

UTAH

Amount of Required Physical Education: The state survey reported that the state does not require elementary schools to provide students with physical education. State law specifies physical education as a “core subject” for grades K-6,³²² but it is not required. The state requires middle school/junior high and high schools to provide physical education and requires students to take physical education in grades 7-11, but does not have a requirement for the number of minutes per day or week. Students in grades 7-8 must earn 0.5 credit in physical education each year.³²³ High school students also must earn physical education credit for graduation. The state does not have a method for enforcing physical education requirements except that high school students will fail to graduate without required physical education credit.

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 0.5 credit in health education and 1.5 credits in physical education for graduation. The following courses can contribute to this requirement and provide 0.5 credit each: Health, Participation Skills, Fitness for Life, Individualized Lifetime Activities, or (with school approval) team sport/athletic participation.³²⁴

Substitutions: The state permits school districts or schools to allow students to substitute interscholastic sports for required physical education credit.

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

Physical Activity: The state does not require elementary schools to provide daily recess, and it does not require a minimum weekly/daily amount of physical activity for elementary, middle school/junior high, or high school students. Classroom physical activity breaks are not required. The state does not prohibit the use of withholding physical activity, including recess, as punishment for disciplinary reasons, nor does it prohibit using physical activity as punishment for inappropriate behavior.

Local School Wellness Policy: The state requires schools or school districts to provide their local school wellness policy to the state education agency. The Child Nutrition Program in the state’s office of education works directly with school districts in implementing their wellness policies.

State Standards: The state has adopted standards for physical education, with which all school districts are required to comply. The state standards were last revised in 2016 and at the time of this report had been released for public comment. The State Board of Education establishes a timeline for review of the core standards in the state’s public schools, which includes physical education.³²⁵

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 requires school districts and schools to use a standards-based curriculum developed by the department of education. Local education agency boards adopt local curriculum and design programs to help students master the General Core.³²⁶ Curriculum must be reviewed and/or revised every 10 years or as needed. In the past year the state has distributed the following to schools and school districts: goals and objectives of physical education programs, student learning benchmarks, a chart describing scope and sequence for physical education, and Beginning a Building Capacity with new core. It has not promoted use of the Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (PECAT) to schools or school districts.

State Funding for Physical Education Programs: General education funding is available for the state’s physical education

programs in school districts and schools. No additional funding is available for physical education programs.

Class Size: The state recommends a student-teacher ratio for physical education.

Grade Point Average (GPA): The state requires physical education grades to be included in a student's GPA.

Online Physical Education Courses: The state allows students to earn required physical education credits through online physical education courses.

Student Assessment Requirements: The state has a Student Learning Objectives policy regarding student assessment in physical education. Local education agencies ensure that students master the core standards at all levels.³²⁷

Fitness Assessment: The state does not require student physical fitness assessment.

Body Mass Index (BMI): The state does not require schools to collect student BMI or height and weight.

Certification/Licensure of Physical Education Teachers: The state requires physical education teachers to be state certified/licensed and endorsed to teach physical education at the elementary,³²⁸ middle school/junior high, and high school levels, and to teach online physical education courses. It also requires physical education teachers to pass a physical education certificate/licensure exam (PRAXIS) before they are endorsed to teach physical education. Elementary classroom teachers (generalists) are allowed to teach required elementary school physical education classes.

Professional Development of Physical Education

Teachers: Professional development is required in order to maintain/renew one's physical education teacher certification or licensure, but this professional development does not have to be on physical education topics. 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: N/A

District Physical Education Coordinator: The state requires each school district to have a licensed physical educator serving as a physical education coordinator. It has designated staffing (<1.0 FTE) to oversee implementation, compliance, technical assistance, or monitoring of physical education programs in school districts and schools.

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322 Utah Admin. Code r. 277-700-(1-7) (2015).

323 Utah Admin. Code r. 277-700-(1-7) (2015).

324 Utah Admin. Code r. 277-700-6 (2015).

325 Utah Code Ann. § 53A-1-402.8 (2015).

326 Utah Admin. Code r. 277-700-1 (2015).

327 Utah Admin. Code r. 277-700-1 (2015); Utah Admin. Code r. 277-700-7 (2015).

328 Utah Admin. Code r. 277-520-4 (2015).