



The Ohio Association for Health,  
Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance

## Guidance for Quality Health Education and Physical Education in Ohio Schools

Schools and school districts are faced with extraordinary circumstances due to the Coronavirus pandemic. We recognize the financial and logistical impacts the pandemic has on our schools with difficult decisions and challenges ahead. As we consider the future, we reaffirm the importance of healthy students who are ready to learn. Our purpose is to provide a clear summary of the Ohio Revised Code, policy, and practices so boards of education, school administrators, and teachers can make decisions that comply with Ohio laws and best practices to ensure the health and well-being of all students.

Ohio's children, families, schools and communities have been significantly impacted by the pandemic. The clear connection between education and health has been reinforced and highlighted as the key to our future. At the intersection of education and health are schools and their efforts to promote a lifetime of health, wellness, physical activity and student success. Healthy students who are more focused on learning, attend school regularly and are prepared for success<sup>1,2</sup>. The [Ohio Department of Education's Strategic Plan "Each Child, Our Future,"](#) emphasizes a [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child \(WSCC\)](#) approach. A WSCC approach incorporates additional programs and opportunities to enhance health and well-being including health education; physical education and physical activity; safe and healthy school environment; prevention programming; social-emotional learning; health services; health-related programs for families and staff; and the establishment of strong family and community connections. Our shared focus on the whole child seeks that every child is healthy, safe, supported, challenged, and engaged. Health Education and Physical Education are key components of the WSCC approach with health and physical educators playing a key role in supporting the whole child.

### Benefits of Health Education

Health education encompasses planned learning experiences that provide the opportunity for students to acquire functional knowledge and skills needed to adopt and maintain healthy behaviors. Health education incorporates a variety of physical, social, emotional, and other components focused on reducing health risk behaviors and promoting healthy decision-making. Health education curricula emphasize a skills-based approach to help students practice and advocate for the health needs of themselves, their families, and their communities. Students must have opportunities within a daily health education class in Grades K–12 led by a licensed health education teacher to gain the content knowledge and practice the skills that will lead to the adoption and maintenance of health-promoting behaviors.

## **Benefits of Physical Education**

Physical Education is an academic subject characterized by a planned, sequential K–12 curriculum, or course of study, that is based on the national standards for physical education.<sup>3</sup> Physical education develops motor skills; knowledge about movement, sport, fitness, and physical activity; the ability to construct physical activity and fitness plans; and demonstrate personal and social responsibility. Schools providing quality physical education can equip students with the skills, ability, and confidence to be physically active for a lifetime<sup>3</sup>. Maintaining or increasing physical education time does not negatively affect students' academic achievement. There are many benefits of physical education in schools including increased physical activity levels; improved academic performance; enhanced positive student behaviors; and increased time on-task in the classroom.

Physical Educators also support a physical activity before, during and after school through a Comprehensive Physical Activity Program (CSPAP). The CSPAP includes physical education, before/after school physical activity, staff involvement, family/community engagement, and classroom physical activity.

## **Review of Requirements, Ohio Law, and Policy that Support Quality Health and Physical Education**

The purpose of this document is to review the requirements and guidelines for health and physical education in Ohio. If you have questions or need additional support please contact OAHPERD ([oahperd@assnoffices.com](mailto:oahperd@assnoffices.com)).

### **Is Health Education and Physical Education Required?**

Health Education and Physical Education has been identified as part of the Prescribed Curriculum. In the following sections we will present the requirements prescribed in Ohio Revised Code and Ohio Administrative Code. Ohio Revised Code includes the general laws of the state of Ohio including requirements for the Prescribed Curriculum and Graduation. Ohio Administrative Code provides operating standards for Ohio's schools to assure students are receiving a high quality education such as curriculum and opportunities to learn.

### **Prescribed Curriculum**

See [Ohio Department of Education website](#) for the Prescribed Curriculum.

## Ohio Revised Code

The general laws of the state of Ohio dealing with individual topics of law including education. Section [3313.60](#) defines the prescribed curriculum:

“The board of education of each city, exempted village, and local school district and the board of each cooperative education school district established, pursuant to section [3311.521](#) of the Revised Code, shall prescribe a curriculum for all schools under its control. Except as provided in division (E) of this section, in any such curriculum there shall be included the study of the following subjects:”

- (1) The language arts, including reading, writing, spelling, oral and written English, and literature;
- (2) Geography, the history of the United States and of Ohio, and national, state, and local government in the United States, including a balanced presentation of the relevant contributions to society of men and women of African, Mexican, Puerto Rican, and American Indian descent as well as other ethnic and racial groups in Ohio and the United States;
- (3) Mathematics;
- (4) Natural science, including instruction in the conservation of natural resources;

### **(5) Health education, which shall include instruction in:**

- (a) The nutritive value of foods, including natural and organically produced foods, the relation of nutrition to health, and the use and effects of food additives;**
- (b) The harmful effects of and legal restrictions against the use of drugs of abuse, alcoholic beverages, and tobacco;**
- (c) Venereal disease education, except that upon written request of the student's parent or guardian, a student shall be excused from taking instruction in venereal disease education;**
- (d) In grades kindergarten through six, instruction in personal safety and assault prevention, except that upon written request of the student's parent or guardian, a student shall be excused from taking instruction in personal safety and assault prevention;**
- (e) In grades seven through twelve, age-appropriate instruction in dating violence prevention education, which shall include instruction in recognizing dating violence warning signs and characteristics of healthy relationships.**

In order to assist school districts in developing a dating violence prevention education curriculum, the department of education shall provide on its web site links to free curricula addressing dating violence prevention.

If the parent or legal guardian of a student less than eighteen years of age submits to the principal of the student's school a written request to examine the dating violence prevention instruction materials used at that school, the principal, within a reasonable period of time after the request is made, shall allow the parent or guardian to examine those materials at that school.

- (f) Prescription opioid abuse prevention, with an emphasis on the prescription drug epidemic and the connection between prescription opioid abuse and addiction to other drugs, such as heroin.**
- (g) The process of making an anatomical gift under Chapter 2108. of the Revised Code, with an emphasis on the life-saving and life-enhancing effects of organ and tissue donation.**

### **(6) Physical education;**

- (7) The fine arts, including music;
- (8) First aid, including a training program in cardiopulmonary resuscitation, which shall comply with section 3313.6021 of the Revised Code when offered in any of grades nine through twelve, safety, and fire prevention. However, upon written request of the student's parent or guardian, a student shall be excused from taking instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

(B) Except as provided in division (E) of this section, every school or school district shall include in the requirements for promotion from the eighth grade to the ninth grade one year's course of study of American history. A board may waive this requirement for academically accelerated students who, in accordance with procedures adopted by the board, are able to demonstrate mastery of essential concepts and skills of the eighth grade American history course of study.

(C) As specified in divisions (B)(6) and (C)(6) of section [3313.603](#) of the Revised Code, except as provided in division (E) of this section, every high school shall include in the requirements for graduation from any curriculum one-half unit each of American history and government.

(D) Except as provided in division (E) of this section, basic instruction or demonstrated mastery in geography, United States history, the government of the United States, the government of the state of Ohio, local government in Ohio, the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Constitution of the state of Ohio shall be required before pupils may participate in courses involving the study of social problems, economics, foreign affairs, United Nations, world government, socialism, and communism.

**(E) For each cooperative education school district established pursuant to section [3311.521](#) of the Revised Code and each city, exempted village, and local school district that has territory within such a cooperative district, the curriculum adopted pursuant to divisions (A) to (D) of this section shall only include the study of the subjects that apply to the grades operated by each such school district. The curriculums for such schools, when combined, shall provide to each student of these districts all of the subjects required under divisions (A) to (D) of this section.**

**(F) The board of education of any cooperative education school district established pursuant to divisions (A) to (C) of section [3311.52](#) of the Revised Code shall prescribe a curriculum for the subject areas and grade levels offered in any school under its control.**

***Analysis:***

Health Education and Physical Education are part of the Prescribed Curriculum. Each district and school within its jurisdiction must provide all aspects of the Prescribed Curriculum. All aspects of the Prescribed Curriculum are essential and must continue to be part of the school's curriculum provided to all students. Ohio Revised Code identifies additional requirements for specific topics to be included in the Health Education Curriculum.

The Ohio Association for Health,  
Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance

**Operating Standards ([See Link](#))**

The Ohio Revised Code (3301.07) authorizes the State Board of Education to “formulate and prescribe” Standards for Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade, commonly known as operating standards. The purpose of the operating standards is to assure that all students are provided a general education of high quality. A general education is considered by many to be a “well-rounded” education. The operating standards establish specific expectations for school districts and schools to use in creating the best learning conditions for meeting the personalized and individualized needs of each student and achieving state and local education goals and objectives.

***Analysis:***

Health Education and Physical Education have been identified in the Ohio Department of Education Strategic Plan: “Each Child, Our Future,” and the Every Students Succeeds Act (ESSA) as part of a well-rounded education.

## Curriculum

Boards of education are required to adopt courses of study for each subject taught, including health and physical education, and include stakeholders in the development of the courses of study.

*OAC 3301-35-04 Student and other stakeholder focus*

“(B)(2) Courses of study shall define the key components of a school district’s curriculum and instruction.

(a) A course of study shall be adopted for each subject taught. Each course of study shall:

- (i) Comply with the provisions of section 3313.60 of the Revised Code;
- (ii) Align with the school district vision, mission, philosophy, educational goals, and strategic plan;
- (iii) Specify learning and performance expectations;
- (iv) Establish a scope and sequence of knowledge and skills to be learned;
- (v) Provide a way to assess student progress and the need for intervention;
- (vi) Address the various developmental needs of early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescent through young adult students;
- (vii) Use technological tools and emphasize inter-disciplinary, real-world, project- based, and technology-oriented learning experiences;
- (viii) Be guided by Ohio’s state-adopted academic content standards;
- (ix) For career and technical courses, be guided by state board approved career and technical core standards and performance measures.’

(b) Courses of study shall be reviewed and updated as needed.

### **Analysis:**

Health and Physical Education must have an adopted Course of Study that contains each of the elements in OAC 3301-35-04. The Course of Study must align with the standards, include assessments, and a scope and sequence. The process should include students and other stakeholders.

### **Opportunities to Learn**

The amount of instructional time required for any course, including the art, music, health education and physical education, is not specified in law or rule at the elementary or middle school levels. Schools are required provide students with opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills to meet local course of study objectives. Ohio high school graduation requirements requires a minimum of 120 hours or 2 semesters of Physical Education instruction to earn .5 credit hours. A minimum of 60 hours or one semester is required Health education is required to complete .5 credits for graduation.

### **Analysis:**

Health and Physical Education must have sufficient time to meet the learning outcomes identified in the district course of study. Health education must have sufficient allocated time to address all of the topics required in ORC as well as meet local course of study objectives. Physical Education must have sufficient time to address all of the Ohio Physical Education Standards as well as sufficient time students can achieve success on the Ohio Physical Education Evaluation.

# Summary of Requirements and Expectations

## Physical Education

- *Physical Education Requirements:*
  - **K-6:** ([Ohio Revised Code](#))
  - **Grades 7-8:** ([Ohio Revised Code](#))
  - **High School:** 120 hours of instruction to earn .5 unit. ([ODE](#))
    - Meeting the requirements for:
      - **Credit Flexibility** – Complete the school’s credit flexibility plan that aligns with the district’s standards and outcomes. ([ODE](#))
      - **Advanced Credit** – To earn High School credit students must first complete the middle school curriculum, then complete the high school curriculum. (See last question at [ODE](#)).
      - **Online** – Online curriculum must meet Ohio requirements and align with district curriculum.
- *Physical Education Waiver – [Ohio Department of Education Physical Waiver FAQ](#)*
  - Advocating for High School Physical Education and Stopping the Waiver
    - Share the importance of the physical education standards
      - What are you students missing by waiving out of physical education?
        - Learning Outcomes
        - Experiences
    - Share the difference between physical activity and physical education.
    - The PE Waiver perpetuates negative stereotypes and diminishes the importance of lifetime physical activity and the role of physical education teachers in supporting healthy students.
    - Suggest Credit Flexibility as a compromise:
      - Students will achieve the Physical Education Standards while creating flexibility in the student’s schedule.
      - Eliminates the need to track student participation in extra-curricular activities.
  - If the waiver has been adopted:
    - Communicate with your school counselors
      - Remember the PE Waiver is adopted by your local board of education and is an option for the student to use and cannot be required by the district for each student participating in an extracurricular activity.
      - Counselors should offer Credit Flexibility as another option, when sharing the PE Waiver.
    - Design and market your curriculum to attract students back to physical education.

- *Physical Education Evaluation*
  - [Ohio Physical Education Evaluation](#) (2016)
    1. All public and community schools are required to assess every student once per grade band (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12).
    2. There is **NO** waiver for the evaluation, schools are obligated to complete the requirements and report the data to EMIS.
    3. Results of the Ohio Physical Education Evaluation will be included on the building and district report card.
    4. The measure is not a factor on your building or district performance rating.
  - Report Card Data
    - Building or District Physical Education Index
    - How to access your building or district report card.
      - Visit: <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Data/Report-Card-Resources>
      - Select School or District
      - Select School Details
      - Scroll Down to Wellness & Physical Education
  - Physical Education Evaluation Data Sheets
    - Using the data sheets
      - Students unable to complete the Evaluation due to an injury, absence or unforeseen circumstances outside of the control of the curriculum.
        - [How to manage cells to blank uncollected data](#)
    - Using your Physical Education Evaluation Data
      - Student Totals – reports the progress of each student.
        - Advanced – Average benchmark score of 2.75 or higher
        - Proficient – Average benchmark score between 2.74 and 1.75
        - Limited – Average benchmark score less than 1.74
        - “Count of Students Not Evaluated” – The number of students not evaluated due to an extenuating circumstance (e.g. moving, injury, etc.).
      - Benchmark Totals – A useful page to show how your school is achieving each benchmark.
      - Data for ODE – Your overall score to report to EMIS
        - High = Average Student Score of 3.0 – 2.7
        - Moderate = Average student score of 2.69 – 1.75
        - Low = Average student score of less than 1.74
  - Using your Physical Education Evaluation data:
    - Curriculum – Review your “Benchmark Totals” to determine benchmarks that need additional instructional time, resources or renewed strategies.
    - Advocacy – Share your data with others to show your curriculum is effective. Remember a “Moderate” score means a majority of students achieved at least Proficient on most of the benchmarks.

- Physical Education Evaluation Additional Considerations
  - High School Physical Education Waiver
    - Students do not complete the physical education credit, thus are not reported with your physical education evaluation.
  - Credit Flexibility
    - Students receive physical education credit so their Physical Education data would be reported.
  - “Advanced” Physical Education
    - Students receive high school credit, so they must complete the high school benchmarks. Report the data with your high school students.
  - Students unable to complete Physical Education Evaluation
    - Include data in the “Count of Students not Evaluated.”
    - It is unclear if you should report the students who received the Physical Education Waiver here.
  - Adapted Physical Education
    - [See ODE Guidelines](#)
- *License Requirement for Physical Education* ([ORC 3319.076](#))
  - “No school district shall employ any classroom teacher initially hired on or after July 1, 2013, to provide instruction in physical education in any of grades kindergarten through twelve unless the teacher holds a valid license issued pursuant to section [3319.22](#) of the Revised Code for teaching physical education.”



The Ohio Association for Health,  
Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance



## Health Education

- *Health Education Requirements:* ([Link to ODE Health Education Requirements](#))
  - Does your school have a health education that includes all required content?
    - **Grades K-6:**
      - Each district shall prescribe a curriculum for all schools under its control for health education.
      - No time requirements, but a prescribed curriculum must have the following topics addressed.
        - See Requirements for Grades K-6 ([ODE](#))
    - **Grades 7-8:**
      - Each district shall prescribe a curriculum for all schools under its control for health education.
      - No time requirements, but a prescribed curriculum must have the following topics addressed.
        - See Requirements for Grades 7 & 8 ([ODE](#))
    - **High School:**
      - Graduation Requirement: Each student must complete 60 hours of instruction to earn .5 unit.
        - High School Curriculum Requirements ([ODE](#))
      - Questions about different paths to complete the High School Graduation Requirements?
        - **Credit Flexibility** – Complete the school’s credit flexibility plan that aligns with the district’s standards and outcomes. ([ODE](#))
        - **Advanced Credit** – To earn High School credit students must first complete the middle school curriculum, then complete the high school curriculum. (Link is to ODE Physical Education, but same rules apply to health. See last question at [ODE](#).)
        - **Online** – Online curriculum must meet Ohio requirements and align with district curriculum.
- *Quality Health Education Curriculum*
  - Tools to develop your local curriculum
    - [OAHPERD Model Curriculum](#)
      - Learning Outcomes, Priority Charts & Content Frameworks.
    - [National Health Education Standards](#)
    - Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool ([HECAT](#))
    - [Characteristics of Effective Health Education](#)

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Basch CE. Healthier students are better learners: a missing link in school reforms to close the achievement gap. *J Sch Health*. 2011;81(10):593-598.
- <sup>2</sup> The Colorado Education Initiative (2015). *Health is vital for student success: An overview of relevant research. Connecting Education and Learning*. Retrieved from <http://www.coloradoedinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MakingtheCaseFF.pdf>
- <sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs: A Guide for Schools*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US Dept of Health and Human Services; 2013.
- <sup>4</sup> Society for Health and Physical Educators (2020). *PE + Health = Student Success*. Retrieved from [https://www.shapeamerica.org/Document\\_manager/PE%20+%20Health%20-%20FINAL%20PRINT.pdf](https://www.shapeamerica.org/Document_manager/PE%20+%20Health%20-%20FINAL%20PRINT.pdf)

