To: Coordinators and Supervisors of Standards-Based Physical Education
From: Jason Semanoff, Director of Comprehensive Health and Physical Education
Date: August 01, 2023
Subject: Student Participation in Standards-Based Physical Education Programs

Standards-Based Physical Education Requirements

Local education agencies (LEAs) must provide an instructional program in physical education for all students in grades PreK-8 each year to meet the requirements of the State Framework. Further, each LEA must offer a standards-based physical education program in grades 9-12, enabling students to meet graduation requirements and select electives that align with the State Framework.

Amendments to Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.04.13.01 became effective on July 12, 2021. For example, local education agencies (LEAs) may not:

- Authorize a student to substitute other activities for a standards-based physical education program for graduation credits, such as interscholastic sports, community-based sports, physical therapy, Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC), or marching band;
- Waive the standards-based physical education requirement to meet the graduation requirement;
- Excuse students from standards-based physical education to participate in other content area classes or to complete classwork assignments in other content areas; or
- Withhold a student from the standards-based physical education program as punishment unless the student is suspended.

Students with Disabilities

LEAs must provide reasonable accommodations to ensure students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in mainstream standards-based physical education programs to the fullest extent possible. Education Article, §7-4B, Annotated Code of Maryland requires adapted, allied, or unified standards-based physical education programs to be made available and adequately funded by the LEA. A student’s individualized education program (IEP) or 504 plan may reflect how students will meet standards-based physical education program outcomes.

Temporarily Injury or Illness

An individualized action plan must be developed in collaboration with the parent/guardian, teacher, and, when appropriate, a medical care provider for students who are temporarily unable to participate in the standards-based physical education program. This action plan must provide appropriate learning experiences aligned with the State Framework.

If I can be of further assistance, please contact me at jason.semanoff@maryland.gov.