

Physical Education in Maryland

Physical Education plays a critical role in educating the whole child as part of a well-rounded education. Like other academic courses of study, physical education is based upon rigorous state and national standards that define what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade level. Physical Education is unique to the school curriculum as it is the only program that provides students with opportunities to learn motor skills, develop fitness, and gain an understanding of the importance of physical activity. Students are provided an individualized and developmentally appropriate instructional program that will develop physically literate individuals who have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity.

The Highly Effective Physical Education Teacher:¹

- Provides ongoing skill-specific feedback aligned with the state standards and grade-level outcomes.
- Implements instruction in the least restrictive environment for ALL students.
- Establishes routines for a physically and emotionally safe environment.
- Demonstrates effective behavior management strategies that support social and emotional learning.
- Maximizes students' activity and limits their inactivity by using space and equipment efficiently.
- Inspires children to seek out and participate in a variety of physical activities.

Hiring positive and professional role models to provide Physical Education is a critical responsibility for school administrators and central office staff. Physical Education should be taught by a licensed teacher who is endorsed by the State of Maryland to teach Physical Education.

Highly Effective Physical Education Programs Include:²

- Pedagogically appropriate tasks that meet the needs of ALL students.
- Lessons with extensions and refinements to aid in student success within and between grade levels.
- Tasks that maximize movement proficiency aligned with the national standards and the Maryland Physical Education Framework.
- Knowledge and skills for a lifetime of physical activity.
- Meaningful and safe activities, with each student actively participating.
- A variety of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor assessments.
- The endorsement of exercise for its contribution to a healthy lifestyle.
- Activities that represent a culturally diverse environment and take a student centered approach to learning.

SHAPE America recommends daily Physical Education in grades K-12, with instruction periods totaling 150 minutes per week in elementary school and 225 minutes per week in middle school and high school.³

Benefits of Physical Education for Students⁴

- Enhanced attention, concentration, and on-task behavior in classes outside of Physical Education.
- Reduced discipline referrals and reduced participation in high-risk behaviors.
- Enhanced school climates through the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model.
- Improved academic achievement, including grades and standardized test scores.⁵

¹ SHAPE America: [20 Indicators of Effective PE Instruction](#) (2016)

² SHAPE America: [Appropriate Instructional Practice Guidelines, K-12: A Side-by-Side Comparison](#) (2009)

³ SHAPE America: [The Essential Components of Physical Education](#) (2015)

⁴ NCBI: [Educating the Student Body: Taking Physical Activity and Physical Education to School](#) (2013)

⁵ CDC: [The Association between School-Based Physical Activity, Including Physical Education, and Academic Performance](#) (2010)

Additional Resources - Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR): [13A.04.13.01](#); MSDE: [Maryland Physical Education Framework](#) (2019); MSDE: [Physical Education Requirement Memo](#) (2019); CDC: [Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool](#) (2019); MSDE: [Adapted Physical Education](#) (2017); SHAPE America: [Key Physical Education Resources to Support Healthy Schools](#) (2019); SHAPE America: [Every Student Succeeds Act: Game Changer for Health and Physical Education](#) (2016); U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd Edition](#) (2018)