

Meeting the District of Columbia’s Physical Activity, Physical Education and Health Education Requirements in DC Public and Public Charter Schools

The Healthy Schools Act of 2010 and Healthy Students Amendment Act of 2018 ([DC Official Code § 38-821.01 et seq](#)) ensure District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), public charter schools and participating private schools are a healthy place for all students. Local education agency (LEA) leaders, school principals and health and physical education coordinators, supervisors and educators should collaborate to ensure that each school meets the following physical activity, physical education (PE) and health education requirements for the 2025-26 school year.

Healthy Schools Act Requirements (☑) and Goals (★) by Grade Level

	Pre-K 3 and 4	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY 	☑ 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity including two 20-minute outdoor recess periods ★ 90 minutes of physical activity	★ 60 minutes per day including one 20-minute recess	★ 60 minutes per day including one 20-minute recess	★ 60 minutes per day
PHYSICAL EDUCATION 	No requirement or goal	☑ Must meet DC’s Physical Education Standards ☑ At least 50 percent must be devoted to moderate-to-vigorous physical activity		
	No requirement or goal	☑ 90 minutes per week throughout the school year ★ 150 minutes	☑ 135 minutes per week throughout the school year ★ 225 minutes	☑ 1.5 Carnegie Units in Health/PE
HEALTH EDUCATION 	No requirement or goal	☑ Must meet DC’s Health Education Standards		
	No requirement or goal	☑ 75 minutes per week throughout the school year	☑ 75 minutes per week throughout the school year	☑ 1.5 Carnegie Units in Health/PE and CPR instruction

For more information, please refer to the [Healthy Schools Act Informational Guide](#).

Strategies and Best Practices

Recognizing that there are many challenges to staffing, scheduling, and implementing high-quality health programs and curriculum, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is here to support LEAs and schools in meeting these requirements and goals. Below are strategies, best practices, and resources to support your school's implementation of physical activity programming and PE and health education instruction.

- **Maximize physical activity throughout the school day** by extending the school day; encouraging students to walk or bike to school; promoting active recess; including physical activity in before- and after-school activities; supporting athletic programs; integrating movement into classroom instruction and instructional breaks; entering into agreements with organizations that provide programming outside of the school day; and using physical activity as a reward for student achievement and good behavior. For more ideas, see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Society of Health and Physical Educators' ([SHAPE America Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program \(CSPAP\)](#))
- **Find opportunities to align curriculum.** For example, use PE class to teach students relationship-building and self-management skills aligned with [DC's Social and Emotional Learning \(SEL\) Standards](#); apply topics in health insurance that are covered in a [financial literacy](#) elective course in a health education class; or reinforce [DC's Social Studies Standards](#) by teaching students about local influences in the natural and built environment that contribute to positive or negative health. When looking for opportunities to align health education or physical education with other subject areas, be sure to use DC's [2016 Health Education Standards](#), [2017 Physical Education Standards](#) and [2023 Menstrual Health Education Standards to ensure all requirements are met. SHAPE America provides the following resources to help align across content areas: Health Education/SEL Crosswalk, Physical Education/SEL Crosswalk, and Connecting Health Skills in the Physical Education Setting.](#)
- **Identify high-quality curriculum** by using the CDC's [Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool \(HECAT\)](#) and [Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool \(PECAT\)](#) to ensure the alignment with national and local standards. OSSE has developed curriculum review guidance for [sexual health education](#), [nutrition education](#) and [sexual harassment, sexual assault, and dating violence prevention education](#).
- **Incorporate evidence-based programs** offered by OSSE and the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH). OSSE offers a variety of mental and behavioral health evidence-based programs and curricula. These programs and curricula are provided to the school behavioral health coordinators at all public and public charter schools. Offered by DBH, [Too Good for Drugs](#) is available at grade 5, grade 7, and high school, and can be arranged for your school through a school-based health center, who can reach out to the community-based organization or DBH provider at the school.

Reminder

Each public and public charter school in DC is required to complete and submit the [School Health Profile \(SHP\)](#) to OSSE annually. This information helps inform OSSE of the services and supports needed by schools citywide and is available to the general public. During the next SHP administration in 2026, please collaborate with your subject area teachers for accurate reporting of your curriculum and instructional minutes.

For questions or further assistance, please contact OSSE.HYDT@dc.gov.