



*Great Public Schools for Every Student*

## **HEALTHY KIDS ARE BETTER STUDENTS**

*Obesity is a problem for both children and adults in America. Fighting this trend and building lifelong habits of exercise requires providing students adequate time to exercise during the school day. Exercise during physical education and recess can improve academic achievement, affect cognitive functioning and attitudes, and build self-esteem.*

### **Physical Education in 2010:**

- Only five states require physical education in every grade K-12.
- Only one state aligns with the nationally recommended 150 minutes per week of PE in elementary school and 225 minutes per week in middle and high school.
- More than half of all states (29) permit waivers and/or exemptions for students from taking PE, a 61% increase from 2006.
- Forty-seven states (92%) have their own state standards for physical education, but only 33 states (65%) require local districts to comply or align with these standards.
- Only 19 states (37%) require some form of student assessment in physical education.
- Fewer states (17 vs. 22 in 2006) require physical education grades to be included in students' grade point averages.
- Only 12 states (24%) require schools to measure Body Mass Index (BMI) and/or height and weight for each student.

Physical education is an essential component of education. Physical education is part of a complete curriculum that addresses the needs of the whole child. In order to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, students need to develop healthy habits of exercise and diet. They need to learn about their bodies and how to care for them. They also need to learn to work in teams and accept the wide range of human abilities and strengths – skills that come from participating in team sports. Physical activities at school enable students to develop leadership skills, habits of persistence and emotional control, social awareness, and collaborative dispositions.

NEA believes that teachers who teach physical education should be certified in that content area and should receive ongoing professional development to continuously improve their capacity to provide essential and excellent learning experiences for students.

#### *Sources:*

Preliminary Findings for the 2010 Shape of the Nation Report

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Association between School-based Physical Activity, including Physical Education, and Academic Achievement* (April 2010)

*Physical Education Is Critical to a Complete Education* (2001), Position Statement, National Association for Sport and Physical Education.