



# Physical Education – Growing Evidence on Increased Academic Performance

## TARGETED GRADUATION INDICATORS

ATTENDANCE  
ACADEMIC SUCCESS  
ENGAGEMENT



### OREGON EXAMPLE

As part of an effort to increase the number of physical education minutes offered to K–5 students, the Medford School District worked with PE instructors to institute an all-school morning walk/movement activity that aligns with what students were learning in their PE classes. As part of their Physical Education Expansion K-8 grant (PEEK 8) Medford tracked the results. Outcomes were positive showing increased attendance, decreased behavioral problems, a higher sense of satisfaction and greater connection to school reported by both students and teachers. Superintendent Bruce Shumate says, “We have seen dramatic key results after implementing and expanding our physical education program.”

### WHY WAS THE STRATEGY CHOSEN?

Medford School District wanted to raise their academic achievement and lower their behavioral problems among their elementary students so they chose to concentrate efforts on increasing staff and student physical activity throughout the school day.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE STRATEGY

The link between health, attendance and academic success is intuitive: healthy students attend school more focused and with more successful outcomes. The goal of physical education (PE) is “to develop physically literate individuals who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity” (SHAPE America – Society of Health and Physical Educators, 2014, p. 11). Incorporating regular physical education classes and physical activity throughout the school day is a win-win for students, teachers and communities.

Many children in the U.S. do not engage in enough physical activity to build a foundation for healthy lifestyles. Physical Education is the foundation of a comprehensive school effort to increase physical activity levels of students. One best practice in Physical Education is to develop and incorporate lessons to keep all students active for at least half of all instructional time.

For example:

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend at least 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity per day (National Physical Activity Plan Alliance, 2016). Yet about three-quarters of U.S. children and youths ages 6-19 do not meet this standard. Furthermore, about 18 percent of these young people are overweight; a 260 percent increase since 1980 (Ogden & Carroll, 2010).
- The Institute of Medicine’s 2012 report on obesity calls for schools to become the national focal point for prevention. Additionally, the authors call on all local education agencies and schools to adopt requirements for high-quality physical education, focus on skill development, and include opportunities for daily physical activity (Glickman, D., Parker, L., Sim, L.J., Del Valle Cook, H., and Miller, E.A. 2012).



## EVIDENCE THE STRATEGY IS EFFECTIVE

Among 5,316 students in grades K through 5, the frequency and duration of physical education class were positively associated with standardized test performance. (Carlson SA, Fulton JE, Lee SM, et al. Phys. Ed. and academic achievement in elementary school. Am J Public Health. 2008)

Regular participation in physical activity and higher levels of physical fitness have been linked to improved academic performance and brain functions (Castelli, et al, 2015).

Long-term studies have demonstrated that increases in physical activity, resulting from greater time spent in physical education, are related to improved academic performance (Castelli, et al, 2015).

To achieve these outcomes on school measures, sustained physical education programs are an important part of a comprehensive school effort to increase the physical activity levels of students that lead to academic success (Rink, Hall & Williams, 2010). Physical education teachers are responsible for providing students with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to lead physically active lifestyles.

## FUNDING OF THE STRATEGY

Medford SD applied for and received a PEEK 8 Physical Education grant from the Oregon Department of Education for teacher hires and professional development to support this strategy. Medford's local school board developed a sustainability plan for each school, and the district applied for local grants to supplement these initial funding sources.

## THE STRATEGY IS WORKING IN OREGON

- Oregon ESSA Plan addresses the need for a well-rounded education that includes Physical Education.
- Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP) is a National Framework for schools to use all opportunities for students to be physically active, meet the nationally recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day and develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to be physically active for a lifetime.
- PE is a required academic content course in all Oregon schools K–12.
- Wellness Policies that address Physical Education and physical activity are federally required for all schools that participate in the National School Breakfast and Lunch programs.
- Policies are being changed to require recess for ALL students, and not allowing withholding recess as punishment are being adopted by many school districts.
- Districts are embracing the research and providing regular classroom “brain boosters”(physical activity) to help students improve retention and memory
- Before and After School programs are incorporating physical activity as an integral part of their programs.

## LINKS TO RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

### ASCD

<http://www.ascd.org/programs/The-Whole-Child/Healthy.aspx>

### CDC and SHAPE AMERICA Step-by-step Guide for CSPAP:

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/cspap.htm>

Castelli, DM, et al. **Active Education: Growing Evidence on Physical Activity and Academic Performance.** San Diego, CA: Active Living Research; 2015. Available at [www.activelivingresearch.org](http://www.activelivingresearch.org).

[http://activelivingresearch.org/sites/default/files/ALR\\_Brief\\_ActiveEducation\\_Jan2015.pdf](http://activelivingresearch.org/sites/default/files/ALR_Brief_ActiveEducation_Jan2015.pdf)

Glickman D, Parker L, Sim LJ, Del Valle Cook H, Miller EA, editors, 2012, **Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention: Solving the Weight of the Nation** National Academies Press (US) Retrieved from

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK201141>

### State Library Graduation Improvement Resources:

[http://libguides.osl.state.or.us/grad\\_outcomes](http://libguides.osl.state.or.us/grad_outcomes)

## CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS

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