

New Hampshire Survey on Physical Activity and Physical Education in Public Schools 2015–2016



New Hampshire Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance

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Background

What Is Physical Education?

Physical education is defined by the Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE America) as a “planned, sequential, standards-based program of curricula and instruction designed to develop motor skills, knowledge, and behaviors for active living, physical fitness, sportsmanship, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence.”¹

A high-quality physical education program is the cornerstone of a comprehensive school effort to increase students’ physical activity levels. Physical education teachers provide students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to lead physically active lives. High-quality physical education is standards-based instruction, includes moderate-to-vigorous physical activity for at least 50% of the class time, follows appropriate instruction practices, and is developmentally appropriate to each student’s physical, cognitive, and social needs.²

What Is Physical Activity?

Physical activity is defined by the World Health Organization as, “any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure.”³ Examples of physical activity provided in schools include recess, physical activity breaks in the classroom, and any activity that keeps kids moving.

Because children spend the majority of their time outside of the home at school, schools are able to influence children’s health by increasing student participation in physical activity. Along with high-quality physical education, students need opportunities for physical activity throughout the school day to help meet the recommended 60 minutes or more of daily physical activity.⁴

Physical Activity Improves Student Health

Regular physical activity in childhood and adolescence has been shown to improve strength and endurance, build healthy bones and muscles, help control weight, reduce anxiety and stress, increase self-esteem, and might improve blood pressure and cholesterol levels.⁵

Physical Activity Improves Academic Outcomes

Beyond health benefits, physical activity supports students’ academic outcomes and positive behaviors. Evolving research on the connection between physical activity and academic outcomes has shown that:

¹SHAPE America. (2015). The essential components of physical education. Reston, VA: Author.

²American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. (2013). *Comprehensive school physical activity programs: Helping students achieve 60 minutes of physical activity each day* [Position statement]. Reston, VA: Author.

³“Health Topics: *Physical Activity*,” World Health Organization, http://www.who.int/topics/physical_activity/en/

⁴American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. (2013). *Comprehensive school physical activity programs: Helping students achieve 60 minutes of physical activity each day* [Position statement]. Reston, VA: Author.

⁵U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008.

- More participation in physical education class is associated with improved academic performance and better classroom behavior.⁶
- Recess positively affects students' attention, concentration, and classroom behaviors.⁷
- Classroom physical activity breaks (5–10 minutes in duration) are associated with improved attention and concentration, improved classroom behavior, and improved scoring on standardized tests.⁸
- Increasing physical activity time by 47 minutes per day while reducing instruction time by the same 47 minutes per day did not have a negatively affect academic achievement.⁹

How Much Physical Activity Should Kids Get Each Day?

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* recommends that children and adolescents age 6–17:¹⁰

- Be physically active for at least 60 minutes throughout each day
- Participate in a variety of physical activities that are appropriate for their age and that they enjoy

What Physical Activity Components Should Schools Consider Offering?

The Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) America (formerly the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance [AAHPERD]) recommends that schools offer each of the five components of the Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program.¹¹ These components include:

1. High-Quality Physical Education
2. Physical Activity During School (such as classroom physical activity breaks)
3. Physical Activity Before and After School (such as walking/running clubs, intramural sports)
4. Staff Involvement (such as joining in physical activity breaks with students)
5. Family and Community Engagement (such as organizing a Fun Run/Walk 5K)

About the Survey

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services (DPHS), sought to understand what physical education and physical activity opportunities were offered by New Hampshire public schools. During the 2015–16 school year, DPHS worked with the New Hampshire Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (NHAHPERD) and collaborated with Marcia McCaffrey, Education Consultant with the New Hampshire Department of Education (DOE), to develop a survey of New Hampshire public school physical education teachers. DPHS focused on public schools because non-public schools do not have physical education requirements and are not required to hire certified physical education teachers.¹² Additionally, the scientific literature on physical activity in schools has focused primarily on public schools.

⁶Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Health and Academic Achievement* (2014), pg. 3.

⁷Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Health and Academic Achievement* (2014), pg. 3.

⁸Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Health and Academic Achievement* (2014), pg. 3.

⁹Trudeau F, Shephard RJ. Physical education, school physical activity, school sports and academic performance. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*; 2008;5(10).

¹⁰U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*, vii

¹¹American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. (2013). *Comprehensive school physical activity programs: Helping students achieve 60 minutes of physical activity each day* [Position statement]. Reston, VA: Author.

¹²U.S. Department of Education (2009), *State Regulation of Private Schools*, pp. 176-180.

The survey consisted of 30 questions in four sections: school information, physical education, physical activity, and professional development. Respondents were asked to answer the questions for the school at which they taught. If a respondent worked at multiple schools, they were asked to select one school as the reference for all of their answers. For analysis of the questions on how teachers preferred to receive professional development, we included all respondents rather than analyze at the school level. The survey included an open-ended question where respondents could describe physical activity or physical education initiatives at their school that might be highlighted. Responses to this question that applied to the survey section topics (i.e., physical education time, physical activity breaks, etc.) were reported in “spotlight” sections in this reports after the respondents gave their consent to report their name and project description.

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) provided paper copies and a link to the electronic version of the survey to 600 NHAHPERD Conference attendees on November 19, 2015. Immediately following the NHAHPERD Conference, DPHS staff sent emails with the link to the electronic version of the survey to those New Hampshire physical education teachers who were not able to complete the survey at the conference. A reminder for teachers to complete the survey was included in the winter edition of the NHAHPERD newsletter in January 2016. The survey remained open from November 19, 2015 until March 31, 2016.

Survey Results

Of 246 survey responses, 14 (6%) were excluded. Reasons for exclusion included a response from a non-public school (n = 5), not reporting the school name (n = 3), not from a physical education teacher (n = 1), or listing responses for more than one school (n = 5). Responses listing more than one school were excluded because of concern of overestimating. Of the remaining 232 surveys, responses from the same school were reviewed. Surveys from the same school with incomplete responses (i.e., did not complete the later survey questions) were excluded, and from those with the apparent equivalent completion, one survey from the school was randomly selected. In total, 24 were excluded because they were from schools with at least one other respondent, leaving 208 included in this analysis, representing 48% of the 434 public schools in New Hampshire.

Of the 208 schools represented in the survey, respondents reported their schools serving grades ranging from kindergarten through grade 12 with more responses from elementary school grades than middle school or high school grades (Table 1). A school was classified as elementary if the respondent reported that the school served any student in kindergarten or grades 1–5, middle school if the school served any student in grades 6–8, or high school if the school served any student in grades 9–12 (Table 1). If a school served grades crossing school types (i.e., K–8, 8–12), the school was classified in each of the types: responses from 56 schools were classified as both elementary and middle, 13 as both middle and high, and 3 as elementary, middle, and high schools.

This document reports the survey results and summarizes the recommendations on physical education and physical activity from national organizations.

Table 1. Number of respondents^a serving public schools by grade level and school type—New Hampshire, 2015–16

Grade	Respondents (N = 208)	
	N	% ^b
K	103	50
1	114	55
2	116	56
3	116	56
4	115	55
5	107	51
6	79	38
7	71	34
8	71	34
9	52	25
10	51	25
11	51	25
12	51	25
School type ^c		
Elementary	134	64
Middle	89	43
High	54	26

^aNumber of respondents who answered this question and had reported that their school served the corresponding grade level, limited one per school.

^bPercentages do not total 100% because respondents serving multiple grades would be included on multiple rows.

Source: New Hampshire Survey on Physical Activity and Physical Education in Public Schools, 2015–16

^cSchool type included: elementary (grades kindergarten–5), middle (grades 6–8), and high (grades 9–12); responses from physical education teachers serving grades crossing categories (i.e., 4–7 or 8–12) were included in both categories.

Physical Education

Minutes of Physical Education

National Recommendations

SHAPE America recommends that elementary school students participate in at least 150 minutes of physical education per week and that middle/high school students participate in at least 225 minutes of physical education per week for the entire school year.¹⁵

New Hampshire Survey Results

Respondents reported the average minutes of physical education provided each week to students in grades K–8 at their schools.

- 100% of New Hampshire students in grades 1–4 received at least 30 minutes of physical education each week (Table 2).
- None of New Hampshire’s K–4 students received on average at least 150 minutes of weekly physical education; 3% of New Hampshire grade 5 students received on average at least 150 minutes of physical education each week (Table 2).
- Most of New Hampshire middle school students received at least 90 minutes of physical education each week: 60% of grade 6 students, 65% of grade 7 students, and 66% of grade 8 students (Table 3).
- Few New Hampshire middle school students received at least 225 minutes of physical education each week: 9% of grade 6 students, 9% of grade 7 students, and 9% of grade 8 students (Table 3).

State of the Nation

4% of U.S. school districts required their elementary schools to provide 150 minutes per week of physical education for their students.¹³

2% of school districts in the U.S. required their middle schools to provide 225 minutes per week of physical education for their students.¹⁴

Table 2. Average Minutes of Weekly Physical Education by Elementary Grade Level—New Hampshire, 2015–16

Grade	Number of respondents ^a	Minutes of physical education each week																	
		0		1–29		30–44		45–59		60–74		75–99		100–124		125–149		≥150	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
K	98	8	8	6	6	31	32	23	23	8	8	18	18	4	4	0	0	0	0
1	108	0	0	0	0	30	28	39	36	7	6	28	26	4	4	0	0	0	0
2	110	0	0	0	0	30	27	40	36	8	7	28	25	4	4	0	0	0	0
3	110	0	0	0	0	28	25	42	38	7	6	29	26	4	4	0	0	0	0
4	107	0	0	0	0	27	25	41	38	7	7	29	27	3	3	0	0	0	0
5	98	0	0	1	1	21	21	34	35	7	7	29	30	2	2	1	1	3	3

^aNumber of respondents who answered this question and had reported that their school served the corresponding grade level.

Source: New Hampshire Survey on Physical Activity and Physical Education in Public Schools, 2015–16

¹³Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Bridging the Gap Research Program. Strategies for Supporting Quality Physical Education and Physical Activity in Schools. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2014.

¹⁴Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Bridging the Gap Research Program. Strategies for Supporting Quality Physical Education and Physical Activity in Schools. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2014.

¹⁵SHAPE America. (2015). The essential components of physical education. Reston, VA: Author.

Table 3. Average Minutes of Weekly Physical Education by Middle School Grade Level—
New Hampshire, 2015–16

Grade	Number of respondents ^a	Minutes of physical education each week																	
		0		1–44		45–59		60–74		75–89		90–119		120–179		180–224		≥225	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
6	66	0	0	7	11	9	14	5	8	6	9	23	35	3	5	7	11	6	9
7	56	0	0	4	7	8	14	3	5	5	9	16	29	5	9	10	18	5	9
8	57	1	2	3	5	7	12	4	7	5	9	17	30	5	9	10	18	5	9

^aNumber of respondents who answered this question and had reported that their school served the corresponding grade level.
Source: New Hampshire Survey on Physical Activity and Physical Education in Public Schools, 2015–16

NH Spotlight



Elementary School Spotlight:

Patrick Ard of Danville Elementary School has created activities that integrate Math and Physical Education. See Patrick’s full story on page 20.

Middle School Spotlight:

Kathy Birse-Siegel of Portsmouth Middle School has created a Quidditch unit that combines Literature and Physical Education. Kathy has also incorporated the popular Drums Alive program into her 6th and 7th grade units. See Kathy’s full story on page 21.

Barriers to Adding More Physical Education Time for Students

New Hampshire Results

Respondents were asked to choose what they felt the biggest barriers were to adding more physical education time for their students. Respondents could choose any/all of the barriers they felt applied at their school.

- The most common barrier to adding more physical education time for students was not having enough time in the schedule; other commonly selected barriers included not enough physical education staff and not enough space (Table 4).
- Not enough time in the schedule and time for standardized testing were reported more frequently among respondents serving elementary school than those serving middle school or high school; however, not enough equipment, physical education staff, or space were reported more frequently among respondents serving high schools than elementary or middle schools (Table 4).

Table 4. Reported Barriers to Adding More Physical Education Time, by School Type—New Hampshire, 2015–16

School type ^a	Number of respondents ^b	Barrier													
		Not enough equipment		Not enough PE staff		Not enough space		Not enough time in schedule		School board/admin does not prioritize PE		Time for standardized testing		Other ³	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Elementary	134	6	4	40	30	37	28	108	81	17	13	14	10	1	1
Middle	89	4	4	29	33	27	30	61	69	15	17	5	6	2	2
High	54	5	9	24	44	20	37	29	54	14	26	0	0	2	4

^aSchool type included: elementary (grades kindergarten–5), middle (grades 6–8), and high (grades 9–12); responses from physical education teachers serving grades crossing categories (i.e., 4–7 or 8–12) were included in both categories.

^bNumber of respondents who answered this question and had reported that their school served a grade in either elementary, middle, or high school; a respondent reporting their school served grades crossing school type categories would be included for each school type served.

³Included budget, large class sizes, and equity among schools in a district (i.e., one school may add time only if all schools in district can add time).

Source: New Hampshire Survey on Physical Activity and Physical Education in Public Schools, 2015–16

Substitutions/Waivers for Physical Education Credits

National Recommendations

The 2016 Shape of the Nation: Status of Physical Education in the USA report suggests that states should not allow waivers from state-mandated requirements for physical education or allow substitutions of other activities (i.e., interscholastic sports, marching band, cheerleading, etc.) for required physical education class time or credit because exemptions or waivers might deprive students of physical education instruction time needed to develop skills for lifelong physical activity.^{17,18}

State of the Nation

93% of school districts in the U.S. allowed students to waive physical education requirements for participation in interscholastic and intramural sports.¹⁶

New Hampshire Results

Respondents teaching physical education in grades 9–12 were asked if high school students could use an online course as physical education credit toward graduation, for example the Fitness Lifestyle Design online course offered by the Virtual Learning Academy (VLACS) that may be substituted for a physical education credit. Respondents were also asked if their school allowed students to use participation in interscholastic sports as a substitution for physical education credits towards graduation.

- 74% of New Hampshire high schools allowed students to substitute an online course as a physical education credit towards graduation.
- 33% of New Hampshire high schools allowed students to use participation in interscholastic sports as a substitution for physical education credits towards graduation.

¹⁶Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Bridging the Gap Research Program. *Strategies For Supporting Quality Physical Education and Physical Activity in Schools, Update for the 2012–13 School Year*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2014, pg. 2.

¹⁷SHAPE America, *2016 SHAPE of the Nation: Status of Physical Education in the USA*, pg. 16.

¹⁸SHAPE America (2014) *Guide for Physical Education Policy*, pg. 2.

NH Spotlight



High School Spotlights:

- Sam Struthers of Coe-Brown Northwood Academy has added Wednesday Workouts to his regular activities. See Sam’s full story on page 22.
- Jeff Holmes of Exeter High School has his freshman students compete in a modified track meet during physical education classes. See Jeff’s full story on page 22.
- Leslie Barry of Concord High School has added Yoga and the Rape, Aggression, and Defense (RAD) Self-Defense Training for Women into her physical activity curriculum. See Leslie’s full story on page 23.

Time Spent Being Physically Active in Physical Education

National Recommendations

At least 50% of the time students spend in physical education should be focused on moderate to vigorous physical activity. Being physically active for at least 50% of class time is considered one of the most important outcome measures in determining the quality of a physical education program.²⁰

State of the Nation

50% of school districts in the U.S. had wording in their local wellness policies requiring 50% or more of physical education class time be devoted to moderate to vigorous activity.¹⁹

New Hampshire Results

Respondents were asked, on average, during the physical education classes that they teach at their school, what percentage of time was devoted to physical activity.

- Of 205 responses, 202 (99%) reported that at least 50% of physical education class time was devoted to physical activity.
- 187 (91%) reported that more than 50% of physical education class time was devoted to physical activity.

Physical Education Curriculum

National Recommendations

Curriculum standards are an essential part of helping students achieve what SHAPE America refers to as “physical literacy.” The SHAPE America Physical Education Standards help, “identify the skills and

¹⁹Piekarz E, Schermebeck R, Young SK, Leider J, Ziemann M, Chriqui JF. School District Wellness Policies: Evaluating Progress and Potential for Improving Children’s Health Eight Years after the Federal Mandate. School Years 2006-07 through 2013-14. Volume 4. Chicago, IL: Bridging the Gap Program and the National Wellness Policy Study, Institute for Health Research and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2016, www.go.uic.edu/NWPSproducts, pg. 138.

²⁰Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2010), *Strategies to Improve the Quality of Physical Education*, pg. 1.

knowledge necessary to support the development of physically literate individuals: those who have the skills and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of physical activity.”²¹

According to SHAPE America, schools should use curriculum and standards to help students achieve “physical literacy.” Achieving physical literacy means that each student will have learned the skills necessary to participate in a variety of physical activities, know the implications and the benefits of involvement in various activities, participate in regular physical activity, and value physical activity and its contributions to a healthy lifestyle.

SHAPE America recommends that schools should:

- Adopt physical activity standards that are aligned with SHAPE America’s national physical education standards and are systematically reviewed and updated²³
- Develop and implement a planned, K–12 sequential physical education curriculum that adheres to national and state standards for physical education and includes a comprehensive student assessment program²⁴

State of the Nation

40 states require each public school to follow their state’s physical education standards.²²

New Hampshire Results

Respondents were asked if their school had a physical education curriculum. If their school had a physical education curriculum, respondents were then asked if it had been approved by the local school board and if it aligned with the New Hampshire 2007 K–12 Physical Education Curriculum Guidelines and/or the 2014 SHAPE America Physical Education Standards.

- 84% of respondents reported that their school had a physical education curriculum.

Of those respondents that reported their school had a curriculum:

- 74% reported that their curriculum aligned with the New Hampshire 2007 K–12 Physical Education Curriculum Guidelines.
- 61% reported that their physical education curriculum aligned with the 2014 SHAPE America Physical Education Standards.
- 54% reported that their physical education curriculum had been approved by the local school board.

²¹Reston, VA, SHAPE America (2015), *The Essential Components of Physical Education*, pg. 1.

²²SHAPE America (2016), *2016 SHAPE of the Nation: Status of Physical Education in the USA*, pg. 20.

²³American Heart Association (2015), *Increasing and Improving Physical Education and Physical Activity in Schools: Benefits for Children’s Health and Educational Outcomes*, pg. 5.

²⁴Reston, VA, SHAPE America (2015), *The Essential Components of Physical Education*, pg. 3.

Physical Activity

Recess

National Recommendations

Elementary school children should be provided with at least one daily period of recess of at least 20 minutes in length.²⁶

State of the Nation

Eight states require their elementary schools to provide daily recess.²⁵

New Hampshire Results

Respondents were asked how many minutes of recess were provided during the day at their school for schools teaching grades K–8.

- All of New Hampshire elementary schools serving grades 1–4 offered daily recess (Table 5).
- Overall, the number of minutes of recess offered decreased with increasing grade (Table 5).

Table 5. Average Daily Minutes of Recess Offered by Grade—New Hampshire, 2015–16

Grade	Number of respondents ^a	Daily minutes of recess											
		None		1–19		20–24		25–29		30–34		≥35	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
K	89	4	4	10	11	21	24	22	25	15	17	17	19
1	104	0	0	10	10	25	24	25	24	21	20	23	22
2	106	0	0	10	9	27	25	25	24	21	20	23	22
3	106	0	0	10	9	34	32	25	24	18	17	19	18
4	105	0	0	12	11	36	34	23	22	16	15	18	17
5	97	1	1	19	20	32	33	20	21	11	11	14	14
6	67	14	21	24	36	12	18	6	9	7	10	4	6
7	58	22	38	24	41	4	7	3	5	4	7	1	2
8	59	22	37	26	44	4	7	3	5	3	5	1	2

^aNumber of respondents who answered this question and had reported that their school served the corresponding grade level, limited one per school.; a respondent reporting their school served multiple grades would have response included for each grade.

Source: New Hampshire Survey on Physical Activity and Physical Education in Public Schools, 2015–16

NH Spotlight



Elementary Schools:

- The Wellness Committee at South Range Elementary School has added “Buddy Benches” to their school playground. Learn how “Buddy Benches” have helped increase play opportunities for students on page 25.
- Dee Blanchard has created a Recess Mileage Club to encourage students to keep moving during recess. See Dee’s full story on page 25.

²⁵SHAPE America (2016), *2016 SHAPE of the Nation: Status of Physical Education in the USA*, pg. 20.

²⁶National Association for Sport and Physical Education. (2006). Recess for elementary school students [Position statement]. Reston, VA.

Physical Activity Breaks

National Recommendations

Schools can provide physical activity breaks in the classroom to help students avoid prolonged periods of inactivity and help students meet the national recommendation of 60 minutes of physical activity each day.²⁹

State of the Nation

25% of public elementary schools offered physical activity breaks apart from physical education class and recess during the 2009–11 school years.²⁷

Students in schools that offered physical activity breaks received an average of almost 40 minutes per week in such breaks.²⁸

New Hampshire Results

Respondents were asked how many teachers in their school provide physical activity breaks. Physical activity breaks were defined as 1–5 minutes of activity during class time.

- The number of all classroom teachers providing physical activity breaks was higher among elementary schools than middle schools (15% vs. 8%) (Table 6).
- The percentage of classroom teachers offering at least some classroom physical activity breaks was 77% of elementary schools, 54% of middle schools, and 27% of high schools.

Table 6. Reported Use of Physical Activity Breaks by Classroom Teachers, by School Type—New Hampshire, 2015–16

School type ^a	Number of respondents ^b	Number of classroom teachers providing physical activity breaks									
		All		Some		One or two		None		Not Sure	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Elementary	122	18	15	76	62	9	7	2	2	17	14
Middle	81	6	7	38	47	13	16	5	6	19	23
High	45	0	0	12	27	10	22	6	13	17	38

^aSchool type included: elementary (grades kindergarten–5), middle (grades 6–8), and high (grades 9–12); responses from physical education teachers serving grades crossing categories (i.e., 4–7 or 8–12) were included in both categories.

^bNumber of respondents who answered this question and had reported that their school served a grade in either elementary, middle, or high school; a respondent reporting their school served grades crossing school type categories would be included for each school type served.

Source: New Hampshire Survey on Physical Activity and Physical Education in Public Schools, 2015–16

²⁷Turner L and Chaloupka FJ. Activity Breaks: A Promising Strategy for Keeping Children Physically Active at School - A BTG Research Brief. Chicago, IL: Bridging the Gap Program, Health Policy Center, Institute for Health Research and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2012. www.bridgingthegapresearch.org.

²⁸Turner L and Chaloupka FJ. Activity Breaks: A Promising Strategy for Keeping Children Physically Active at School - A BTG Research Brief. Chicago, IL: Bridging the Gap Program, Health Policy Center, Institute for Health Research and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2012. www.bridgingthegapresearch.org.

²⁹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Bridging the Gap Research Program. Strategies For Supporting Quality Physical Education and Physical Activity in Schools. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2014.

NH Spotlight



Elementary Schools:

Teachers from Hallsville, Highland-Goffe's Falls, and Weston Elementary Schools in Manchester volunteered to attend trainings on how to keep students active and learning at the same time. See their full story on page 24.

Physical Activity Opportunities Provided Before and After School

National Recommendations

Before- and after-school physical activity can provide students with further opportunities to increase their overall physical activity levels. It is important that school personnel focus on providing a variety of activities both before and after the school day in order to reach the greatest number of students. There are no specific recommendations for offering physical activity before or after school hours, but offering both structured and non-structured forms of physical activity are suggested.³¹

State of the Nation

13% of school districts mention before- or after-school physical activity opportunities in their local school wellness policies.³⁰

Examples of before- and after-school physical activity include: walk/bike to and from school, intramural sports/physical activity clubs, and informal play on school grounds.

New Hampshire Results

Respondents were asked to choose which physical activity options were available to students before the school day begins and/or after the school day ends.

- The most commonly reported before-school physical activity opportunity was any recess for elementary and middle schools (40% and 28%, respectively) and open gym for high schools (17%) (Table 7).
- Most (56%) high schools reported offering no before-school opportunities; 36% of elementary and 46% of middle schools reported no before-school opportunities (Table 7).
- More after-school than before-school activities were reported (Tables 7 and 8).
- Most middle and high schools offered interscholastic sports after school (76% and 78%, respectively) (Table 8).
- No respondents reported that their high school offered no after-school activities (Table 8).

³⁰Piekarz E, Schermbeck R, Young SK, Leider J, Ziemann M, Chriqui JF. School District Wellness Policies: Evaluating Progress and Potential for Improving Children's Health Eight Years after the Federal Mandate. School Years 2006–7 through 2013–14. Volume 4. Chicago, IL: Bridging the Gap Program and the National Wellness Policy Study, Institute for Health Research and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2016, www.go.uic.edu/NWPSproducts.

³¹American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. (2013). Comprehensive school physical activity programs: Helping students achieve 60 minutes of physical activity each day [Position statement]. Reston, VA: Author.

Table 7. Physical Activity Opportunities Offered Before School, by School Type—New Hampshire, 2015–16

School type ^a	Number of respondents ^b	Physical activity opportunity—before school															
		Intramural sports		Open gym ^c		Recess ^d for some		Recess ^d for all		Safe Routes to School		Structured activities ^e		Walking School Bus		No activities offered	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Elementary	134	5	4	8	6	30	22	24	18	7	5	5	4	7	5	48	36
Middle	89	2	2	11	12	17	19	8	9	3	3	3	3	2	2	41	46
High	54	0	0	9	17	1	2	2	4	0	0	1	2	1	2	30	56

^aSchool type included: elementary (grades kindergarten–5), middle (grades 6–8), and high (grades 9–12); responses from physical education teachers serving grades crossing categories (i.e., 4–7 or 8–12) were included in both categories.

^bNumber of respondents who answered this question and had reported that their school served a grade in either elementary, middle, or high school; a respondent reporting their school served grades crossing school type categories would be included for each school type served.

^cOpen gym activities examples include basketball; weight room, activity stations.

^dRecess included recess for students arriving early.

^eStructured activities examples included Dance Dance Revolution, basketball, activity stations.

Source: New Hampshire Survey on Physical Activity and Physical Education in Public Schools, 2015–16

Table 8. Physical Activity Opportunities Offered After School, by School Type—New Hampshire, 2015–16

School type ^a	Number of respondents ^b	Physical activity opportunity—after school															
		Intramural sports		Interscholastic sports		Open gym ^c		Informal walk/run group		Safe Routes to School		School playground supervised		Teacher/volunteer-led activities		No activities offered	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Elementary	134	31	23	48	36	15	11	23	17	3	2	13	10	37	28	15	11
Middle	89	26	29	68	76	10	11	13	15	5	6	5	6	24	27	2	2
High	54	7	13	42	78	24	44	4	7	1	2	0	0	13	24	0	0

^aSchool type included: elementary (grades kindergarten–5), middle (grades 6–8), and high (grades 9–12); responses from physical education teachers serving grades crossing categories (i.e., 4–7 or 8–12) were included in both categories.

^bNumber of respondents who answered this question and had reported that their school served a grade in either elementary, middle, or high school; a respondent reporting their school served grades crossing school type categories would be included for each school type served.

^cOpen gym activities examples include basketball, weight room, activity stations.

Source: New Hampshire Survey on Physical Activity and Physical Education in Public Schools, 2015–16

NH Spotlight



Elementary Schools:

Shawn Croteau of James Mastricola Elementary School has created Walking Wednesdays and Fitness Fridays, a before-school walking/running program for elementary students. See Shawn’s full story on page 24.

Withholding Physical Activity as a Disciplinary Measure

National Recommendations

SHAPE America opposes administering or withholding physical activity as a form of punishment or behavior management because behavioral experts view administering or withholding physical activity as a disciplinary measure as a “quick fix” that actually might not change the initial behavior.³⁴

SHAPE America suggests using alternatives to withholding physical activity as a punishment, such as establishing a reward system for appropriate classroom behavior, developing better classroom routines, including students in creating behavior goals and how they can be reached, and not drawing unnecessary attention to inappropriate behaviors.

New Hampshire Results

Respondents were asked how often physical activity (such as recess or physical activity breaks) was withheld as a disciplinary measure for behavior management.

- Physical activity was never withheld as behavior management in 8% of elementary, 24% of middle, and 39% of high schools (Table 9).
- Of respondents serving high schools, 24% were not sure the frequency of withholding physical activity as a disciplinary measure (Table 9).

State of the Nation

In a 2009 Gallup survey of more than 1,900 school principals in the United States, 77% of principals reported that their schools allowed recess to be taken away from students as a punishment.³²

The American Academy of Pediatrics stated in their 2013 report, *The Crucial Role of Recess in School*, that:

*“Recess is a necessary break in the day for optimizing a child’s social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development,” and “should be considered a child’s personal time and should not be withheld for academic or punitive reasons.”*³³

Table 9. Withholding Physical Activity as a Disciplinary Measure for Behavior Management, by School Type—New Hampshire, 2015–16

School type ^a	Number of respondents ^b	Frequency of Withholding Physical Activity as a Disciplinary Measure									
		Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Not sure	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Elementary	134	11	8	45	34	44	33	17	13	5	4
Middle	89	21	24	20	22	25	28	5	6	10	11
High	54	21	39	3	6	6	11	1	2	13	24

^aSchool type included: elementary (grades kindergarten–5), middle (grades 6–8), and high (grades 9–12); responses from physical education teachers serving grades crossing categories (i.e., 4–7 or 8–12) were included in both categories.

^bNumber of respondents who answered this question and had reported that their school served a grade in either elementary, middle, or high school; a respondent reporting their school served grades crossing school type categories would be included for each school type served.

Source: New Hampshire Survey on Physical Activity and Physical Education in Public Schools, 2015–16

³²Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2010), *The State of Play: Gallup Survey of Principals on School Recess*, pg. 9.

³³Robert Murray, MD, Catherine Ramstetter, PhD, (2013), *The Crucial Role of Recess in School*, American Academy of Pediatrics.

³⁴SHAPE America–Society of Health and Physical Educators. (2009). Using physical activity as punishment and/or behavior management [Position statement]. Reston, VA: Author.

Barriers to Adding More Physical Activity Time

New Hampshire Results

Respondents were asked what they thought were the biggest barriers to providing more physical activity time for their students before, during, or after the school day. Respondents were asked to choose as many of the listed barriers that applied to their school.

- For elementary and middle schools, the most commonly reported barrier was not enough time (61% and 57%, respectively) (Table 10).
- For high schools, the most commonly reported barrier was no dedicated funding for before- or after-school physical activity programs (46%) (Table 10).

Table 10. Reported Barriers to Adding More Physical Activity Time for Students, by School Type—New Hampshire, 2015–16

School type ^a	Number of respondents ^b	Barrier									
		No dedicated funding		Not enough space		Not enough staff		Not enough time		Transportation (After-School Programs)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Elementary	134	37	28	35	26	61	46	82	61	33	25
Middle	89	23	26	26	29	37	42	51	57	23	26
High	54	25	46	20	37	23	43	21	39	15	28

^aSchool type included: elementary (grades kindergarten–5), middle (grades 6–8), and high (grades 9–12); responses from physical education teachers serving grades crossing categories (i.e., 4–7 or 8–12) were included in both categories.

^bNumber of respondents who answered this question and had reported that their school served a grade in either elementary, middle, or high school; a respondent reporting their school served grades crossing school type categories would be included for each school type served.

Source: New Hampshire Survey on Physical Activity and Physical Education in Public Schools, 2015–16

Professional Development

Professional Development Delivery Preferences

Respondents were asked how they prefer to receive professional development opportunities.

New Hampshire Results

Most physical education teachers reported preference of receiving professional development at the NHAHPERD conference (85%), other regional workshops or trainings (73%), or peer learning in-person (58%) (Table 11).

Table 11. Physical Education Teachers: Professional Development Opportunity Preferences — New Hampshire, 2015–16 (N = 207)

Professional development opportunity	n	% ^a
NHAHPERD Conference	176	85
Regional workshop or training	151	73
Staff meeting	36	17
Staff in-service training	76	37
Peer learning in-person	122	59
Peer learning conference call	11	5
Online training	58	28

^aRespondents could select multiple answers, so percentage exceeded 100.

Source: New Hampshire Survey on Physical Activity and Physical Education in Public Schools, 2015–16

Topics for Professional Development Learning Opportunities

Respondents were asked to select topics that they would be interested in learning more about.

New Hampshire Results

The most common topics for future learning were cross-curricular integration (88%), teacher evaluation models (77%), Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (73%), and adapted physical education for students with disabilities (68%) (Table 12).

Table 12. Physical Education Teachers: Topics for Future Learning—New Hampshire, 2015–16 (N = 200)

Topic	n	% ^a
Adapted Physical Education for Students with Disabilities	68	34
Alternatives to Withholding Physical Activity	33	17
Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program	73	37
Cross-Curricular Integration	88	44
Elementary Physical Education Competencies	71	36
Physical Activity Breaks in the Classroom	58	29
Teacher Evaluation Models in Physical Education	77	39
Other	17	9

^aRespondents could select multiple answers, so percentage exceeded 100.

Source: New Hampshire Survey on Physical Activity and Physical Education in Public Schools, 2015–16

Discussion

The *New Hampshire Survey on Physical Activity and Physical Education in Public Schools* provides baseline information on statewide practices in physical education and physical activity. Physical education and physical activity practices differ among elementary, middle, and high schools, which would be expected because of different curricular and developmental needs at different grade levels. For example, recess was more common among respondents serving elementary schools than middle or high schools, yet offering interscholastic sports after school was more common among respondents serving high schools.

Overall, New Hampshire public schools appear to be using physical education time for physical activity by keeping students moving and active during physical education class. However, no New Hampshire public school teaching grades 1–4 meets the SHAPE America–recommended 150 minutes of physical education each week, and less than one in 10 of grade 6–8 meets the SHAPE America–recommended 225 minutes of physical education each week.

Because having limited extra time in schools was a commonly selected barrier to adding more physical education or activity opportunities, identifying other ways to incorporate physical activity in other curricular activities during the school day might be one way to increase physical activity for New Hampshire’s students. Most high schools allow students to use online physical education courses to receive physical education credit, and understanding the quality of the online courses and whether these online courses are appropriate substitutes for active physical education classes might be helpful.

Survey Limitations

The survey had several limitations. First, it was a convenience sample of public school physical education teachers, so responses might not reflect statewide practices. Second, the survey involved self-reported answers, so it is possible that a respondent might not have known about all practices occurring in the school and, therefore, would be underreporting. Finally, the survey focused on practices and perceptions among teachers in public schools, so practices and perceptions among private schools or homeschooling were not captured. However, even with these limitations, this is the most extensive survey of its kind in New Hampshire to date and yields some baseline insight into physical education and physical activity practices in the State.

Next Steps

In the next two years, the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services, Diabetes, Heart Disease, Obesity and School Health Program will work with its partners to:

- Highlight physical education teachers, classroom teachers, and school administrators who have found ways to overcome barriers (such as a lack of time, funding, space, and staffing) in order to add physical education and/or physical activity time for their students before, during, and after the school day.
- Share information with schools on alternatives to withholding physical activity as a punishment.
- Provide training and direct assistance to physical education teachers, classroom teachers, and school administrators wanting to increase physical activity opportunities for students before, during, or after the school day.
- Work with NHAHPERD and the New Hampshire Department of Education to create at least two regional professional development opportunities for physical education teachers in addition to the NHAHPERD Conference. The two opportunities would mainly include peer-to-peer sharing of activities, classroom management skills, student and teacher evaluation, and sharing best practices.
- Promote New Hampshire physical education teachers as the resident physical activity experts within each school.

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Appendix A: New Hampshire School Spotlights

In an effort to demonstrate practices that advance the goals of physical education and physical activity in schools in New Hampshire’s public schools, the School Spotlights section features success stories provided by physical education teachers as a part of their survey responses.

1. New Hampshire School Spotlight: Elementary School Physical Education

Math/PE Integration

Patrick Ard (PE teacher) worked with classroom teachers to create activities that mix basic math facts with games from PE class. This collaboration has led to a combined math/physical education activity for 18 students in the second grade that takes place during a “math block.” The combined activity allows students to learn by playing a game, and students are so engaged that they forget to stress about math! One game that was developed was **Math Line Tag**. The students walk on any of the gym lines and if they are tagged they sit and wait for another student to show them a flash card with a “math fact” on it. When they answer the math fact correctly, they can quickly re-join the game. Some students have even taken a leadership role and begun to help other students with their math facts during the activity. Math Facts has proven to be a very engaging activity that the students just love!

Story submitted by: Patrick Ard, Physical Education Teacher

Contact information: Patrick.ard@timberlane.net

School: Danville Elementary School (grades K–5)

Number of Students: 280

School District: Timberlane Regional School District

2. New Hampshire School Spotlight: Middle School Physical Education

A. Quidditch Literature/PE Unit

Quidditch is a physical education unit that connects literature to physical activity and is offered to all 6th grade physical education classes during the winter months. The Quidditch activity was created using the terms and concepts of the Quidditch game from the Harry Potter book series, which helps the students bring what they are reading to life. Students love the connection between the books and physical education class, and Kathy Birse Siegel has created a variety of challenges and choices within the game that allow all students the opportunity to be successful.

B. Drums Alive

Drums Alive is a research-based program that combines drumming, music, and educational concepts. Drums Alive is designed to be provided to students from kindergarten through middle school as a part of physical education classes, before- or after-school activities, and music education programs. The Drums Alive unit is a part of the 6th and 7th grade physical education curriculum at Portsmouth Middle School, and the 6th grade activities are also tied to the Mindful Movement activities that are done on a school-wide level.

For more information about Drums Alive, visit their website at:

<http://www.drums-alive.com/programs/new-drumtastic-program-for-educators>.

Quidditch/Drums Alive stories submitted by: Kathy Birse-Siegel, Physical Education/Health teacher, K–12
Physical Education Department Head

Contact information: kbirse@portsmouth.k12.nh.us

School: Portsmouth Middle School (grades 6–8)

Number of Students: 550

School District: Portsmouth School District

3. New Hampshire School Spotlight: High School Physical Education

A. Wednesday Workouts

Every Wednesday, PE classes at Coe-Brown take a break from their physical education unit and spend their physical education class time in a simulated fitness club or “boot camp.” Students complete activities that can include an outdoor fitness loop, muscle-strengthening exercises, and fitness stations, and they can participate in a variety of fitness DVDs. Physical education staff play music during the workouts to keep students entertained and energized. In the coming school year, physical education staff are hoping to have students create workouts/stations as a way of including their ideas into the Wednesday Workout activities.

Story submitted by: Sam Struthers, Physical Education Teacher

Contact information: sstruthers@coebrown.org

School: Coe-Brown Northwood Academy (grades 9–12)

Number of Students: 700

School District: Coe-Brown Northwood Academy

B. Freshman Track and Field Unit

Exeter High School provides a track and field unit for freshmen students in September, and again in late April. The freshmen love this unit because it is something new to most of them, and everyone can find an event that they enjoy participating in. Typically students do a track event and a field event each day, and on block scheduling days (extended class time) they complete a modified track meet during physical education class. Students can choose to participate in a wide variety of events that include the high jump, long jump, discus, shot put, javelin, and running relays. Optional events include the hurdles, triple jump, and pole vault.

Story submitted by: Jeff Holmes, Physical Education Teacher, Track and Field Coach

Contact information: jholmes@sau16.org

School: Exeter High School (grades 9–12)

Number of Students: 1,700

School District: Exeter Region Cooperative School District

3. New Hampshire School Spotlight: High School Physical Education (Continued)

C. Yoga

Concord High School provides an optional 90-minute yoga class for close to 200 students per year in grades 10–12. Using breathing and warm-ups with simple yoga stretches, students learn to relax the muscles of the body and improve overall health and well-being. The class has been very popular, and students have enjoyed trying new and non-competitive type of physical activity. Most students report to the physical education staff that they have never had the opportunity to try yoga before it was offered as a physical education class.

D. Rape, Aggression, and Defense (RAD) Self-Defense for Women

Students in grades 10–12 learn ways to protect themselves through assertiveness, awareness, risk reduction, risk recognition, avoidance, and physical defense strategies. The RAD (Rape, Aggression, and Defense) curriculum is followed, and Leslie Barry has completed the certification required in order to provide RAD classes as a part of the physical education program. The RAD classes have been very popular, and students who sign up for the class say that they chose something new to them and something they may never have had the opportunity to take if it wasn't offered as a part of their physical education curriculum.

Yoga and RAD stories submitted by: Leslie Barry, Physical Education/Health Teacher

Contact information: lbarry@sau8.org

School: Concord High School

Number of Students: 1,701

School District: Concord School District

4. New Hampshire Spotlight: Physical Activity Offered Before School

Walking Wednesdays/Fitness Fridays

James Mastricola Elementary School provides a before-school walking/running program for students in grades K–4 each year. During the fall and spring months, students are invited to walk or run in an outdoor area designated by cones. They can begin as soon as they are dropped off at school and continue until they either choose to return to the playground area or the whistle blows to line up and go inside. During the winter the activity is moved into the gym, where two different sets of cones are located. Students that want to walk or have improper footwear can walk around the outer cones and those that want to run stay between the outer and inner sets of cones. Due to limited space in the winter, grades K–2 participate on Wednesdays and Fridays are reserved for grades 3–4. Shawn tracks the students’ mileage and each year students are given a mileage goal (e.g., “Walk across America”). The program has been very well received, and gives siblings/peers of different age groups/abilities the chance to join in an activity they can all do safely together.

Story submitted by: Shawn Croteau, Physical Education Teacher

Contact information: shawn.croteau@sau26.org

School: James Mastricola Elementary School (grades K–4)

Number of Students: 356

School District: Merrimack School District

5. New Hampshire School Spotlight: Including Physical Activity in the Classroom

Manchester School District: Classroom Physical Activity Breaks

Manchester School District Food and Wellness Council co-chair Sue Sheehy has worked with the principals from Manchester School District’s elementary and middle schools to provide training to teachers on how to lead classroom physical activity breaks, as well as resources for teachers on how to implement physical activity breaks in their classrooms. Twenty-five teachers from Hallsville, Weston, and Highland-Goffe’s Falls elementary schools volunteered to attend these trainings, which resulted in more teachers providing physical activity breaks in their classrooms. Thirteen teachers from ten other Manchester elementary and middle schools also volunteered to attend the trainings. Weston Elementary School has devoted one entire classroom space that students can choose to visit for a short physical activity break when they feel they need one.

Story submitted by: Sue Sheehy, Manchester School Food and Wellness Council

Schools: Hallsville Elementary Schools (K-5), Highland-Goffe’s Falls Elementary School (K-5)

Weston Elementary School (K-5)

Number of students: Hallsville (324), Highland-Goffe’s Falls (484), Weston (495)

District: Manchester School District

Contact information: Sue Sheehy at suesheehy@aol.com

Lizabeth MacDonald (Principal, Weston Elementary School) at lmacdonald@mansd.org

Susan Matthews (Principal, Highland-Goffe’s Falls) at smatthews@mansd.org

Bonnie Skogsholm (Principal, Hallsville) at bskogsholm@mansd.org

6. New Hampshire School Spotlight: Recess Activities

A. Buddy Benches

On the playground at South Range Elementary School, “buddy benches” have been added to include students who might be feeling left out and/or unsure what to do, and to help facilitate a playground environment where students have the opportunity to interact and play with different classmates. The idea behind the “buddy benches” is that kids can go and sit on the benches if they don’t have anyone to play with at recess. When a student is sitting on the bench, it’s a signal to the other kids to ask him or her to play.

Besides keeping kids active, the benches can also help children with prosocial behaviors such as inclusion, empathy, sharing, compassion, and conflict resolution. Confidence levels are also enabled for students who ask other students sitting on the bench to play with them and/or join their group of friends. According to Connection for Kids, buddy benches help kids identify a problem and then work together to solve it. The benches have been very well received and have kept kids playing more actively and more happily during recess.

For more information, view the presentation on Buddy Benches at the following link:

https://docs.google.com/a/sau10.org/presentation/d/16teXbkyTJjbVD0I7ucsynKvZhENMCV3FPy_lqRKQnQM/edit?usp=sharing

Story submitted by: Jake Filip, Physical Education Teacher and Susan Linehan, RN, BSN

Contact information: jfilip@sau10.org, slinehan@sau10.org

School: South Range Elementary School (K-5)

Number of Students: 337

School District: Derry Cooperative School District

B. Recess Mileage Club

First grade students are given the option at recess to participate in the “mileage club.” Parent volunteers staff a square path that is 1/8th of a mile long. Each time a student completes a lap of the course, one of the parent volunteers gives them a craft stick. When they are all done, they show the sticks to the parent volunteer and count them together. The parent volunteers record daily progress on clipboards that they have at recess and once every week or so this progress is recorded in the gym. Once each student reaches 40 sticks, they are given a token to add to a chain. The tokens are awarded during physical education classes to promote the program and to recognize the students who have achieved their token.

Story submitted by: Dee Blanchard, Physical Education Teacher

Contact information: dblanchard@milfordk12.org

School: Jacques Memorial Elementary School (1st Grade)

Number of Students: 170

School District: Milford School District

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End