

## ARKANSAS



**Amount of Required Physical Education:** The state requires 40 minutes per week of physical education in K-8. An additional 90 minutes per week of physical activity is also required for elementary grades K-4, K-5, or K-6 depending on how the grades are divided between elementary and middle schools. There are no specific time requirements for high school students, but students must earn physical education credit for graduation.<sup>8</sup> The state department of education is to annually monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the physical education standards,<sup>9</sup> and is authorized to review documentation, request information, or require additional reports from schools or school personnel to enforce compliance with the rule.<sup>10</sup> The state uses periodic accreditation reviews to enforce the requirements and issues a citation for noncompliance.

**Physical Education Equipment and Facilities:** The state survey reported that there was no annual assessment of equipment and facilities related to physical education. The state's Public School Academic Equipment Manual has uniform standards for equipment determined to be necessary for adequate education, including physical education. The standards are to establish a method for keeping an inventory of technology systems, instructional materials, and related equipment.<sup>11</sup>

**High School Graduation Requirements:** The state requires students to earn 0.5 credit in physical education for graduation.<sup>12</sup>

**Substitutions:** The state survey reported that substitute activities were not permitted. Arkansas Code specifies that students in grades 9-12 who complete an organized physical activity class are eligible to earn 0.5 credit in physical education.<sup>13</sup> A student who completes two semesters of a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program shall receive 0.5 credit in physical education.<sup>14</sup> These approved physical activities must meet the same framework standards as traditional physical education class.

**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 and physical activity requirements by seeking an exemption from the local school board of directors based on documentation of medical reasons or religious beliefs that contraindicate participation. If an exemption is granted, the student will be encouraged to take alternative, appropriate instruction in health education or other instruction in lifestyle modification.<sup>15</sup>

**Physical Activity:** The state does not require elementary schools to provide daily recess; it does require a minimum of 90 minutes per week of physical activity for K-6 students in addition to the 60 minutes required for physical education. This time may include recess, additional physical activity instruction, or intramural sports.<sup>16</sup> The state does not require a minimum weekly amount of physical activity for 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. The state does prohibit the use of physical activity as punishment.

**Local School Wellness Policy:** The state does not require schools or school districts to provide their local school wellness policy to the state education agency nor to post it online for the public. It does not monitor the implementation of local school wellness policies.

**State Standards:** The state has adopted standards for physical education, with which all school districts are required to comply.<sup>17</sup> If physical education course content standards and curriculum frameworks are not met, the school district or open-enrollment charter school may be cited or placed in probationary violation of the Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts.<sup>18</sup> [The Arkansas Physical Education and Health Standards](#) are revised every six years and were last revised in 2011.

**Areas addressed in the state 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

Every school district is required to convene a school nutrition and physical activity advisory committee that is tasked with a number of

responsibilities including to assist with development of local policies for the implementation and enforcement of physical activity standards and requirements. School districts shall also require that physical activity goals are incorporated into the annual school planning and reporting process.<sup>19</sup>

**State Curriculum:** The state does not require schools or school districts to use a specific curricula for elementary, middle school/junior high and high school physical education. It has not promoted physical education curriculum tools or use of the Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (PECAT) to school districts or schools.

**State Funding for Physical Education Programs:** N/A

**Class Size:** The states required student-teacher ratio for physical education classes in grades K-6 of 30:1.<sup>20</sup>

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

**Online Physical Education Courses:** The state does not allow students to earn required physical education credits through online physical education courses.

**Student Assessment Requirements:** The state does not require student assessment related to the state physical education standards, but any available results are sent to individual students' parents/guardians.

**Fitness Assessment:** The state requires students to participate in a nationally recognized fitness assessment.

**Body Mass Index (BMI):** The state does not require schools to collect student Body Mass Index (BMI).

**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, middle school/junior high, and high school levels. This includes passage of a physical education certificate/licensure exam in order to be endorsed to teach.

For grades K-6, at least one of the adults directly supervising the

physical education classes must be a licensed physical education teacher or licensed elementary teacher. For grades 7-12, physical education instruction must be provided by a licensed physical education teacher with a license that corresponds to the grade levels being taught.<sup>21</sup>

**Professional Development of Physical Education Teachers:**

Professional development is required in order to maintain/renew one's physical education teacher certification or licensure, and this professional development must be on physical education topics. The state does not provide professional development events or funding specifically for physical education teachers.

Every school district is to convene a school nutrition and physical activity committee that is tasked with a number of responsibilities including integrating physical activity into the overall curriculum; ensuring that students engage in healthful levels of vigorous physical activity; ensuring that professional development for staff includes physical activity issues; improving the quality of physical education curricula and increasing training of physical education teachers.<sup>22</sup>

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

**National Board Certification:** N/A

**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 not have designated staffing to oversee implementation, compliance, technical assistance or monitoring of physical education programs in school districts and schools.

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8 Act 1079 amendment to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-16-132 (2015). Physical education.  
9 Ark. Code Ann. § 20-7-135 (2015). Nutrition and physical activity standards – Implementation.  
10 005.19.11-5.00  
11 Ark. Code Ann. § 6-21-810 (2015).  
12 Ark. Code Ann. § 6-16-132 (2015). Physical education.  
13 Ark. Code Ann. § 6-16-137 (2015).  
14 Ark. Code Ann. § 6-16-141 (2015).  
15 Ark. Code Ann. § 6-16-132 (2015): Physical education.

16 Ark. Code Ann. § 6-16-132 (2015). Physical education.  
17 Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-202 (2015); Ark. Admin. Code R. 005.15.15-7.0 (2015)  
18 Ark. Admin. Code R. 005.19.11-6.00 (2015).  
19 Ark. Code Ann. § 20-7-135 (2015). Nutrition and physical activity standards – Implementation.  
20 Ark. Admin. Code R. 005.15.15-7.0 (2015).  
21 Ark. Admin. Code R. 005.15.15-7.0 (2015).  
22 Ark. Code Ann. § 20-7-135 (2015).