



## Physical Education

### ***Are there school district policies and programs that address physical education?***

Yes. Each school district is responsible for developing a physical education program that stresses physical fitness; encourages healthy, active lifestyles; and encourages all students in prekindergarten through grade 12 to participate in physical education.<sup>1</sup> Florida law, defines “physical education” to mean:

the development or maintenance of skills related to strength, agility, flexibility, movement, and stamina, including dance; the development of knowledge and skills regarding teamwork and fair play; the development of knowledge and skills regarding nutrition and physical fitness as part of a healthy lifestyle; and the development of positive attitudes regarding sound nutrition and physical activity as a component of personal well-being.<sup>2</sup>

Each school district is required to adopt and annually review a written physical education policy that details the district’s physical education program, expected program outcomes, the benefits of physical education, and the availability of one-on-one counseling concerning the benefits of physical education.<sup>3</sup> Each district must post a current version of its physical education policy on the district’s website, and the Department of Education (DOE) must post links to each of the district policies on DOE’s website.<sup>4</sup> A school district may also adopt policies for participation in physical education programs, including appropriate physical education attire and protective gear.<sup>5</sup>

Each school district must provide all courses required for middle grades promotion and high school graduation, including courses in physical education.<sup>6</sup> In addition, physical education instruction must be aligned to standards adopted by the State Board of Education.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Section 1003.455(1), F.S.

<sup>2</sup> Section 1003.01(16), F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Sections 1003.453(1) and 1003.455(2), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Sections 1001.11(7) and 1003.453(2), F.S.; see Florida Department of Education, *Links to Florida School Districts’ Physical Education Policies*, <http://www.fldoe.org/bii/CSHP/word/flschldist.doc> (last visited May 13, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Section 1001.43(3)(d), F.S.

<sup>6</sup> Section 1003.42(1), F.S.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*; see rule 6A-1.09401(1)(g), F.A.C.; see also Florida Department of Education, *Sunshine State Standards: Health Education and Physical Education, Pre-K-2* (1996), available at <http://www.fldoe.org/BII/Curriculum/SSS/pdf/pek.pdf>; Florida Department of Education, *Sunshine State Standards: Health Education and Physical Education, Grades 3-5* (1996), available at <http://www.fldoe.org/BII/Curriculum/SSS/pdf/pe3.pdf>; Florida Department of Education, *Sunshine State Standards: Health Education and Physical Education, Grades 6-8* (1996), available at <http://www.fldoe.org/BII/Curriculum/SSS/pdf/pe6.pdf>; Florida Department of Education, *Sunshine State*

**What are the physical education requirements for elementary and middle school students?**

School districts must provide 150 minutes of physical education every week for elementary school students.<sup>8</sup> On any day during which physical education instruction is conducted, students must be provided with at least 30 consecutive minutes of physical education.<sup>9</sup>

Beginning with the 2009-10 academic year, the equivalent of one class period per day of physical education for one semester each year is required for middle school students (grades 6 through 8).<sup>10</sup>

To satisfy the 150-minute-per-week requirement for elementary school students or the one semester requirement for middle school students, the physical education provided must “consist of physical activities of at least a moderate intensity level and for a duration sufficient to provide a significant health benefit to students, subject to the differing capabilities of students.”<sup>11</sup>

A district’s physical education program and curricula must be reviewed by a certified physical education instructor.<sup>12</sup> However, the required physical education for elementary and middle school students may be provided by any instructional personnel, designated by the school principal, *regardless of their certification*.<sup>13</sup> These instructional personnel may include classroom teachers; staff who provide student personnel services (*e.g.*, guidance counselors, social workers, career specialists, and school psychologists); librarians and media specialists; other instructional staff (*e.g.*, learning resource specialists); and education paraprofessionals.<sup>14</sup>

**May the physical education requirements be waived for elementary or middle school students?**

Yes. A public elementary or middle school must waive the physical education requirements for a student:

- ❖ Who is enrolled or required to enroll in a remedial course; or
- ❖ Whose parent indicates in writing to the school that:

The parent requests that the student enroll in “another course from among those courses offered as options by the school district;” or

The student is participating in physical activities outside the school day which are equal to or in excess of the mandated requirement.<sup>15</sup> A school district is required to notify a student’s

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*Standards: Health Education and Physical Education, Grades 9-12 (1996), available at <http://www.fldoe.org/BII/Curriculum/SSS/pdf/pe9.pdf>.*

<sup>8</sup> Section 1003.455(3), F.S. The 150-minute-per-week requirement applies to students in kindergarten through grade 5 and students in grade 6 who are enrolled in a school that contains one or more elementary grades. *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> Section 2, ch. 2008-94, L.O.F.; s. 1003.455(3), F.S.

<sup>11</sup> Section 1003.455(1), F.S.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> Section 1003.455(3), F.S.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*; s. 1012.01(2), F.S.

<sup>15</sup> Section 1003.455(4), F.S.

parent of the options available for waiver of the physical education requirements before scheduling the student to participate in physical education.<sup>16</sup>

### ***Is there a physical education requirement for high school graduation?***

Yes. A student selecting the traditional 24-credit graduation option must earn one credit in physical education.<sup>17</sup> For students entering 9th grade in or after the 2007-08 academic year, credit for physical education must include the integration of health education.<sup>18</sup> A student selecting one of the accelerated 18-credit graduation options or the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum or Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) Curriculum is not required to earn physical education credit.<sup>19</sup>

### ***What options are available for meeting the high school graduation requirement for physical education?***

To meet the one-credit requirement for students entering high school in or after the 2007-08<sup>20</sup> academic year, DOE has established three course options.<sup>21</sup> A school district may choose from among these three options:

- ❖ **Option 1.** A one-half-credit course in personal fitness and one-half-credit course in a physical education elective (taught by teachers certified in physical education);
- ❖ **Option 2.** The one-credit Health Opportunities through Physical Education (HOPE) Core course<sup>22</sup> (co-taught by a teacher certified in physical education and a teacher certified in health education or taught by a teacher dually certified in both physical education and health education); or
- ❖ **Option 3.** The one-credit HOPE Physical Education Variation course<sup>23</sup> (taught by a teacher certified in physical education).<sup>24</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Section 1003.455(5), F.S.

<sup>17</sup> Sections 1003.428(2)(a)6. and 1003.43(1)(j), F.S.; *see also* High School Graduation and Traditional 24-Credit Graduation Option Fact Sheets.

<sup>18</sup> Section 1003.428(2)(a)6., F.S. For students who entered high school before the 2007-08 academic year, credit for physical education must include the assessment, improvement, and maintenance of personal fitness. Section 1003.42(1)(j), F.S.

<sup>19</sup> *See s.* 1003.429, F.S.; *see also* High School Graduation and Accelerated 18-Credit Graduation Options Fact Sheets.

<sup>20</sup> Students who entered high school before the 2007-08 academic year must take a one-half-credit course in personal fitness and one-half-credit course in a physical education elective.<sup>20</sup> In addition, these students must take a one-half-credit course in life management skills, which includes nutrition and other health education.<sup>20</sup> A school district may not require a student to earn this physical education credit in 9th grade.<sup>20</sup> Section 1003.43(1), F.S.

<sup>21</sup> Memorandum from Commissioner of Education to District Superintendents (March 12, 2007), *available at* <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-4332/k12-07-61memo.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> *See* Florida Department of Education, *Course Description, Grades 9-12, Adult, Health Opportunities through Physical Education (HOPE)*, <http://www.fldoe.org/bii/CSHP/word/hope.doc> (last visited May 13, 2010).

<sup>23</sup> *See* Florida Department of Education, *Course Description, Grades 9-12, Adult, Physical Education Variation*, <http://www.fldoe.org/bii/CSHP/word/phyedvar.doc> (last visited May 13, 2010).

<sup>24</sup> Memorandum from Commissioner of Education to District Superintendents, *supra* note 21, at 2.

A school district may not require a student to take these physical education courses in 9th grade.<sup>25</sup>

***What alternatives are available for satisfying the high school graduation requirement for physical education?***

A student entering high school in or after the 2007-08<sup>26</sup> academic year may satisfy the physical education credit requirement through any of the following alternatives:

- ❖ For a student enrolled in *Option 1* (one-half-credit course in personal fitness and one-half-credit course in a physical education elective):
  - ◆ Participation in an interscholastic sport at the varsity or junior varsity level for two full seasons, and passage of DOE’s personal fitness competency test with a “C” or better, satisfies both the one-half credit in personal fitness and one-half credit in a physical education elective, totaling one credit in physical education;
  - ◆ Completion of one semester with a “C” or better in a marching band class, a physical activity class that requires participation in marching band activities as an extracurricular activity, or a dance class, satisfies one-half credit in a physical education elective. However, the student must take one-half-credit in personal fitness to complete the required one credit in physical education; or
  - ◆ Completion of 2 years in a Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) class that includes drills as a significant component satisfies one credit of physical education electives. However, the student must take one-half credit in personal fitness to complete the required one credit in physical education.<sup>27,28</sup>
- ❖ For a student enrolled in *Option 2* (one-credit HOPE Core course) or *Option 3* (one-credit HOPE Physical Education Variation course):
  - ◆ Participation in an interscholastic sport at the varsity or junior varsity level for two full seasons, and passage of DOE’s personal fitness competency test with a “C” or better, satisfies the required one credit in physical education; or

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<sup>25</sup> Section 1003.428(2)(a)6., F.S.

<sup>26</sup> A student who entered high school before the 2007-2008 school year may satisfy the physical education credit requirement through participation in an interscholastic sport at the varsity or junior varsity level for two full seasons, and passage of DOE’s personal fitness competency test with a “C” or better, satisfies the required one credit in physical education; or completion of one semester with a “C” or better in a marching band class, a physical activity class that requires participation in marching band activities as an extracurricular activity, or a ROTC class with drills as a significant component, satisfies one-half credit in a physical education elective. However, the student must take one-half credit in personal fitness to complete the required one credit in physical education. Section 1003.43(1)(j), F.S.

<sup>27</sup> Completing 2 years in a Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) class simultaneously satisfies one credit in fine or performing arts and one credit in physical education electives (total of two credits). Section 1003.428(2)(a)6., F.S.

<sup>28</sup> Section 1003.428(2)(a)6., F.S.; Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Instruction and Innovation, Division of K-12 Public Schools, *Technical Assistance Paper: New Legislation Relating to Physical Education, No. K12: 2007-103*, at 4-5 (Jun. 15, 2007), available at [http://www.fldoe.org/bii/CSHP/Education/Physical\\_Ed/TAPnewPElegislation.pdf](http://www.fldoe.org/bii/CSHP/Education/Physical_Ed/TAPnewPElegislation.pdf) [hereinafter *2007 Physical Education TAP*].

- ◆ Completion of 2 years in a (ROTC) class, with drills as a significant component, satisfies the required one credit in physical education.<sup>29</sup>

***Does the Florida Virtual School offer courses that satisfy the physical education requirements?***

Yes. The Florida Virtual School offers the following high school physical education/health classes: Adaptive Physical Education for students with Individual Educational Plans (IEP) or 504 Plans (1/2 credit), Fitness Lifestyle Design (1/2 credit), Life Management Skills (1/2 credit), Personal Fitness (1/2 credit), and Health Opportunities through Physical Education (HOPE).<sup>30</sup>

***Where can I get additional information?***

***Florida Department of Education***

Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction  
Coordinated School Health Program  
(850) 245-0480  
[http://www.fldoe.org/bii/CSHP/Education/Physical\\_Ed](http://www.fldoe.org/bii/CSHP/Education/Physical_Ed)

***Florida House of Representatives***

Education Committee  
(850) 488-7451  
<http://www.myfloridahouse.gov>

***Florida House of Representatives***

Appropriations Committee  
(850) 488-6204  
<http://www.myfloridahouse.gov>

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<sup>29</sup> Section 1003.428(2)(a)6., F.S.; see *supra* note 27; 2007 Physical Education TAP, *supra* note 28.

<sup>30</sup> Florida Virtual School: Course Offerings, available at <http://www.flvs.net/areas/flvscourses/Pages/Course%20Catalog/CourseListing.aspx#> (last visited May 13, 2010).