

SHAPE OF THE NATION

Executive Summary

Purpose

The purpose of the Shape of the Nation Survey, which was last conducted in 1993, is to determine the availability and mandate for physical education programs in each state, provide an overview of who is teaching physical education and the requirements for students taking physical education in each state. To purchase the full Shape of the Nation document, call 1-800-321-0789.

Method

During the summer of 1997 NASPE sent a questionnaire to physical education consultants in all 50 state Departments of Education. Consultants were asked about the state mandate for physical education at the elementary, middle and secondary school levels, acceptance of substitutions, time allocation, qualification directives for teaching physical education, and issues and concerns. Follow-up phone calls were made to complete responses to the survey. All 50 states provided complete information for the survey. All information was returned to state Departments of Education for verification after it had been compiled and interpreted.

Results

Most states are not living up to recommendations of the *U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health* and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to require daily physical education for all students in kindergarten through 12th grade. That is the major finding of the Shape of the Nation Report, which was conducted by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE).

Forty-seven states (the same amount as in 1993) have state mandates for physical education.

As reported in 1993, Illinois is still the only state that requires daily physical education for all students, K-12. Alabama and Washington require daily physical education for all students K-8.

At the elementary school level, where mandated by the state, physical education time requirements range from 50 minutes

a week to 200 minutes per week.

At the middle school level, where mandated by the state, physical education time requirements range from 55 minutes a week to 275 minutes per week.

The majority of high school students take physical education for only one year between 9th and 12th grades.

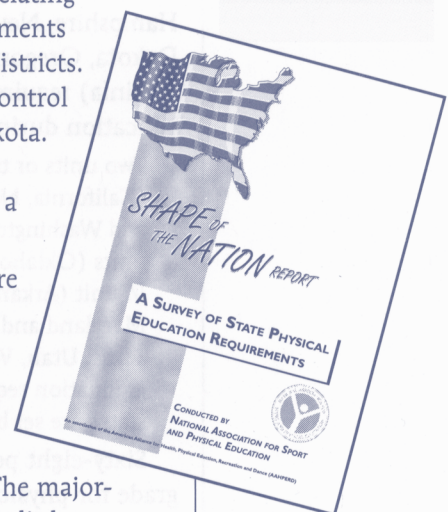
Ten years after the U.S. Congress passed Resolution 97 encouraging state and local governments and local educational agencies to provide high quality daily physical education programs for all children in kindergarten through grade 12, no progress has been made. This is despite concerns about the health of our nation's children and youth and the federal government calls for daily physical education programs for all students, kindergarten through 12th grade.

Other highlights include:

Only Illinois requires all students to take a specific amount of physical education in all grades, K-12. *In 1993 four states (Illinois, Hawaii, Kentucky, and Rhode Island) required all students to take a specific amount of physical education in all grades, K-12.*

Three states (*the same amount as in 1993*) do not have any state mandates relating to physical education. All requirements are left to the individual school districts. They are Colorado (now a local control state), Mississippi and South Dakota. Arizona, which did not have a mandate in 1993, does now have a mandate.

Only a few states do not require continuing education credits to maintain teacher certification. In some states the individual school districts either set or may add to the state requirement for continued teacher certification. The majority of states required five or six credit hours every five years to maintain teacher certification in physical education. This is the same requirement as in other fields of study.



Elementary Highlights:

Only certified physical education teachers teach physical education in Delaware, Idaho, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, and South Dakota.

Only classroom teachers teach physical education in California, Hawaii, Oklahoma and Washington.

In the remaining 39 states, both certified physical education specialists and classroom teachers teach physical education.

Middle School Highlights:

In 38 states certified physical education specialists teach physical education at the middle school level.

In 11 states (Alaska, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oklahoma and Washington) certified physical education specialists and classroom teachers teach middle school physical education.

In Alabama, certified physical education specialists and physical education aides teach physical education.

Secondary School Highlights:

Certified physical education specialists teach physical education at the secondary school level in 46 states.

Certified physical education specialists and classroom teachers teach physical education at the secondary level in four states (Alaska, Massachusetts, Oklahoma and Oregon).

The majority of states – 19 (Alabama, Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, South Carolina, and West Virginia) require one unit or one year of physical education during 9th through 12th grades.

Two units or two years are required in six states (California, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, Virginia and Washington). Other requirements include zero units (Oklahoma, South Dakota and Tennessee); 1/2 unit (Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland and Ohio); and 1 1/2 units (Louisiana, Texas, Utah, Vermont and Wisconsin). The graduation requirements for the remaining 11 states are set by the local school districts.

Sixty-eight percent of the states (34) give a grade for physical education and include it in the grade point average. California does not include the physical education grade in the grade point average. The remainder of the states (13) decide at the local school district level if grades are included in the students' grade point average.

Forty-six percent of the states (23) do not allow any substitutions for physical education.

Forty-two percent of the states (21) allow substitutions for physical education. These may include medical reasons, religious, varsity athletics, ROTC and marching band. The remaining states make substitution options at the local school district level.

In the comments section, the answers varied quite a bit. Several states expressed very positive signs of physical education growth in their states. Others expressed concerns over the physical conditions of their students and the fact that students are allowed to avoid physical education by participating in other courses, activities, etc. One state feared that the requirement for physical education may be dropped. Most believed that physical educators need to get more involved at all levels to ensure positive physical education programs for all states in the future.

Recommendations for Action

Regarding physical education, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) recommends the following:

1. All students K-12 receive quality, regular physical education.
2. Elementary school children receive a minimum of 150 minutes per week of instructional physical education; middle and high school students receive a minimum of 225 minutes per week of instructional physical education.
3. All states require comprehensive physical education as part of their core curriculum and set minimum standards of achievement for each grade level.
4. Meeting standards for physical education be a requirement for graduation.
5. Other courses and activities that may include physical exercise should not be substituted for instructional physical education.
6. Teachers who are specially trained in physical education deliver physical education instruction at all levels.
7. All sport coaches be certified/licensed teachers and have additional education and certification for coaching.
8. Physical education programs be designed to facilitate achievement of the national standards for physical education.

