

Should the physical education profession lobby to become a "core subject" when No Child Left Behind is amended?

Yes, the physical education profession should lobby to become a core subject when No Child Left Behind is amended. More attention to physical education and physical activity is needed because of the rising epidemic of obesity among youths in the United States and the dwindling of physical education programs in many areas of the country. If physical education were considered a core subject, it would help bring recognition to the field and make the public realize its importance. With this recognition, schools would be more accountable for what goes on in physical education classes and perhaps more money would be allotted to the programs so that adequate equipment could be purchased. In addition, class sizes might be reduced so that all students could receive more practice time, thereby increasing fitness levels and motor skill ability, which would lead to a healthier and more physically active population.

—*Ryan R. Bradshaw, physical education teacher, Western High School, Las Vegas, NV.*

Iwish I could say that I believe physical education should be included as a core subject in No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Unfortunately, I feel that physical education is still a work in progress, which has transitioned from old school gymnastics, to a form of military boot camp, to a team sports emphasis, to a current fitness boom that is paving the way for students' future physical activity experiences. Physical education teachers across the country are all working hard to create a physical education environment that is the most beneficial for students. Advancements in physical education are taking place today and are enhancing the ability for students to gain a solid education.

No Child Left Behind has not yet been proven to be an effective measure of students' education. Having physical education as a core subject would only slow the advancing process of physical education due to added emphasis on testing, budget threats, and limited curriculum, rather than working to discover the best methods for teaching and learning in a pro-

gressive manner. Both physical education's current direction and NCLB need to be proven effective before they are integrated.

—*Danny Gatfield, undergraduate student, Boise State University, Boise, ID.*

Physical educators should lobby for physical education to become a core subject when No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is amended in order to cease further marginalization of the subject. Throughout the nation, physical education requirements are minimal. If physical education does not lobby for inclusion in NCLB as a core subject, school requirements for physical education may be decreased even more, so that more time during the school day may be focused on core subjects. If physical education were a core subject, it would be included in each school's adequate yearly progress scores, and thus provide the necessary incentive that school policymakers apparently need in order to understand the value of offering opportunities to be physically active to students. Fighting to make physical education a core subject will also strengthen physical education programs across the nation. As physical education becomes a core subject, there also will be accountability for teaching, and hence a greater emphasis placed on (1) curriculum development, (2) professional development in instructional effectiveness, and (3) refining measures for student-learning outcomes. We will be enabled to educate students on a physical and academic level. The message will be sent to the nation that sacrificing our young people's health and fitness for improved

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May Question

In light of the editorial in this issue, do online physical education courses meet NASPE's standards for quality physical education?

Respond briefly* and send your response by March 6 to *JOPERD*, Issues, 1900 Association Dr., Reston, VA 20191, or e-mail: joperd@aaahperd.org

*Preferred length is 200 words or less; occasionally, longer responses may be considered. Please include your institution's name and your position—whether faculty or staff member, administrator, or student. We also welcome suggestions for future Issues questions.

academic achievement is a cost we cannot afford.

—*Jenelle Young, graduate student, Department of Sports and Educational Leadership, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV.*

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is an ideal standard in education that is focused on the concept that every child will meet a minimal standard of academic performance. However, NCLB is flawed in its basic concept, because it fails to recognize factors external to the educational system that contribute to student academic performance (e.g., family structure, home life support, basic character makeup).

For this reason, physical educators must be cautious. As a profession, we must be aware of the problems associated with NCLB and avoid advocating for physical education to become a core subject. If physical education chooses to lobby for inclusion, it will incur the same problems as other core subjects that have demonstrated a failure to help every child reach minimal levels of achievement. Physical education should be mindful of the challenges NCLB presents, especially with respect to the fact that no funding comes with this mandate. Without funding, physical education faces some very difficult hurdles (e.g. ridiculous class sizes and a shortage of trained individuals), which may lead to demonstrated failure.

—*Kenneth V. Higbee, teacher and administrative assistant at Pahrangat Valley High School, Alamo, NV, and a doctoral student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV.*

Regardless of one's opinion of the merit or lack thereof of No Child Left Behind policies, the cold, hard facts are that principals and school districts are under

tremendous pressure to meet required performance standards in the subject areas that No Child Left Behind currently addresses. Principals, acting as organizational leaders, should prioritize their focus and resources on performance in the core subject areas because under-performance in those areas puts critical funding for their schools in jeopardy. A subject that is not a core subject under No Child Left Behind risks becoming marginalized over time and greatly increases the likelihood that it could be eliminated from the curriculum. If the physical education profession believes that physical education is truly a vital component to a child's overall, school-based education, it must lobby for it to become a core subject under No Child Left Behind. In addition, the physical education profession must be prepared to create a standardized process to demonstrate evidence of student learning in physical education class as the result of the increased accountability that No Child Left Behind will require. Otherwise, school-based physical education's viability will be greatly jeopardized in the years to come.

—*Tom Lillis, graduate student, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA.*

I feel that physical education should be an enjoyable subject and not a core subject. I also believe that students have enough tests to pass and do not need an additional exam to add further stress.

Not everyone is interested in physical education. People have their own preferences, and they should be allowed to make their own choices.

—*Corey Allen, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA.*

Yes. However, the push for physical education without a simultaneous push for all other components of the Coordinated School Health Program model will

have little impact.

—*Jeff Schulz, associate dean of the College of Health and Human Services, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI.*

Yes. With the dramatic increase in obesity among youths, physical education should be one of the first areas to become part of a No Child Left Behind amendment. Childhood obesity is up 30 percent, and if physical education does not become a core subject, that number will continue to increase. If the importance of physical fitness is not established at a young age, it is hard to live a healthy life in adulthood. Children also need physical education as a way to relieve stress and as a chance to relax and not have to be in the classroom. I feel that not making physical education a core subject will make students think there is no need to be active or to play sports. Physical education is an aspect of education that is very important, and removing it from the curriculum will teach students that being active and healthy is not important.

—*Darren Thomas, undergraduate student in health and physical education, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA.*

Physical educators need to lobby federally to be fully funded for mandated physical education daily in every state for K-8 students. All educators have to do is look at the shape some of these kids are in to know that our profession appears to be failing our students.

At my school we measured the height and weight of each child, and I was astounded at what some of my students weigh. I have a fourth-grade girl who weighs 190 pounds at 4 feet, 7 inches tall. Whenever we run in physical education class, she always tells me she is hurt or is sick or her mom does not want her to run. This child is already obese and is clear-

ly a candidate for heart problems and possibly diabetes.

I cannot help this child when I see her twice every six days. If physical education were a daily event, I would have more time to educate her and her classmates on good health habits as well as on the importance of daily exercise.

In order to help the next generation of Americans, the government needs to fully fund and mandate daily physical education in all 50 states!

—Cheryl Allen, *K-6 physical educator, Madison Park School, Phoenix, AZ.*

The physical education profession should lobby to become a core subject when No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is amended. I believe there should be standardized testing for physical education, just as there is in other curricular areas. Standardized testing will lead to higher standards and accountability within physical education.

This means children will be held responsible for performing physical activities at the end of the year that will count toward graduation. Inclusion in NCLB will result in greater priority for quality physical education programming, as well as communicate the importance of our subject matter to administrators, parents, and other teachers.

The NCLB Act states that it will empower parents, educators, and administrators with data from annual assessments that measure what children know in "core subjects." From these assessments, parents will be given information on their children's schools, the qualifications of teachers, and their children's progress in "core subjects." Without standardized testing in physical education, annual assessments cannot be made and physical education will never become a "core subject."

—Charles A. Hackenheimer, Jr., *graduate assistant, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV.*

Conferences & Workshops

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ty's Institute for the Study of Youth Sports. Leaders in the coaching industry will teach new techniques for the proper training of coaches. The conference targets coaching educators at all levels of competition and in all sports. For more information, call Christine Bolger, (800) 213-7193 x417.

October 12–14, 2006. National Physical Education Teacher Education Conference, Long Beach, CA. Taking as its theme, "Directions for the 21st Century," this NASPE-sponsored conference will feature research by teacher educators and graduate students, showcase exemplary practices in PETE, and highlight current issues and initiatives that affect PETE. Proposals are due by March 17. For more information, see the conference web page (www.naspeinfo.org/PETE).

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Manuscripts must be submitted either on disk or by email attachment. For disk submission, place the manuscript on a 3.5-inch disk or Zip disk, with IBM (and compatible) or Macintosh format. Label the disk with the corresponding author's name, manuscript title, and word processor format used.

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Tie manuscript length to the scope of the content, generally limiting articles to between 7 and 16 pages. Simple, straightforward writing—concise, logical, and clear—is best. Focus the manuscript, use examples, capture readers' interest, and stimulate their thinking. Avoid educational jargon and passive voice, vary sentence structure, and keep paragraphs short. The JOPERD Editorial Board encourages authors to have colleagues review manuscripts before submission.

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