



Idaho Schools Physical Education- Quality and Quantity Study and Report, Dec. 2009

Limited statewide information exists on the quality and quantity of physical education in Idaho. To address this problem, the Coordinated School Health Program (CSH) in the Idaho State Department of Education and Department of Health and Welfare and the University of Idaho led efforts, in collaboration with the Idaho Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, Boise State University, Lewis-Clark State College, and Idaho State University, to examine the quality and quantity of physical education received by K-12th grade Idaho students.

As there is no federal law requiring schools to provide physical education, states may choose to set general or minimum requirements. Like many states, Idaho delegates the responsibility for physical education decisions to local school districts. Idaho requires physical education for grades K-8 but does not set minimum time requirements. Physical education must be offered as a course of study for grades 9-12, but it is not required nor is it a graduation requirement.

618 surveys were sent to PE teachers statewide and 285 surveys were returned for all grade levels across all six education regions (46% response rate)



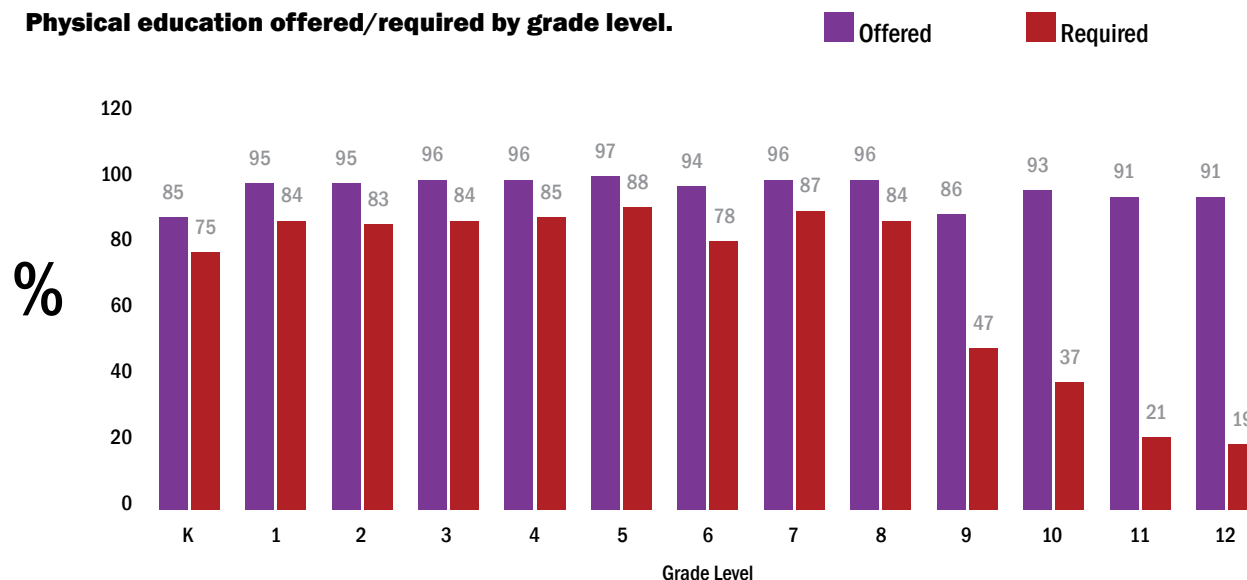
Positive Findings:

- Most physical education teachers are certified
- The average elementary class size is 22 students per teacher; junior high is 23 students per teacher and high school is 22 students per teacher.
- Strong perceived support from principals for physical education

Findings of Concern:

- Quantity of Physical Education Offered and Required in Idaho Schools

Physical education offered/required by grade level.



Idaho requirements for physical education fall below National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) physical education recommendations of 150 minutes per week for elementary students and 225 minutes for middle and high school students.

High school students taking physical education receive the highest number of physical education minutes per week (194 minutes) and were closest to meeting NASPE standards. Elementary students receive physical education slightly over one third of the recommended number of minutes (55 minutes) per week and junior high students received just over half of the recommended number of minutes (128 minutes) per week.

- Formal assessment of student performance is sparse and non-uniform, fitness assessment is conducted in only 11% of schools surveyed. Thus, there is no information available on the fitness status of Idaho students.
- Utilization of Idaho Physical Education Standards is lowest in high schools (45-52%)

Suggestions to Address Concerns:

1. Adopt physical education time and graduation requirements for all grade levels.
2. Adopt requirements for fitness assessment of Idaho students
3. Expand professional development to model best practices in physical education and train educators to increase physical activity across the curriculum
4. Implement professional development focusing on physical education standards and comprehensive physical education assessment

Funding for this project was provided to Idaho Coordinated School Health through a cooperative agreement for CDC Division of Adolescent School Health and Idaho Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.