

## PERK: The Status of Physical Education in CA Schools

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## Presenter Disclosures

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(1) The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationship to disclose.

## Background

- ▶ Youth obesity on rise
- ▶ Absence of physical education (PE) and physical activity (PA) in CA schools
- ▶ California Ed. Codes 51210 and 51222 mandates
- ▶ 2006 CCPHA\*\* report on statewide district compliance of Ed. Code 51210 reported that **more than 51% of the districts did not meet the minimum physical education standard of 200 minutes of PE every 10 school days.**
- ▶ PE – primarily untouched market for legislators.

\*Children Now, California 2009 Report Card  
\*\*California Center for Public Health Advocacy, Dropping the Ball

## Background

- ▶ Funders: The California Endowment, Kaiser Permanente
- ▶ Primary Objective: Examine state of physical education and physical activity in schools throughout CA
  - December 08–December 10
  - No study to date has examined statewide
  - 8 regions of the state
- ▶ Comprehensive Lit Review (217 sources)
- ▶ Make policy rec to CA legislators on needed policy change

## Background

- **Primary Partners:**
  - Sacramento State University, Department of Kinesiology and Health Science
  - UC Berkeley Center for Weight and Health
- **Collaborative Partners:**
  - California Department of Education
  - California Project LEAN
  - California School Boards Association
  - CAHPERD
  - Healthy Eating Active Communities
  - Statewide Youth Board on Obesity Prevention
  - California School Nurses Organization
  - Dairy Council of California
  - Others

## Methods: Sampling

- Primary Target Population:
    1. Physical education teachers K–12 (elementary/secondary)
    2. District level physical education representatives
    3. Elementary school teachers (focus on underserved districts >50% FRL; high % ELL)
- \*Representation from all 8 regions across the state

## Methods: Sampling

- ▶ Online mixed methods survey
  - Quantitative
  - Open-ended questions
- ▶ Thematic analysis of qualitative findings:
  - Tape-recording and transcription of interviews and focus groups



## Results: Demographics

### Survey:

- ▶ 690 respondents (n=147 districts)
  - 44.2% credentialed PE teachers secondary level
  - 34.6% elementary school teachers
  - 22% credentialed PE teachers elementary level
  - 6.8% district level PE reps
- ▶ ~40% of schools responded

### Focus Groups:

- ▶ 6 regions (72 people total); Greater LA; Inland Empire; Greater San Diego; Bay Area; Greater Sacramento; Central Valley

### Key Informant Interviews:

- ▶ 6 professionals (north coast and greater Shasta area)



## Results: Elementary

- ▶ Person responsible teach Elem PE: 59.3% elementary MS teachers
  - Ongoing training: 27.9% None; 24.4% Not Know
- ▶ Received grant funds in district for PE:
  - 53.9% Not Know; 32.4% Governors Block Grant
- ▶ How PE \$ is spent:
  - 51.5% purchase equipment; 40.3% Not Know



## Results: Elementary

- ▶ Biggest barriers at elem level:
  1. District not placing PE as priority
  2. Lack of credential PE teachers
  3. Lack of training for elem MS teachers
  4. Lack of admin interest or support
  5. Amount of time assigned to PE by district
- ▶ Elem School meeting 200 min requirement:
  - 64% No; 30% yes; 5.6 not applicable



## Results: Secondary

- ▶ Years currently engaging in PE:
  - 50.1% 2 years (permanent exemption)
- ▶ Time spent in MVPA:
  - 41.5% said 51-75% of time
  - 29.6% said 21-50% of time
  - 14.9% said 75-100% of time
- ▶ Biggest barriers to quantity/quality:
  - Class size; exceptions; focus=athletics



## Results: Overall

### Qualitative:

- De-valuing of Physical Education (at all levels)
  - Learning to swim on the bleachers
  - Evaluating physical educators (it took 30 years)
- Over emphasis on test scores
  - "Their name, their school, their score."
  - "The shut down the school to take those tests. They don't shut down the school to take the physical education test."



## Results: Elementary

- ▶ Pressure of responsibilities:
  - Not enough time
  - One more subject they must master
  - Administrative pressure–test scores
    - “We are a program improvement district and they all know the minimum requirement, but the teachers are told, you stay in that classroom and work in improving those test scores!”
- ▶ On–going training:
  - One shot deal not working

## Results: Secondary

- ▶ Class size:
  - “1:90 ratio” with 90 moving bodies
  - Safety issues
- ▶ Funding:
  - Line item funding for PE–more detrimental to PE
  - “You can’t use the economy for not providing a quality education to a child.”

## Results: Secondary

- ▶ Exceptions: pull outs; substitutions
  - “Administrators are looking for any reason to get them out of PE class. Our administrators just gave a girl a full year’s credit for going to Europe!”
  - “Kid...had to turn in paperwork that he went to the health club.” to get PE credit
  - “Pictures”; “Punishment”

## Discussion

- ▶ Lack of inclusion of PE professionals in administrative decision making
- ▶ De–valuing of physical education at all levels:
  - Money
  - Support
  - Oversight–state, district, local
- ▶ Safety issues must be addressed now

## Policy Recommendations

- ▶ Improve the content and evaluation of school physical education programs
  - Monitoring and accountability at all levels
  - Measurement of quality physical education
  - Physical education for all students, avoid opting out for other subject areas
  - Professional development and credentialing
  - Adopt a standards based standardized physical education curriculum
  - Support and funding to schools program improvement schools
  - Administrative staffing at the state and district levels to assure increased oversight and support for physical education

## Policy Recommendations

- ▶ Integrate physical activity into the full school program
  - Increase physical activity in the classroom across all subject matters
  - Increase recess and activity breaks outside of class time
  - Improve school facilities and playground designs statewide
- ▶ Recognize the broader context of school physical education and physical activity programs
  - Increase integration of school, after school, and community physical activity programs.

## Next Steps

- ▶ Valuable resources to physical education advocates
  - One location for supportive research
- ▶ Used in presentations to avoid cuts and layoffs
- ▶ No state-level policy changes YET
- ▶ CAHPERD included PERK findings in online advocacy kits
- ▶ Moving toward advocacy work

## PERK CONTACTS

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