



SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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BULLETIN NO. 063-15 TEACHING & LEARNING

TO: Educational Service District Superintendents
Educational Service District Assistant Superintendents
School District Superintendents
School Building Principals
School District Curriculum Directors

FROM: Randy I. Dorn, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

RE: Physical Education State Requirements

CONTACT: Marissa Rathbone, Health and Physical Program Supervisor
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This bulletin provides guidance to schools and districts related to physical education state requirements and resources for grades K–12.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

- [RCW 28A.150.210](#) requires students to know and apply the core concepts and principles of health and physical education according to the Basic Education Act in Washington state.
- [WAC 392-410-135](#) requires that students in grades 1–8 receive an average of at least 100 instructional minutes per week per year in physical education. Note: Minutes accumulated during one school year cannot be averaged with minutes accumulated during another school year.
- [WAC 180-51-067](#) requires two **health and fitness** credits (.5 credit health; 1.5 credits physical education/fitness) for high school graduation. Students may be excused from the physical education requirement under [RCW 28A.230.050](#). Such excused students shall be required to demonstrate proficiency/competency in the knowledge portion of the physical education requirement, in accordance with written district policy.

- [OSPI Recommendations for Physical Education Waivers](#)

WHAT CONSTITUTES PHYSICAL EDUCATION?

Physical education is a planned instructional program which enhances physical competence, health-related fitness, self-responsibility, social and cooperative skills, self-monitoring (through daily personal logs), setting goals, planning personal programs, decision making and enjoyment of physical activity—all skills needed for the successful 21st Century Learner.

The following instructional opportunities may be used to meet the requirements:

- Instruction provided within the school day by a certified classroom or physical education teacher that involves all students.
- Instruction aligned with the Washington State K–12 Health and Physical Education Learning Standards.

WHAT DOES NOT CONSTITUTE PHYSICAL EDUCATION?

In grades 1–8, **recess** should not be used to meet the requirement of an average of 100 instructional minutes per week in physical education. While recess provides children play opportunities to engage in physical activity and an opportunity to practice skills learned in physical education classes, it does not replace physical education classes given that in most cases recess does not provide structured, sequential instruction delivered by a certified physical education teacher to enhance the development of motor skills, movement concepts, and physical fitness.

In middle and high school, **athletics, classes, specialized groups and teams** that provide physical activity (e.g., marching band, ROTC, cheerleading, or community-based sports and school athletics) have important but distinctly different goals than physical education. Any opportunity for students to participate in sustained periods of meaningful physical activity can be valuable for their health and fitness. However, these activities do not provide the content of a comprehensive, standards-based physical education program, and thus should not be allowed to fulfill a physical education requirement.

Some school districts may offer waivers of the required high school physical education credits, however this should be considered very carefully to assure the instruction meets the expectations within the Washington State K–12 Health and Physical Education Learning Standards and meets the requirements within the Washington State statutes.

RESOURCES

OSPI and state health and physical education partners are committed to supporting schools to provide quality instruction based on effective learning opportunities, meaningful and challenging content, and student and program assessment. Below are resources to support effective health and fitness education.

- [Laws and Regulations/Graduation Requirements](#) – The WACs and RCWs that outline Health and Physical Education requirements in Washington state.

- [Resources to Support Quality Instruction](#) – Videos, sample lessons, and assessment tutorials designed to assist schools and districts to enhance comprehensive health and physical education programs.
- District Models – Contact OSPI for information about school districts that are implementing effective physical education in schools.
- [Governor Inslee's Healthiest Next Generation Initiative](#)
- [Society of Health and Physical Educators of Washington](#) (SHAPE WA)
- [Health and Fitness Connections to the Common Core State Standards](#)
- [Research Review: School-based Health Interventions and Academic Achievement](#)

If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please contact Marissa Rathbone at 360-725-4977 or marissa.rathbone@k12.wa.us; the agency TTY number is 360-664-3631.

K–12 EDUCATION

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TEACHING AND LEARNING

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