



# Health Education

All Washington schools are accountable for students meeting the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) in health and fitness. These requirements are designed to establish the concepts and skills necessary for safe and healthy living, and in turn, for successful learning. The four goal areas for students are:

1. The student acquires the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain an active life: Movement, physical fitness, and nutrition.
2. The student acquires the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain a healthy life: Recognize patterns of growth and development, reduce health-risks, and live safely.
3. The student analyzes and evaluates the impact of real-life influences on health.
4. The student effectively analyzes health and safety information to develop health and fitness plans based on life goals.

## **Health Education Policy and Procedures**

Most secondary schools (92 percent) required Health Education for students in at least one grade. Health Education was more often required in middle school Grades (6–8) than in high school grades (especially Grades 10–12).

Principals reported required health education courses are taught in each of the following grades:

- 65 percent of 6th graders.
- 65 percent of 7th graders.
- 74 percent of 8th graders.
- 72 percent of 9th graders.
- 51 percent of 10th graders.
- 26 percent of 11th graders.
- 26 percent of 12th graders.

Among schools requiring health education, most high school principals reported students are required to take one health education course (77 percent).

There is greater variability of required health education courses among middle schools. Middle school principals reported:

- About 33 percent required one course.
- 20 percent required two courses.
- 26 percent required three courses.
- 7 percent required four or more courses.

Among schools that require health education, 28 percent of high school principals and 13 percent of middle school principals reported that students cannot be exempted or excused from any part of a required health education course.

Nearly all (98 percent) high school principals reported that students who fail a required health education course are required to repeat it. Seventeen percent of middle school principals reported that students who fail health education are required to repeat it.



### **Health Education Instruction**

Principals reported required health education courses are often combined with other types of instruction, including:

- 49 percent of high schools and 61 percent of middle schools combined health education and physical education courses.
- 17 percent of high schools and 43 percent of middle schools combined health education and other subjects such as science, social studies, home economics, or English.

Health teachers reported that health education is coordinated by different individuals with different backgrounds including the following:

- 44 percent were health education teachers.
- 15 percent were district health education or curriculum coordinators.
- 15 percent were school administrators.
- 9 percent were district administrator.
- 3 percent were school nurses.
- 10 percent were someone else.
- 5 percent no one coordinates health education.

### **Health Education Staff Development**

Principals reported most high schools (82 percent) and over half of middle schools (57 percent) required newly hired health education teachers to be certified, licensed, or endorsed by the state in health education (health and fitness).

### **Health Education Resources**

Information about Washington Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) and Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) are available at the OSPI Health and Fitness Web site:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/curriculumInstruct/healthfitness/resources.aspx>.

Resources for implementation of new health and fitness policy requirements as a result of SB 5436 are provided at: [www.healthyschoolswa.org](http://www.healthyschoolswa.org).

The Washington Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance: <http://www.wahperd.com>.