

Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (PECAT)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: What is the *PECAT*?

A1: The *PECAT* is a tool for analyzing written physical education curricula to determine how closely they align with national standards for high-quality physical education.

Q2: What is the purpose of the *PECAT*?

A2: The purpose of the *PECAT* is to help school districts conduct a clear, complete, and consistent analysis of physical education curricula. *PECAT* results can help users enhance, develop, or select appropriate and effective physical education curricula for the delivery of quality physical education, which will improve the ability of schools to positively influence motor skills and physical activity behaviors among school-age youth.

Q3: Who can use the *PECAT*?

A3: The *PECAT* is designed to be used primarily by a school district team that may consist of school-based physical education coordinators, physical education teachers, curriculum specialists, or curriculum committee members. Additional users of the *PECAT* might include the following:

- Curriculum committees or educators at the school level might use this tool, in conjunction with the standards established by the states and physical education frameworks or other locally determined requirements, to
 - examine curricula currently in use;
 - develop a new or improved course of study, frameworks, learning objectives, student assessment protocols, or curricula;
 - guide the selection of curricula available for purchase.
- College teacher preparation programs can use the *PECAT* to improve their students' understanding of physical education and physical activity programs, curriculum analysis, and instructional skills.
- Developers of nationally disseminated and packaged curricula, such as nongovernmental organizations and for-profit curriculum development companies, can use the tool to design physical education curricula and physical activity programs that best meet the needs of schools and their students.



Department of Health and Human Services
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Q4: Should the *PECAT* be completed by an individual?

A4: No. This review process should be conducted as a **team** effort; an individual cannot do it alone. A *PECAT* committee, working together, should complete the *PECAT*.

It is not advisable to assign a single person to review sections that would benefit from multiple perspectives and expertise. For example, accuracy, acceptability, feasibility, and affordability analyses should be done by the appropriate members of the committee; they require input from committee member(s) well-versed in those areas. Multiple reviewers can ensure that the scores reflect the school and community perspectives, rather than an individual's point of view.

Q5: Who should serve on the *PECAT* Committee?

A5: *PECAT* committees might include:

- District curriculum director.
- District physical education administrator.
- Physical education teachers from elementary, middle, and high schools (teachers should complete grade levels that pertain to their school).
- Members of the district school health council.
- Health education teachers.
- School health nurses.
- Public health and non profit professionals.
- Parents.
- Students.
- Other administrators.
- College physical education faculty who are teacher educators.

All *PECAT* committee members should have an investment in the physical education needs and interests of the students at the state, school district, or school level.

Q6: How is the *PECAT* organized?

A6: The *PECAT* includes:

- An introduction, discussing the purpose and structure of the tool, the rationale for the *PECAT*, characteristics of high-quality physical education and the physical education curriculum, and physical education in the context of a coordinated school health program.
- Instructions for preparing and completing the *PECAT* analyses and guidance on using the *PECAT* results to make informed physical education curriculum decisions.

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- Part 1
 - Curriculum Description — a template to record important descriptive information about a curriculum for use during the curriculum review process
 - Accuracy, Acceptability, Feasibility, and Affordability Analyses — questions to consider before analyzing the content and student assessment components
- Part 2
 - Content and Student Assessment Analyses and Score Sheets for grades K–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12 -- templates that rate the curriculum on how well it addresses each of the six national standards for physical education
 - Overall *PECAT* Scorecard to identify strengths and weaknesses of the written curriculum
 - Multiple Curricula Comparison Scorecards that allow for comparison of *PECAT* results among different curricula
- Part 3
 - Curriculum Improvement Plan — This section is used to assess the results of the analysis, identify strengths and weaknesses, and determine action steps for curriculum improvement.
- Appendices
 - Example of a completed scoring sheet
 - *Moving Into the Future: National Standards for Physical Education*
 - Glossary
 - Resources.

Q7: How do my state or local education agency's standards fit into the *PECAT*?

A7: Your state or local education agency's standards may guide the curriculum under review. The *PECAT* committee will determine where there is overlap with the national standards. The committee should discuss whether the state or school district has adopted additional standards and whether additional or modified content and student assessment scoring analyses need to be created to meet local needs. The *PECAT* committee is best suited to determine what the main components of each additional standard are and proceed with the analysis. The end of each content and student assessment analysis includes a template for any additional standards the committee deems essential to analyze.

Q8: How can using the *PECAT* add to what my district is already doing for curriculum improvement or development?

A8: The *PECAT* can be used to:

- Ensure that your current physical education curriculum development or selection process is systematic, consistent, and thorough.
- Clarify what gaps exist in your current physical education curriculum.
- Assess how closely written curricula align with national standards.
- Identify instructional strategies that improve teaching and student learning.
- Inform selection of a high-quality curriculum that is affordable and feasible to implement in your schools.
- Identify where revisions might be needed in a locally developed curriculum.
- Provide additional perspectives that can help strengthen your curriculum development or selection processes.
- Provide sound and defensible justification for curriculum decisions to parents, school board members, and others interested in physical education in your community or state.

Q9: Why doesn't the *PECAT* ask about other parts of the physical education program, such as teacher qualifications, policies of physical education program, or facilities?

A9: The *PECAT* was developed to review written curricula, which are considered an essential foundation to any physical education program. In future iterations of the *PECAT*, other components may be addressed. At present, CDC's *School Health Index (SHI)*, a self-assessment tool, can be used to determine the extent to which your school implements the types of policies and practices recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in its research-based guidelines related to physical education and other physical activity programs. The *SHI* is easy to use and completely confidential. It is available online as an interactive tool and can be accessed at www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/shi.

Q10: How much time will be required to complete a curriculum review using the *PECAT*?

A10: While it will depend on a number of factors, completing the *PECAT* should take approximately 4 to 10 hours per curriculum. The *PECAT* provides for a thorough review and analysis of a curriculum and requires that the committee provide sufficient time to prepare for and complete the analysis. Typically, a curriculum review will not be completed in one session. Separate sessions may be necessary to prepare the review committee to use the *PECAT*, determine local performance benchmarks, shorten the list of curricula that might be acceptable for complete analysis, conduct the complete analysis of the remaining curricula, and create an improvement plan. The committee should allow time to review curriculum analysis

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scores and reach consensus on curriculum recommendations. The Instructions section provides guidance for coordinating and organizing your curriculum review and helps you determine the time you need to complete your curriculum review and selection process.

Q11: What factors should be considered when predicting or allocating time for the *PECAT* process?

A11: Several factors should be considered when planning the time needed to implement the *PECAT* process. They include:

- Each reviewer's understanding of physical education.
- Each reviewer's familiarity with the *PECAT*.
- Each reviewer's familiarity with the National Standards for Physical Education and with state or local standards that are addressed within the curriculum under review.
- Each reviewer's familiarity with the curriculum being reviewed.
- The breadth and scope of the curriculum under review. For example, a multigrade curriculum will require more time than a single-grade curriculum.
- The number of curriculum materials—more time will be required for a curriculum that includes ancillary or support products, such as videos/DVDs, workbooks, teacher guides, family involvement materials, than for a single-packaged curriculum with no extra materials.
- The orderliness of a curriculum—more time will be required for a curriculum that is disorganized, fragmented, or incomplete than for one that is packaged and well organized.
- The extent to which curriculum materials are easily available for all reviewers. For example, the process will take longer if members have to share materials than if they have their own complete package of materials.

Q12: Does the entire *PECAT* need to be completed?

A12: No. You can determine which items in the *PECAT* are useful and important to include in your curriculum analysis and development or selection process and how you want to use *PECAT* items in your review process. Not all sections may apply to the curriculum being reviewed. For example, if the curriculum being reviewed is developed for students in elementary school (grades K–5) then the content and student assessment analysis forms specific to only those grade levels will be used. If the curriculum being analyzed is not being considered for purchase, the affordability analysis may not be applicable. Remember, the review of curricula should be consistent. You should use the same process and *PECAT* items in the review of all curricula under consideration.

Q13: Where can we get help in planning a physical education curriculum review or using the *PECAT*?

- A13:** There are several resources available to assist you with physical education and curriculum planning. First, contact the school physical education consultant or coordinated school health physical education program director in your state education agency. The state consultant or director might not be able to assist you directly, but he or she can refer you to state or community resource centers and other experts including:
- Instructional staff from local or state college physical education teacher preparation programs.
 - State-based professional physical education organizations.
 - Knowledgeable physical educators employed in other school districts.
 - Reputable consultants with expertise in physical education curricula.

Many school physical educators are members of national professional associations that represent school physical educators, including the National Association for Sports and Physical Education (NASPE). Numerous resources for curriculum, instruction, and physical education program development are available on NASPE's web site at www.aahperd.org/naspe.

You can also direct physical education or *PECAT* questions to CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health at the following e-mail address: CDC-INFO@cdc.gov.

Q14: If we are reviewing a commercially developed curriculum, should we invite the curriculum developers to be members of the curriculum review committee?

- A14:** No. It may be helpful to talk with the curriculum developer to thoroughly complete the Curriculum Description, or you may invite the company to showcase its curricular materials (e.g., scope and sequence, or charts that show alignment with the National Physical Education Standards, etc.) before your actual review process. However, curriculum developers should not be included in the analysis or scoring process because they can unduly influence review committee members' analyses. Keep in mind that the primary interest of most curriculum developers is selling their products.

Q15: What is the next step?

- A15:** Go to the INTRODUCTION section of the *PECAT* first. Next, proceed to the INSTRUCTIONS section of the *PECAT*, **Getting Ready** (page 7), and get started by 1) selecting a *PECAT* coordinator, 2) assembling a *PECAT* committee and 3) providing each member of the *PECAT* committee with a copy of the curriculum being reviewed and a copy of the *PECAT*.