

# Recommendations for Waivers in High School Physical Education

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This document outlines sample procedures for high school physical education waivers in accordance with state laws and regulations.

September 2013





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## Introduction and Purpose

This document is intended to offer resources and recommendations for school district leaders and educators to navigate the process for granting student waivers for high school physical education. The document:

1. Details the rules and regulations for high school physical education waivers.
2. Defines and delineates differences among physical education, physical activity, and athletics.
3. Provides sample guidelines, templates, and student study guides for district use.

The role of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and statewide health and physical education partners is to provide assistance to school leaders and educators in developing and delivering high quality physical education programs. This includes providing access to high quality and aligned resources for:

- Navigating the many state statutes related to health and physical education.
- Implementation of [Washington's K-12 Health and Fitness State Learning Standards](#) and related [OSPI-Developed Health and Fitness Assessments](#).

OSPI is committed to helping educators provide high quality instruction for all Washington students in health and physical education. To that end, teachers and administrators can use the samples within this document as starting points in designing best practices for quality physical education programs.

Note: [Washington's K-12 Health and Fitness State Learning Standards](#) focus on what students should know and be able to do. High quality physical education instruction contributes to good health, develops fundamental and advanced motor skills, improves students' self-confidence, and provides opportunities for increased levels of physical fitness that are associated with high academic achievement. For more information on the [differences between physical education, physical activity, and athletics](#), please refer to page 16.

## Overview – Background and Expectations for Health and Physical Education in Washington State

Washington's four State Learning Goals outlined in the Basic Education Act, (BEA) ([RCW 28A.150.210](#)) set the state's vision for K-12 education. The BEA is a foundational pillar in Washington's school reform efforts that since 1993 focus on setting clear and high expectations for what students should know and be able to do by the end of their K-12 education. "Goal Two" of the BEA illustrates the state's commitment to ensuring that all students become educated and engaged in a lifetime of health and physical education. Further, [RCW 28A.655.070](#) grants OSPI the responsibility for developing K-12 state learning standards (also known as Essential Academic Learning Requirements) consistent with the BEA's four State Learning Goals. [Washington's K-12 Health and Fitness State Learning Standards](#) (2008) establish the clear and foundational concepts and skills necessary for health and physical education, including

safe and healthy living principles, and in turn, for successful learning that all students should be able to do by the end of their K-12 education. Additionally, [OSPI-Developed Health and Fitness Assessments](#) are designed to measure whether students have had an opportunity to learn these standards.

The following state statutes provide further guidance for districts for developing and delivering health and physical education as well as emphasizing the importance of these content areas:

**High School Graduation Requirements** – delineates the minimum course credits

- Health education (.5 credit) and physical education (1.5 credits)
- Minimum requirements for graduation ([WAC 180-51-067](#))

**Assessments for Health and Fitness** – formerly known as Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs)

- Emphasizes alignment with state health and fitness learning standards and assessments
- Essential academic learning requirements and assessments ([RCW 28A.230.095](#))

**Waivers in Physical Education** – outlines parameters for excused physical education

- Physical education in grades 1–8 ([RCW 28A.230.040](#))
- Physical education in high schools ([RCW 28A.230.050](#))

**Minutes in Physical Education** – defines parameters for

- Grades 1-8, an average of 100 instructional minutes of physical education per week
- High schools, must offer one course in PE for each grade in high school ([WAC 392-410-135](#))

**Physical Education Requirements** – outlines physical education and equivalency credits

- Excuse from physical education requirement ([WAC 392-410-136](#))

**Special Education Students** – explains services available to PE students receiving FAPE

- Special education/Physical education ([WAC 392-172A-02030](#))

**Nutrition and Physical Activity** – emphasizes the goals for wellness policies

- Access to nutritious foods and exercise ([RCW 28A.210.360](#))
- Food choice, physical activity, childhood fitness ([RCW 28A.210.365](#))

**Basic Education Act** – outlines expectations for what students should know and be able to do by the end of their K-12 education

- Basic education act – Goal ([RCW 28A.150.210](#))
- Basic education act – Program contents ([RCW 28A.150.200](#))
- Powers and duties ([RCW 28A.300.040](#))

**International Baccalaureate Programme**

Students who fulfill the requirements of an International Baccalaureate DIPLOMA Programme are exempt from [WAC 180-51-067](#) (required demonstration of proficiency/competency in the knowledge portion of the fitness requirement) as per statute [RCW.28A.230.122](#). School districts may require students under this section to complete local graduation requirements that are in addition to state minimum requirements before issuing a high school diploma under [RCW 28A.230.120](#).

Further, employers are now realizing the extent to which poor health practices can undermine an employee's effectiveness and ability to succeed. In fact, full-time workers in the United States who are overweight or obese and have other chronic health conditions miss an estimated 450 million additional days of work each year compared

with healthy workers – resulting in an estimated cost of more than \$153 billion in lost productivity annually, according to a 2011 Gallup Poll. The same is true of students and their ability to learn. Students who are unhealthy, inactive and lack good nutrition often are unmotivated to learn in the classroom, which presents a barrier to a complete education ([Research Review: School-based Health Interventions and Academic Achievement, 2009](#)). The goal of high quality physical education is to develop physically educated individuals who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of physical activity. Providing our students a high quality physical education program is critical to a complete education and development of the whole child that students need and deserve.

As school districts consider the options for supporting student achievement throughout the course of their K-12 education, it is critical to have a strong understanding of the purpose and importance of the state’s health and physical education requirements, and to carefully consider the processes and implications for supporting (granting) students’ waivers of high school physical education requirements.

Important Note: Waivers of physical education requirements do not include the requirements of high school health education. High school health education cannot be waived; however, students may be excused from portions of health education as per [WAC 392-410-140](#) listed below:

#### Sexual Health Education

1. AIDS education in public schools ([RCW 28A.230.070](#))
2. Medically accurate sexual health education ([RCW 28A.300.475](#))
3. Sexual health education – Definition – Optional course or subject matter – Excusal of students ([WAC 392-410-140](#))

## Defining High School Physical Education Waivers

### What is the law?

There are two state statutes that provide guidance for middle and high schools related to health and physical education:

1. [WAC 180-51-067](#) – requires students to demonstrate proficiency/competency in the knowledge portion of the fitness requirement.  
**Statute Language:** “Two health and fitness credits (.5 credit health; 1.5 credits fitness). Students may be excused from the fitness requirement under RCW [28A.230.050](#). Such excused students shall be required to demonstrate proficiency/competency in the knowledge portion of the fitness requirement, in accordance with written district policy.”
2. [RCW 28A.230.050](#) – provides for the option of waiving physical education.  
**Statute Language:** “All high schools of the state shall emphasize the work of physical education, and carry into effect all physical education requirements established by rule of the superintendent of public instruction: PROVIDED, That individual students may be excused from participating in physical education otherwise required under this section on account of physical disability, employment, or religious belief, or because of participation in directed athletics or military science and tactics or for other good cause.”

At the local school district level, school districts determine whether or not to allow for waivers in physical education based on the laws and local school board policies. There are many schools that do not offer waivers or offer minimal waivers in physical education in high school.

### What does it mean to waive physical education?

- Released from physical education class (not taking physical education at all).
- Not receiving credit.
- Accountable for the knowledge portion of physical education, as per statute.

### What does a student need to do to earn a waiver?

- Follow district and building process and recommendations (refer to page 5).
- Follow adopted school board policy and procedure (refer to page 6).
- Complete student paperwork, assessment and/or Fitness Plan or Portfolio (refer to pages 7-9).

## Physical Education Waiver Process and Recommendations

It is important for districts to carefully develop processes that align with state requirements. It is also important to note that a student may only waive .5 credit of physical education per semester. If a student is approved for more than one waiver of physical education, the following guidelines are recommended:

First Waiver (.5 PE credit)	Must meet proficiency/competency at 70% or higher in one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OSPI-developed fitness assessment: <i>Concepts of Health and Fitness</i></li> <li>District-approved fitness assessment (cognitive assessment on fitness education)</li> </ul>
Second Waiver (.5 PE credit)	Must meet proficiency/competency at 70% or higher in one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OSPI-developed fitness assessment: <i>Fitness Planning</i></li> <li>District-approved fitness assessment (cognitive assessment on fitness education that is different than First Waiver)</li> </ul>
Third Waiver (.5 PE credit)	Must meet proficiency/competency in one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District-approved fitness plan/portfolio at 80% or higher</li> <li>District-approved fitness assessment (cognitive assessment on fitness education that is different than Second Waiver) at 70% or higher</li> </ul>

The following process is offered as a framework for districts to support meeting state requirements and supporting educators and students in navigating physical education waiver requests.

### District Level

- Waiver for high school physical education should be an adopted board policy and procedure. (Refer to page 6, [Sample School Board Policy](#)).

### Building Level

- All waiver requests will be reviewed by a district/building designee.
- The building should have the following available:
  - Deadline for student applications.
  - Scheduled time and date to complete the assessment.
  - Assessment study guide for *Concepts of Health and Fitness*, *Fitness Planning*, or district-approved cognitive fitness assessment (refer to page 11, [Sample Student Physical Education Study Guide](#)).
  - Scheduled date to submit completed fitness plan/portfolio.
  - [Sample Rubric for Third Physical Education Waiver](#), [Sample Fitness Plan/Portfolio](#), refer to page 12.

### Student Level

- Step 1: Complete all paperwork and submit to the district/building designee for waiving physical education.
- Step 2: Receive notification from the district/building designee.
- Step 3: If approved, contact district/building designee for student materials.  
If not approved, register for a physical education course.

*Reminder: Students may be excused from the fitness requirement under [RCW 28A.230.050](#). Such excused students shall be required to demonstrate proficiency/competency in the knowledge portion of the fitness requirement as per statute (WAC 180-51-067).*

## Sample School Board Policy

It is the policy of the \_\_\_\_\_ School Board that physical education is a central component of a school's overall environment. The district shall adopt and implement a physical education waiver policy to meet Washington State statutes related to health and physical education requirements:

**High School Graduation Requirements** – delineates the minimum course credits

- Health education (.5 credit) and physical education (1.5 credits)
- Minimum requirements for graduation ([WAC 180-51-067](#))

**Assessments for Health and Fitness** – formerly known as Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs)

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- Essential academic learning requirements and assessments ([RCW 28A.230.095](#))

**Waivers in Physical Education** – outlines parameters for excused physical education

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- Physical education in high schools ([RCW 28A.230.050](#))

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- Access to nutritious foods and exercise ([RCW 28A.210.360](#))
- Food choice, physical activity, childhood fitness ([RCW 28A.210.365](#))

A student may only waive .5 credit of physical education per semester and student must demonstrate competency/proficiency on a fitness assessment and/or Fitness Plan/Portfolio. Waiver application forms are to be completed and returned to the appropriate designee (*example, 10 days prior to the start of the semester*). Applications received after the deadline for the applicable semester will be denied.

Allowable reasons for requesting a physical education waiver ([RCW 28A.230.050](#)):

1. Physical Disability – Attach verification from doctor or health care professional indicating that participation in a physical education class will be detrimental to student's health.
2. Employment\* – Attach verification from employer including dates and times of employment.
3. Religious Belief – Attach a note from parent/guardian if religion does not allow for participation in physical education.
4. Directed Athletics\* – Participation in school district extra-curricular athletic program. Student must complete the full season in good standing.
5. Military Science & Tactics\*
6. Other Good Cause\*

\*Exclusions that do not meet the criteria for a physical education waiver:

- Position as a Teacher's Aide or Office Assistant
- Use of an Open Period (e.g., late arrival, early dismissal)
- Previous failure of a high school physical education class

Rationale – Meeting a high school graduation requirement has a higher priority over serving as a teacher's aide, office assistant or use of an open period.

## Sample Student Directions for Requesting a Waiver

Complete the following steps to earn a waiver for physical education.

- Step 1: Complete and submit High School Physical Education Waiver Application Form A to the district/building designee.
- Step 2: Receive notification from the district/building designee.
- Step 3: If approved, contact district/building designee for student materials and High School Waiver Physical Education Waiver Form B.  
If not approved, register for a physical education course.
- Step 4: Complete and submit Authenticity of Student Work Form B and student work.

A student may only waive .5 credit of physical education per semester. If a student is approved for more than one waiver of physical education, the following procedure is recommended:

First waiver (.5 PE credit)	Must meet proficiency/competency at 70% or higher in one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OSPI-developed fitness assessment: <i>Concepts of Health and Fitness</i></li> <li>• District-approved fitness assessment (cognitive assessment on fitness education)</li> </ul>
Second waiver (.5 PE credit)	Must meet proficiency/competency at 70% or higher in one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OSPI-developed fitness assessment, <i>Fitness Planning</i></li> <li>• District-approved fitness assessment (cognitive assessment on fitness education)</li> </ul>
Third waiver (.5 PE credit)	Must meet proficiency/competency in one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District-approved fitness plan/portfolio at 80% or higher</li> <li>• District-approved fitness assessment (cognitive assessment on fitness education) at 70% or higher</li> </ul>

# Sample High School Physical Education Waiver Form A – Student Form

This form to be completed by the student for each semester waiver requested.

Application date: \_\_\_\_\_ Semester applying for: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

High School: \_\_\_\_\_ Graduation Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical education completed.

- 1 semester  
 2 semesters

Have you received a waiver in physical education?

- Yes, semester waived (e.g., Second semester, Sophomore Year) \_\_\_\_\_  
 No

Check all that apply.

- Enrolled as a Teacher's Aide (TA)  
 Enrolled in study hall  
 Failed physical education at any time in high school  
 Have you had any open periods e.g., late arrival, early dismissal?

Check the appropriate box for waiver request:

The following six categories qualify as allowable reasons for the administrator to consider waiving physical education:

- Physical Disability** – Attach verification from doctor or health care professional indicating that participation in a physical education class will be detrimental to student's health.  
 **Employment\*** – Attach verification from employer including dates and times of employment.  
 **Religious Belief** – Attach a note from parent/guardian if religion does not allow for participation in physical education.  
 **Directed Athletics\*** – Participation in school district extra-curricular athletic program. Student must complete season in good standing.  
 **Military Science & Tactics\***  
 **Other Good Cause\*** – Please explain. \_\_\_\_\_

\* Exclusions for Physical Education Waivers: A student is not eligible for a PE waiver if one or more of the following apply:

- Position as a Teacher's Aide or Office Assistant
- Use of an Open Period (e.g., late arrival, early dismissal)
- Previous failure of a high school physical education class

Rationale – Meeting a high school graduation requirement has a higher priority over serving as a teacher's aide, office assistant or use of an open period.

Submit a copy of your transcript and a list of classes to be taken for the remainder of your high school career.

**I understand that if the Physical Education Waiver Application is approved, I will be required to take a written test and/or complete portfolio requirements according to district policy.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Student)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Parent/Guardian)

Committee Approval Only

- Approved  
 Not approved

Committee Member Signatures

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Administrator)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Department Head)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Staff)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Counselor)

# Sample High School Physical Education Waiver Form B – Student Form

This form to be completed by the student.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

High School: \_\_\_\_\_

You have been approved for:  1<sup>st</sup> Semester  2<sup>nd</sup> Semester Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete the following steps to earn a waiver for physical education.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>First Waiver</b> (.5 PE credit)	<p><b>Assessment</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Schedule a date/time for a written cognitive fitness assessment (<i>Concepts of Health and Fitness</i> or district-approved written fitness assessment).</p> <p>Date _____ Time _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Obtain a district prepared study guide.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Second Waiver</b> (.5 PE credit)	<p><b>Assessment</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Schedule a date/time for a written cognitive fitness assessment (<i>Fitness Planning</i> or district-approved written fitness assessment that is different than First Waiver).</p> <p>Date _____ Time _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Obtain a district prepared study guide.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Third Waiver</b> (.5 PE credit)	<p>Complete one of the following:</p> <p><b>A. Fitness Plan/Portfolio</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Obtain a district prepared Fitness Plan/Portfolio.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Complete Student Fitness Plan/Portfolio.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Submit Student Fitness Plan/Portfolio to district/building designee.</p> <p>Submit by _____ (Due Date)</p> <p><b>B. District Approved Fitness Assessment (written cognitive fitness assessment that is different than Second Waiver)</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Schedule a date/time for a written cognitive fitness assessment</p> <p>Date _____ Time _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Obtain a district prepared study guide.</p>

### Signed statement of authenticity of work

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that the documents submitted are evidence for the physical education waiver and are authentic and of my own work.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Student Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

# Sample High School Physical Education Waiver Form C – District/Building Form

This form to be completed by the district/building designee.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

High School: \_\_\_\_\_

The student is applying for:

- First Waiver
- Second Waiver
- Third Waiver

The student has:

1. Provided a copy of Form A.

- Yes
- No

2. Met proficiency/competency in one or more of the following (check appropriate box).

- OSPI-developed fitness assessment: *Concepts of Health and Fitness* (at 70% or higher)
- Fitness Planning* (at 70% or higher)
- District-approved fitness assessment (at 70% or higher)
- Fitness Plan/Portfolio (at 80% or higher)

3. Provided a copy of Form B.

- Yes
- No

Committee Use Only

- Waiver requirements met
- Waiver requirements not met

Committee Member Signatures

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Department Head)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Administrator)

*Completed form should be kept with student records.*

## SAMPLE STUDENT PHYSICAL EDUCATION STUDY GUIDE

The purpose of this study guide is to distribute to the student requesting a physical education waiver to study for the required fitness assessment(s).

<b>First waiver</b>	<b><i>Concepts of Health and Fitness</i></b>	<b>District-Approved Fitness Assessment</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S.M.A.R.T. Goal setting</li> <li>• FITT Principle</li> <li>• Components of Health-Related Fitness</li> <li>• Benefits of Exercise</li> <li>• Training Principles</li> <li>• R.I.C.E.</li> <li>• Physical Testing</li> <li>• Importance of Tracking Fitness</li> <li>• Metabolism</li> <li>• Caloric Expenditure</li> <li>• Body Image</li> <li>• Consumerism</li> <li>• Sedentary vs. Non-Sedentary Lifestyle</li> </ul>	This area needs to be completed by the school district if they have created a district-approved fitness assessment.
<b>Second waiver</b>	<b><i>Fitness Planning</i></b>	<b>District-Approved Fitness Assessment</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S.M.A.R.T. Goal setting</li> <li>• FITT Principle</li> <li>• Components of Health-Related Fitness</li> <li>• Training Principles</li> <li>• Physical Testing</li> <li>• Importance of Tracking Fitness</li> <li>• Body Image</li> <li>• Sedentary vs. Non-Sedentary Lifestyle</li> </ul>	This area needs to be completed by the school district if they have created a district-approved fitness assessment.
<b>Third waiver</b>	<b><i>Fitness Plan/Portfolio</i></b>	<b>District-Approved Fitness Plan/Portfolio or District-Approved Fitness Assessment</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S.M.A.R.T. Goal setting</li> <li>• FITT Principle</li> <li>• Components of Health-Related Fitness</li> <li>• Training Principles</li> <li>• Importance of Tracking Fitness</li> <li>• Warm-up/Cool-down</li> <li>• Work-out Safety</li> <li>• Motivation</li> </ul>	This area needs to be completed by the school district if they have created a district-approved fitness assessment.

**For the SAMPLE RUBRIC FOR THIRD PHYSICAL EDUCATION WAIVER, Student Fitness Plan/Portfolio, refer to the next page.**

**SAMPLE RUBRIC FOR THIRD PHYSICAL EDUCATION WAIVER  
Student Fitness Plan/Portfolio**

<b>CATEGORIES</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PLAN</b>	<b>GOAL</b> Identify a health-related fitness component and write a S.M.A.R.T. Goal	Clearly identifies all 5 areas of a S.M.A.R.T. Goal	Clearly identifies 4 of the 5 areas of a S.M.A.R.T. Goal	Clearly identifies 3 of the 5 areas of a S.M.A.R.T. Goal	Clearly identifies 1-2 of the 5 areas of a S.M.A.R.T. Goal
<b>PROGRAM DESIGN</b>	<b>WARM-UPS</b> Gentle exercises that increase in intensity and gradually raise heart rate and temperature of muscles	Clearly identifies all 3 areas of a warm-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Type of exercise</li> <li>Duration</li> <li>Intensity</li> </ul>	Clearly identifies 2 of the 3 areas of a warm-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Type of exercise</li> <li>Duration</li> <li>Intensity</li> </ul>	Clearly identifies 1 of the 3 areas of a warm-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Type of exercise</li> <li>Duration</li> <li>Intensity</li> </ul>	Shows little or no understanding of a proper warm-up
	<b>FITT PRINCIPLE</b> Analyzes the FITT Principle as related to established goals	Clearly analyzes all 4 areas of the FITT Principle	Clearly analyzes 3 of the 4 areas of the FITT Principle	Clearly analyzes 2 of the 4 areas of the FITT Principle	Clearly analyzes 1 of the 4 areas of the FITT Principle
	<b>PROGRESSION</b> Addresses increase in intensity and/or duration of exercise(s)	Clearly records information regarding reps, sets, weight or time. Progression is evident.	Records information regarding reps, sets, weight or time. Progression is difficult to determine.	Records information regarding reps, sets, weight or time. Little or no progression is apparent.	Exercises are not recorded properly and little or no progression is apparent.
	<b>COOL-DOWN</b> Slowing down the level of activity to decrease heart rate and muscle temperature	Clearly identifies all 3 areas of a cool-down: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Type of exercise</li> <li>Duration</li> <li>Intensity</li> </ul>	Clearly identifies 2 of the 3 areas of a cool-down: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Type of exercise</li> <li>Duration</li> <li>Intensity</li> </ul>	Clearly identifies 1 of the 3 areas of a cool-down: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Type of exercise</li> <li>Duration</li> <li>Intensity</li> </ul>	Shows little or no understanding of a proper cool-down
<b>STRATEGIES</b>	<b>SAFETY</b> Identifies potential dangers during the work-out that could result in injury	Clearly identifies all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 potential dangers</li> <li>2 solutions to the potential dangers</li> </ul>	Clearly identifies 3 of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 potential dangers</li> <li>2 solutions to the potential dangers</li> </ul>	Clearly identifies 2 of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 potential dangers</li> <li>2 solutions to the potential dangers</li> </ul>	Clearly identifies 1 of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 potential dangers</li> <li>2 solutions to the potential dangers</li> </ul>
	<b>MOTIVATION</b> Identifies challenges and strategies for completing fitness plan	Clearly identifies all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 challenges</li> <li>2 strategies for overcoming challenges</li> </ul>	Clearly identifies 3 of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 challenges</li> <li>2 strategies for overcoming challenges</li> </ul>	Clearly identifies 2 of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 challenges</li> <li>2 strategies for overcoming challenges</li> </ul>	Clearly identifies 1 of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 challenges</li> <li>2 strategies for overcoming challenges</li> </ul>

## Differences Between Physical Education, Physical Activity, and Athletics

The terms “physical education” and “physical activity” seem to be used interchangeably by many people. [Washington’s K-12 Health and Fitness State Learning Standards](#) focus on what students should know and be able to do. High quality physical education instruction contributes to good health, develops fundamental and advanced motor skills, improves students’ self-confidence, and provides opportunities for increased levels of physical fitness that are associated with high academic achievement.

### *What is the difference between physical education, physical activity, and athletics?*

<b>Physical Education</b>	<b>Physical Activity</b>	<b>Athletics</b>
Physical Education is defined as a planned, sequential program of curricula and instruction that helps students develop the knowledge, attitudes, motor skills, confidence, and self-management skills needed to adopt and maintain physically active and healthy lifestyles.	Physical Activity is defined by the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that result in energy expenditure. CDC recommends sixty minutes of physical activity is needed along with daily physical education.	Athletics is described as an active diversion requiring physical exertion and competition; a contest between athletes. While athletics are a valuable part of school life, athletics are extra-curricular activities which do not meet the <a href="#">Washington K-12 Health and Fitness State Learning Standards</a> and do not promote participation by all students. Athletics are not a replacement for physical education.
An understanding of good health and fitness concepts and practices is essential for all students. High quality physical education instruction contributes to good health, develops fundamental and advanced motor skills, improves students’ self-confidence, and provides opportunities for increased levels of physical fitness that are associated with high academic achievement as defined by the <a href="#">Washington K-12 Health and Fitness State Learning Standards</a> .	Physical activity may include recreational, fitness and sport activities such as jumping rope, playing soccer, lifting weights, as well as daily activities such as walking to the store, taking the stairs or raking the leaves.	Physical education teaches knowledge of skills and concepts necessary for safe and healthy living, and in turn, for successful learning. Athletics typically focuses on one sport. Athletics provides sport specific instruction but the coach is not responsible for teaching the <a href="#">Washington K-12 Health and Fitness State Learning Standards</a> .
When children learn and have the time to develop and practice skills, they have an increasing opportunity to find enjoyment in sport and physical education, which can carry into an active adult lifestyle. Providing quality physical education can assist as a solution for creating active healthy adults.	Physical activity and exercise is the application of what is learned in physical education class. Children need time to learn and practice to master basic locomotor skills and knowledge. Students benefit from time and practice spent with a certificated physical education specialist.	Athletes are not given the opportunity to learn what a physically educated person should know and be able to do. Physical education can enhance interest in athletics.
The physical education setting, whether the gym, field, or multipurpose room, is the classroom in which the curriculum of physical education is conducted and is taught by a certified physical education specialist. Physical education is a required class and a component of the curriculum and the education of the whole child.	Good physical education develops (teaches) individuals to have the knowledge, skills and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of physical activity.	Athletics are enrichment activities that occur outside of the normal school day and are optional activities. Athletics are taught by a certificated coach.

There is a significant difference in the definitions of physical education, physical activity, and athletics. Each is extremely beneficial and important in the educational system.

National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), [Is it Physical Education or Physical Activity?](#)

## Quality Physical Education

Physical inactivity is part of the problem of overweight youth. Physical activity is part of the solution. Physical education is a critical component to increasing physical activity.

School physical education programs are the one place that:

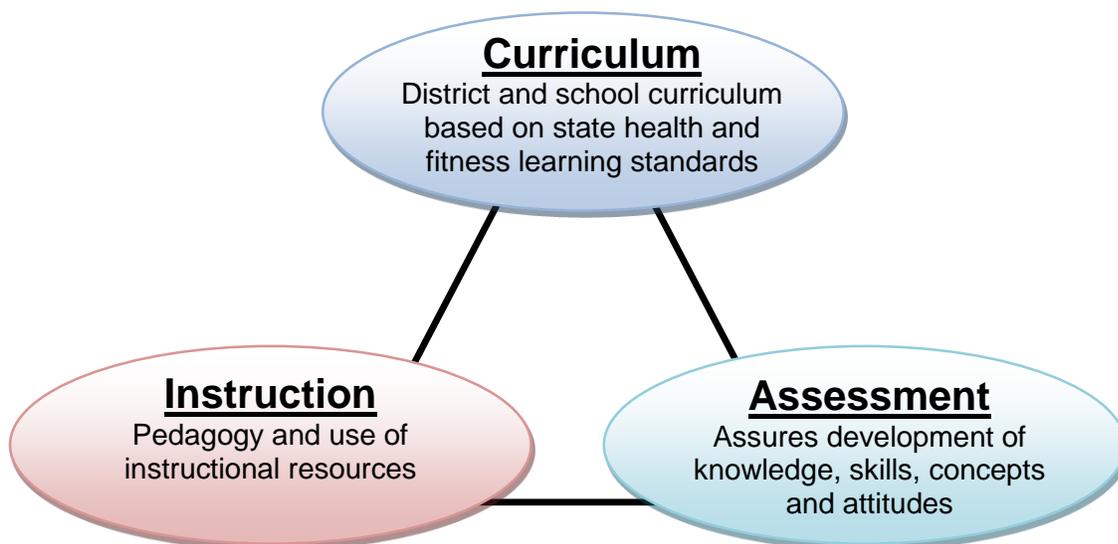
1. **All** children can participate in regular physical activity.
2. **All** children can become physically educated for a lifetime of physical activity.

**Physical Activity is a BEHAVIOR**

**and**

**Physical Education is a CURRICULUM**  
that helps create and support physical activity.

*Quality physical education leads to a  
lifetime of physical activity.*



## Acknowledgements

Sincere appreciation is extended to the members of the Physical Education Waiver Team for their time, expertise, and commitment to ensuring that all students in Washington achieve a quality education in health and fitness.

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For more information about the contents of this document, please contact the Program Supervisor for Health and Fitness Education.

*This publication was supported by Cooperative Agreement Award No. DP08-801 5U87DP001264 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC.*

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