schools that taught about dietary behaviors and nutrition.
- ☑ In 2009, only 18% of high school students had participated in at least 60 minutes per day of physical activity, and only 33% attended physical education class daily.
- ☑ Health and fitness are linked to improved academic achievement and grades, cognitive ability, and behavior as well as reduced truancy.
- ☑ Recent studies, such as the Campaign for Healthy Schools *Health in Mind* (2012) report, show that health and fitness are linked to improved academic performance, cognitive ability, and behavior as well as reduced truancy.
- ☑ The lack of physically fit and health-literate graduates has become a national security issue—being overweight or obese has become the leading medical reason why applicants fail to qualify for military service.
- ☑ Comprehensive health education curriculum would also include effective violence prevention strategies.
- ☑ Subjects that are not considered “core” under the current education law are frequently marginalized and too often eliminated due to a lack of funding or administrative priority, as is shown in the National Association for Sport and Physical Education/American Heart Association *2012 Shape of the Nation Report: Status of Physical Education in the U.S.A* (2012).



NASPE Shape of the Nation Infographic