



National Association for Sport and Physical Education

*an association of the American Alliance for Health,
Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*

NASPE Sets the Standard

1900 Association Drive
Reston, VA 20191

Phone: 703-476-3410

Fax: 703-476-8316

Email: naspe@aahperd.org

Statement of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR SPORT AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

District of Columbia State Board of Education

January 25, 2013

On behalf of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), I am writing to provide a statement of opposition regarding the proposed implementation of waivers or exemptions for physical education.

A quality physical education program offers the best opportunity to provide physical activity to all children and to teach them the skills and knowledge needed to establish and sustain an active lifestyle. Any opportunity for students to participate in sustained periods of meaningful physical activity can be valuable for their health and fitness, but activities like interscholastic or intramural sports do not provide the content of a comprehensive, standards-based physical education program, and therefore should not be allowed to fulfill a physical education requirement. Quality physical education programs are aligned to state standards for physical education and follow a standards-based curriculum with integrated lessons for instruction development. Interscholastic or intramural sports do not meet the state standards for physical education and therefore would not be an appropriate substitution for physical education class or credit.

Standards, in general, provide a framework for the development of realistic and achievable expectations for student performance at every level. Such expectations are the first step in designing an instructionally aligned program focused on student learning and achievement. The National Standards for Physical Education, with which DC State Standards for Physical Education are aligned, describe achievement, show that knowledge and skills matter, and confirm that mere willing participation is not the same as learning. The National Standards demonstrate that physical education has meaningful and significant content. They

justify the academic standing and inclusion of physical education in the curriculum. And they further indicate that all behaviors associated with physical education can in some way be measured. The National Standards define student learning—what students should know and be able to do as a result of a quality physical education program.

Quality physical educators assess student knowledge, motor and social skills, and provide instruction in a safe, supportive environment. Sport coaches are not required to be licensed to teach and are not trained in physical education. Physical education teachers are educated on specific skill development, lifetime physical activities, assessments, fitness education, and understanding the positive health impacts of physical activity. Activities that provide physical activity have important but distinctly different goals than physical education. For example:

Athletics or Intramural Sports

School athletics is a great extension of the educational day. However, the content covered in physical education is very different than athletics. Students need to learn about lifelong physical activities and information on how to stay fit after competition days are over – lessons that are taught during physical education.

Community Recreation Programs

Recreation programs offer great opportunities for students to participate in recreational sports and activities. These programs are a logical extension of the physical education program but are not a substitution for physical education, as they do not provide skills-based education or instruction.

On behalf of NASPE, I encourage you to rethink the proposed change in graduation requirements for DC students that would allow athletic participation to be substituted for required physical education credit. As you can see, this would be a disservice to the students of the DC Public School system. I ask you to focus on the documented benefits that physical education brings students such as improved mental alertness, academic performance, readiness to learn and enthusiasm for learning in addition to building healthy habits for a lifetime.

I would like to commend you for your dedicated service in striving to promote and improve the education status of DC students. Serving as a leader often requires that one

donates significant personal time and, for that, I and many others are greatly appreciative. I am happy to provide any additional information needed. Please feel free to contact me at cbraxton@aahperd.org.

Sincerely,

Carly Braxton

Carly Braxton

Senior Manager of Government Relations