

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Amount of Required Physical Education: The District of Columbia (referred to as the state throughout) requires 150 minutes of physical education per week for elementary school students and 225 minutes per week for middle school/junior high students.⁵⁹ High schools are required to provide physical education courses, and students must earn physical education credit for graduation. Annual reporting is required regarding compliance with physical education requirements and student achievement of physical education standards.⁶⁰ Data are self-reported in the Annual School Health Profile.

Physical Education Equipment and Facilities: The state does not annually assess the availability of appropriate equipment and adequate facilities for students to engage in required physical education instruction.

High School Graduation Requirements: The state requires students to earn 1.5 credits of physical education/health to graduate.⁶¹

Substitutions: The state does not permit schools or school districts to apply for a waiver from physical education requirements.

Exemptions/Waivers: The state does not permit schools or school districts to apply for a waiver from physical education requirements. Students may not apply for an exemption from required physical education.

Physical Activity: The state does not require elementary schools to provide daily recess, but it states a goal to engage children in physical activity for at least 60 minutes per day. Promoting active recess is one way to fulfill the daily 60 minutes. Classroom physical activity breaks are not required.⁶² There is no minimum weekly requirement for physical activity for middle school/junior high or high school students. The state does prohibit the use of withholding physical activity, including recess, as punishment for disciplinary reasons. It also prohibits the use of physical activity as punishment for inappropriate behavior.⁶³

Local School Wellness Policy: The state requires schools to provide their local school wellness policies to the state education agency and to post the policy online for the public. Implementation is monitored by site visits.

State Standards: The DC Board of Education has adopted standards for physical education, with which all schools must comply.⁶⁴ [The Physical Education Standards](#) were last revised in 2008 and were under revision in 2015 to align with national standards.

Areas addressed in the standards include:

National Standard 1: Competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns

National Standard 2: Knowledge of concepts, principles, strategies and tactics related to movement and performance

National Standard 3: Knowledge and skills to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness

National Standard 4: Responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others

National Standard 5: Value of physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and/or social interaction

State Curriculum: The state does not require the use of specific curricula for elementary, middle school/junior high or high school physical education. The state has distributed written physical education curriculum including a chart of its scope and sequence, goals and objectives of physical education programs, student learning benchmarks, and lesson plans or learning activities for physical education to schools or school districts. It has also promoted the use of the Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (PECAT) by conducting a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)-sponsored professional development session and shares information through state communication networks.

State Funding for Physical Education Programs: General education funding is available for the state's physical education programs. Additional funding for physical education programs may be secured through a competitive grant process. Grant funds that are awarded may be used for equipment, facilities, programming, and technical assistance.

Class Size: The state's required student-teacher ratio for academic classes is applicable to physical education.

Grade Point Average (GPA): Physical education grades are required to be included in a student's GPA.

Online Physical Education Courses: The state does not allow required physical education credits to be earned through online physical education courses.

Student Assessment Requirements: The state requires student assessment using the District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System. This is administered in grades 5, 8, and the high school year when health is taken. Questions related to physical education standards are included. Aggregate data for the school are sent to the state department of education and are used to inform wellness policies.

Fitness Assessment: The state does not require student physical fitness assessment nor the use of a particular fitness assessment protocol, but recommends FITNESSGRAM®. Available data are shared with the state department of education.

Body Mass Index (BMI): The state requires schools to collect students' height and weight. Data are collected through the Universal Health Certificate and are kept at the Local Education Agency. The state does not provide school districts or schools with model policies, policy guidance, or other materials to inform school or district policy on this data collection.

Certification/Licensure of Physical Education Teachers:

The state requires physical education teachers to be certified/licensed and endorsed to teach physical education⁶⁵ at the elementary, middle school/junior high and high school levels. It requires public school (but not charter school) physical education teachers to pass a physical education certificate/licensure exam (Praxis) before they are endorsed to teach physical education. Elementary classroom teachers (generalists) may not teach required elementary school physical education classes.

Professional Development of Physical Education

Teachers: Professional development is not required in order to maintain/renew one's physical education teacher certification or licensure. The state provides professional development events or funding specifically for physical education teachers.

Teacher Evaluation: The state has a teacher evaluation system for all teachers.

National Board Certification: The state supports National Board Certification by encouraging physical education teachers to register and by providing or facilitating mentoring for teachers going through the process.

District Physical Education Coordinator: The state does not require each school district to have a licensed physical educator serving as a physical education coordinator. It does have designated staffing (<1.0 FTE) to oversee implementation, compliance, technical assistance and monitoring of physical education programs in school districts and schools.

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59 D.C. Code § 38-824.02 (2015).

60 D.C. Code § 38-824.05 (2015).

61 D.C. Mun. Regs. tit. 5, § 2203 (2015).

62 D.C. Code § 38-824.01 (2015); Code § 38-824.02 (2015).

63 D.C. Code § 38-824.03 (2015).

64 D.C. Code § 38-824.02 (2015).

65 D.C. Mun. Regs. tit. 5, § 1641 (2015).