Mississippi

Amount of Required Physical Education:
Mississippi mandates 150 minutes of activity-based instruction per week for K-8. At least 50 of those minutes must be physical education class. The state also mandates at least 45 minutes per week of health education in grades K-8.

High School Graduation Requirements: The state requires students to earn 0.5 physical education credits for graduation.

Substitutions: The state permits school districts or schools to allow students to substitute interscholastic sports, Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC), marching band, and cheerleading for their required physical education credit.

Exemptions/Waivers: Only physicians can grant waivers or exemptions.

Physical Activity: The state requires elementary schools to provide daily recess, but does not require a minimum amount of time required for recess. The state also requires a minimum weekly amount of 101-150 minutes of physical activity time for elementary and middle school/junior high school students, but does not require a minimum weekly amount of physical activity for high school students. Classroom physical activity breaks are required in elementary and middle/junior high schools, but Mississippi does not prohibit the use of withholding physical activity, including recess, as punishment for disciplinary reasons, nor prohibit using physical activity as punishment for inappropriate behavior. Mississippi does support Safe Routes to School programs.

Local School Wellness Policy: The state requires schools or school districts to provide their local school wellness policy to the state education agency and monitors the implementation of local school wellness policies every five years.

State Standards: All instruction in physical education, health education, and physical activity must be based on the most current state standards provided by the State Department of Education. The Mississippi Physical Education Framework was last revised in 2006.

State Curriculum: The 2006 Mississippi Physical Education Framework provides a planned, sequential K-12 framework that provides cognitive content and learning experiences in a variety of activity areas such as basic movement skills; physical fitness; rhythms and dance; games; team, dual, and individual sports; tumbling and gymnastics; and aquatics. The 2006 Physical Education Framework, Physical Education Evaluation Tool, Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (PECAT), Health in Action, and You’ve Gotta Move are the resources available on the state department of education’s website.

Class Size: The state does not have a mandate for a teacher-to-student ratio, but recommends a ratio of 35:1 for schools that are K-5 or K-6 and a ratio of 40:1 for grades 6 through 12. With a licensed teacher and a teacher assistant, it is recommended the maximum class size for physical education shall not exceed 70 students for grades K-6. If there is a licensed teacher and a teacher assistant it is recommended the maximum class size should not exceed 80 students for grades 7-12.

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 in physical education in grades 5 and in high school the year the students receive their 0.5 Carnegie unit (credit). Results are not required to be sent to the state as aggregate data for the school, and individ-
ual student’s results are not required to be sent to their parent or guardian. There are suggested assessments designed to assess the objectives and competencies in the Mississippi Physical Education Framework and some environment assessment tools to support quality physical education programs in Mississippi Schools.

**Grade Point Average (GPA):** The state does require physical education grades to be included in a student’s GPA.

**Fitness Assessment:** The state does not require the use of a particular fitness assessment protocol but does require fitness assessment in the grade which the student receives credit.

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

**Certification/Licensure of Physical Education Teachers:** The state requires certification or licensure of physical education teachers at the high school level only. Elementary classroom teachers (generalists) may teach required elementary school PE classes. A score of 138 on the PRAXIS exam is required for certification.

**Professional Development of Physical Education Teachers:** The state does require teachers to attend professional development in order to obtain continuing education credit to renew their teaching license outlined in the Licensure Guidelines from the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Licensure, and Development. The content of professional development is left to the teachers/districts.

**Temporary Certification:** Temporary or emergency certification may be granted to teach at the elementary or middle school/junior high school level to anyone holding a bachelor’s degree in any subject area. This certification is valid for one year.

**National Board Certification:** The state actively encourages physical education teachers to become certified through the National Board Certification process.

**District Physical Education Coordinator:** The state does not require each school district to have a licensed physical educator serving as a PE coordinator.

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