

## CALIFORNIA



**Amount of Required Physical Education:** The state requires students to take physical education for at least 200 minutes every 10 school days in grades 1-6<sup>23</sup> and at least 400 minutes every 10 school days in grades 7-12.<sup>24</sup> School districts are to report their compliance to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Allegations of noncompliance may be filed with a school district or county superintendent of schools.<sup>25</sup>

**Physical Education Equipment and Facilities:** State law stipulates that necessary supplies and equipment of sufficient quantity and quality are to be provided to allow each student's active participation throughout a class period (physical education is not specifically included or excluded in this language).<sup>26</sup> 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 two (one-year each) courses in physical education<sup>27</sup> for a total of 2.0 physical education credits for graduation.

**Substitutions:** Substitutions for physical education requirements are at the discretion of local school districts. Substitutions may be permitted for interscholastic sports, community sports, Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp, marching band, and cheerleading.

**Exemptions/Waivers:** The state does not permit schools or school districts to apply for a waiver from the state physical education requirements. Students may apply for an exemption from participation in the physical education class time or required credit. The governing board of a school district of the county superintendent of schools may grant an exemption for medical reasons or half-time enrollment status. A two-year exemption may be granted during grades 10-12 upon meeting at least 5 of the 6 standards of the physical performance test administered in grade 9. Exempted students will be offered elective physical education courses of at least 400 minutes/10 school days.<sup>28</sup>

**Physical Activity:** The state encourages but does not require elementary schools to provide daily recess.<sup>29</sup> The state does not have a minimum weekly amount of physical activity time for students at any grade level. However, physical activity must be addressed in each school district's local school wellness plan. Classroom physical activity breaks are not required. The state prohibits the use of withholding physical activity, including recess,

as punishment for disciplinary reasons, and it also prohibits using physical activity as punishment for inappropriate behavior.

**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. The state does not monitor the implementation of local school wellness policies.

**State Standards:** The state has adopted standards for physical education, though school districts are not required to comply. [The Physical Education Model Content Standards for California Public Schools](#) were last revised in January 2005.

**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

High school physical education programs are to provide instruction in a developmental sequence and include activities of a vigorous nature adapted to individual capacities and designed to permit maximum individual development.<sup>30</sup>

**State Curriculum:** The state does not require the use of specific curricula for elementary, middle or junior high school physical education. It does require that an elementary physical education specialist be employed to develop model physical education curriculum standards for grades 1-8.<sup>31</sup> The state has distributed 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 presentations at state conferences and meetings, sharing information through state communication networks, and conducting trainings at districts throughout the state.

**State Funding for Physical Education Programs:** A number of funding methods are provided for the state's physical education programs in school districts and schools. Additional funding for physical education programs may be secured through grants. These funds may be used for staff, technical assistance, professional development, facilities upgrades, or equipment purchases.

**Class Size:** The state does not have a required student-teacher ratio for classes, but the state criteria for physical education program states that high school physical education class size is to be consistent with the requirements of good instruction and safety.<sup>32</sup>

**Grade Point Average (GPA):** The state does not require 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 requires student assessment in physical education according to the state standards in grades 9 and 10. Assessment is required in eight content areas: 1) Effects of physical activity upon dynamic health, 2) Mechanics of body movement, 3) Aquatics, 4) Gymnastics and tumbling, 5) Individual and dual sports, 6) Rhythms and dance, 7) Team sports, and 8) Combatives.

**Fitness Assessment:** The state requires school districts/schools to assess students' physical fitness levels in grades 5, 7, and 9 using FITNESSGRAM®.<sup>33</sup> Students with disabilities or physical limitations will be given as much of the test as their condition permits. Data are shared at the school level (e.g. to students, parents, principal), at the school district level, and with the state department of education.<sup>34</sup>

**Body Mass Index (BMI):** The state requires schools to collect BMI or students' height and weight in grades 5, 7, 9, and 11. The state provides model policies, policy guidance, or other materials to inform school or district policy on this data collection. Aggregate data for the school and school district are sent to the state department of education; aggregate school district data are shared publicly. Individual student results are sent to parents.

23 Cal. Edu. Code § 51210 (2016).

24 Cal. Edu. Code § 51220 and 51222 (2016).

25 Cal. Edu. Code § 51210.1 (2015); Cal. Edu. Code § 51223 (2016).

26 Cal. Edu. Code § 38118 (2016); Cal. Code Regs. tit. 5, § 10060 (2016).

27 Cal. Edu. Code § 51225.3 (2015).

28 Cal. Edu. Code § 51241 (2016).

29 Cal. Edu. Code § 33350 (2015).

### **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. It does not require physical education teachers to pass a physical education certificate/licensure exam before they are endorsed to teach physical education. Elementary classroom teachers (generalists) may 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 license. The state does require certified/licensed physical education teachers to complete professional development on physical education topics, and provides professional development events or funding specifically for physical education teachers.

**Teacher Evaluation:** The state does not have a teacher evaluation system.

**National Board Certification:** The state does not actively promote or encourage teachers to register for the National Board Certification process, nor does it provide mentoring or funding support, or any type of monetary compensation, for physical education 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.<sup>35</sup>

### **Contact Person:**

Mike Lee  
Education Programs Consultant  
California Department of Education  
1430 "N" Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916.323.5798  
Mikelee36@gmail.com

30 Cal. Code Regs. tit. 5, § 10060 (2016).

31 Cal. Edu. Code § 51206 (2016).

32 Cal. Code Regs. tit. 5, § 10060 (2016).

33 Cal. Code Regs. tit. 5, § 1041 (2016).

34 Cal. Edu. Code § 60800 (2016).

35 Cal. Edu. Code § 33352 (2016).