

Physical Education FAQs

Questions and answers regarding physical education.

Physical Education

What is physical education (PE)?

PE teaches students how their bodies move and how to perform a variety of physical activities. Students learn the health-related benefits of regular physical activity and the skills to adopt a physically active, healthy lifestyle. The discipline provides learning experiences that meet the developmental needs of students. A standards-based PE program also provides an excellent opportunity to ensure that students develop positive social skills, cooperate with others, and accept responsibility for their own actions.

Why is physical education (PE) taught in California public schools?

PE contributes significantly to every student's health and well-being, and it is an instructional priority for California schools. Every student, regardless of disability, ethnicity, gender, native language, race, religion, or sexual orientation, is entitled to a high-quality PE program. PE is an integral part of the overall education program for every student and provides one of the few opportunities students have to develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary to lead a physically active lifestyle. A high-quality PE program promotes an active lifestyle, improved health, motor skill development, and better cognitive performance.

Daily PE for all students is recommended by numerous national associations, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education, the National Association for State Boards of Education, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Heart Association, and is noted in the Healthy People 2020 document.

Students who become skilled and knowledgeable in PE are more likely to become healthy adults who are motivated to remain healthy and physically active throughout their lives.

PE is a part of the coordinated school health system program. It is the component that addresses each student's fundamental need for planned, sequential instruction that promotes lifelong physical activity and attitudes and behaviors that reduce health risks.

What is the difference between physical education (PE) and physical activity?

The terms physical education and physical activity are often used interchangeably, but they differ in important ways. Understanding the differences between the two is critical to understanding why both

contribute to the development of healthy and active youths. Every student needs both a quality PE program and physical activity program.

Physical education instructional programs provide students with the skills and knowledge they need to establish and sustain physical activity as a key component of their lifestyle, as children, adolescents, and adults. The PE model content standards adopted by the State Board of Education involve five overarching standards in kindergarten through grade eight and three overarching standards in grades 9 through 12, including eight required content areas that provide a developmentally appropriate, standards-based sequence of instruction. PE instruction provides students with essential skills and knowledge through a broadly-based curriculum that is age-appropriate and links learning experiences in a sequential and articulated manner.

Physical activity is any bodily movement that is produced by the contraction of skeletal muscle and that substantially increases energy expenditure, including exercise, sport, dance, and other movement forms. PE programs, recess periods, intramural sports programs, and athletic programs involve physical activity, but each serves a different purpose. Intramural sports and athletic programs provide opportunities for student learning but are not likely to constitute high-quality, standards-based PE instruction.

Recess periods provide students with opportunities for unstructured physical activity time during the school day. These breaks from classroom activities may enhance participation and learning in the classroom, aside from the benefits gained from additional physical activity.

Intramural sports programs provide opportunities for students to be physically active and apply PE learning outside of the curricular program. In addition, intramural programs give students opportunities to implement the skills and knowledge gained in PE.

Athletic programs are essentially designed for youths who have special skills and would like to specialize in one or more sports. They provide students with the opportunities to refine their skills and compete with others of similar interests and abilities.

Physical activity may include recreational, fitness, and sport activities such as jumping rope, playing soccer, lifting weights, or participating in organized sports. National recommendations (such as the National Association of Sport and Physical Education and The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, United States Department of Health and Human Services) urge school-age children to accumulate at least 60 minutes, and up to several hours, of physical activity per day while avoiding prolonged periods of inactivity. Physical activity programs that students participate in outside of school are not the same as PE instructional programs. Such physical activity programs typically provide opportunities for students to develop skills in a single area and are not intended to provide instruction in the essential content areas and standards of PE.

Teacher Credentialing

Who may provide instruction in physical education to elementary, middle, and high school students?

“A teacher who is authorized for single subject instruction may be assigned, with his [or her] consent, to teach any subject in his [or her] authorized fields at any grade level; preschool; kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive; or in classes organized primarily for adults, and similarly, a teacher authorized for multiple subject instruction may be assigned, with his [or her] consent, to teach in any self-contained classroom; preschool; kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive; or in classes organized primarily for adults; and similarly, a teacher authorized as a specialist teacher may be assigned, with his [or her] consent, to teach in his [or her] area of specialization at any grade level; preschool; kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive; or in classes organized primarily for adults” (EC Section 44258). Other relevant ECs include EC sections 44256 through 44258.7.

“The holder of a credential authorizing instruction in a self-contained classroom may teach in any of grades 5 to 8, inclusive, in a middle school, provided that he or she teaches two or more subjects for two or more periods per day to the same group of pupils, and, in addition, may teach any of the subjects he or she already is teaching to a separate group of pupils at the same grade level as those pupils he or she already is teaching for an additional period or periods, provided that the additional period or periods do not exceed one-half of the teacher's total assignment” (EC Section 44258.1). Other relevant ECs include EC sections 44256 through 44258.7.

““Single subject instruction” means the practice of assignment of teachers and students to specified subject matter courses, as is commonly practiced in California high schools and most California junior high schools. The holder of a single subject teaching credential or a standard secondary credential or a special secondary teaching credential, as defined in this subdivision, who has completed 20 semester hours of coursework or 10 semester hours of upper division or graduate coursework approved by the commission at an accredited institution in any subject commonly taught in grades 7 to 12, inclusive, other than the subject for which he or she is already certificated to teach, shall be eligible to have this subject appear on the credential as an authorization to teach this subject” (EC Section 44256[a]). Other relevant ECs include EC sections 44256 through 44258.7. For questions regarding teacher credentialing, please contact the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing Assignment Unit at 916-322-5038 or by e-mail at cawassignments@ctc.ca.gov.

May an instructional aide or non-credentialed volunteer provide physical education (PE) instruction?

No. Instruction must be provided by a teacher who holds an appropriate credential which permits him or her to deliver PE instruction. Instructional aides may only assist the credentialed teacher (EC sections 45340 through 45349).

May a teacher credentialed in another subject coach a competitive sport for which students receive physical education course credit?

Yes. "A person who holds a teaching credential in a subject or subjects other than physical education may be authorized by action of the local governing board to coach one period per day in a competitive sport for which students receive physical education credit, provided that he or she is a full-time employee of the school district and has completed a minimum of 20 hours of first aid instruction appropriate for the specific sport" (EC Section 44258.7[b]).

May a teacher credentialed in a subject other than physical education (PE) teach a PE course?

Yes. "A teacher employed on a full-time basis who teaches kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, and who has special skills and preparation outside of his or her credential authorization may, with his or her consent, be assigned to teach an elective course in the area of the special skills or preparation, provided that the assignment is first approved by a committee on assignments. For purposes of this subdivision, an "elective course" is a course other than English, mathematics, science, or social studies" (EC Section 44258.7[c]).

Who is on the committee on assignments?

"The membership of the committee on assignments shall include an equal number of teachers, selected by teachers, and school administrators, selected by school administrators" (EC Section 44258.7[c]).

"Assignments approved by the committee on assignments shall be for a maximum of one school year, but may be extended by action of the committee upon application by the schoolsite administrator and the affected teacher. All initial assignments or extensions shall be approved prior to the assignment or extension. Districts making assignments under this subdivision shall submit a plan to the county superintendent of schools..." (EC Section 44258.7[d]).

Physical Education Courses

Elementary School

What is the course of study for grades one through six?

The selection of a course of study for grades one through six, inclusive, is the responsibility of local governing boards of education. The course of study selected and implemented for physical education (PE), beginning in grade one and continuing through grade six, must include instruction with an "emphasis upon the physical activities for the pupils that may be conducive to health and vigor of body

and mind, for a total period of time of not less than 200 minutes each 10 schooldays, exclusive of recesses and the lunch period" (EC Section 51210[a][7]).

The California Department of Education (CDE) provides both the Physical Education Model Content Standards for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve and the Physical Education Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve that it recommends local governing boards use to guide their choice of courses of study for PE programs. Both documents are available on the CDE Curriculum and Instruction Web page.

How many minutes of physical education (PE) instruction must students in grades one through six receive?

Students in grades one through six, inclusive, must be provided with PE instruction with an "emphasis upon the physical activities for the pupils that may be conducive to health and vigor of body and mind, for a total period of time of not less than 200 minutes each 10 schooldays, exclusive of recesses and the lunch period" (EC Section 51210[a][7]).

What are the required instructional minutes for an elementary school maintaining any of grades one through eight?

If a school is identified as an elementary school in the County-District-School code system, EC Section 51223(a) states that, "Notwithstanding the provisions of Sections 51210 and 51222, instruction in physical education in an elementary school maintaining any of grades 1 to 8 shall be for a total period of time of not less than 200 minutes each 10 schooldays, exclusive of recesses and the lunch period."

Middle School and High School

What is the course of study for grades seven through twelve?

EC Section 51220 states that, "The adopted course of study for grades 7 to 12, inclusive, shall offer courses in the following areas of study: (d) Physical education, with emphasis given to physical activities that are conducive to health and to vigor of body and mind, as required by Section 51222."

How many minutes of physical education instruction must students in grades seven through twelve receive?

Notwithstanding EC Section 51223(a), "All pupils, except pupils excused or exempted pursuant to Section 51241, shall be required to attend upon the courses of physical education for a total period of time of not less than 400 minutes each 10 schooldays" (EC Section 51222[a]).

High School

What are the state high school graduation requirements for physical education (PE)?

The minimum requirement for graduation is two courses in PE. EC Section 51225.3(a) states, “A pupil shall complete all of the following while in grades 9 to 12, inclusive, in order to receive a diploma of graduation from high school: At least the following numbers of courses in the subjects specified, each course having a duration of one year, unless otherwise specified:” (EC Section 51225.3[a][1]) “Two courses in physical education, unless the pupil has been exempted pursuant to the provisions of this code” (EC Section 51225.3[a][1][F]).

What is the required course content for high school students enrolled in physical education (PE)?

The course of study adopted by local educational agencies (LEAs) must include PE for grades one through six, inclusive, (EC Section 51210[a][7]) and for grades 7 through 12, inclusive (EC Section 51220[d]). These statutes specify that the PE course of study must include an emphasis upon those physical activities that may be “conducive to health and vigor of body and mind.”

EC Section 51220(d) and EC Section 33352(b)(7) together require that each LEA offers a course of study in PE for grades 9 through 12, inclusive, that includes a developmentally appropriate sequence of instruction in the eight required content areas over the span of the PE classes offered as part of the school’s course of study. The law does not specify that every class must include instruction in all eight areas, but rather it speaks to a course of study over grades 9 through 12 that includes all eight areas.

Along with EC Section 33352(b)(7), Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations (5 CCR) Section 10060(a) outlines the criteria upon which each school district shall evaluate students in its course of study for high school PE. “The course of study provides for instruction in a developmental sequence in each of the following areas:

Effects of physical activity upon dynamic health

Mechanics of body movement

Aquatics

Gymnastics and tumbling

Individual and dual sports

Rhythms and dance

Team sports

Combatives.” (5 CCR Section 10060[a])

In addition, the Physical Education Model Content Standards for California Public Schools, High School Courses One and Two, convey a course model that includes the topics listed above.

Is there a particular requirement of course content in order for a course to be awarded physical education (PE) credit? (as a part of a broader course of study in PE)

In making the determination of whether to award PE credit for any given activity or class, EC Section 51220(d) and EC Section 33352(b)(7) together require that each local educational agency (LEA) offers a course of study in PE for grades 9 through 12, inclusive, that includes instruction in the eight required content areas over the span of the PE courses offered as part of the school's course of study. The law does not specify that every class must include instruction in all eight areas, but rather it speaks to a course of study over grades 9 through 12 that includes all eight areas. It is ultimately the obligation of each LEA to determine how each particular class, as conducted in its district, supports its course of study for grades 9 through 12. The course of study must include the eight required content areas and substantially meet the objectives and criteria of EC Section 33352(b)(7) and 5 CCR Section 10060. While it is not required that every class for which PE course credit is given includes all eight areas, each LEA is required to structure its course offerings such that all areas are included over the course of study offered to all students.

In addition, it is important to note that EC Section 33352(b) requires each LEA to meet additional responsibilities should the LEA decide to award PE credit for a particular course. These responsibilities include the provision of minimum instructional minutes, various reporting requirements, and the assignment of an appropriately credentialed teacher.

If high school courses provide students with physical activity, but do not meet the content requirements, can those courses be used to meet physical education (PE) requirements?

It is ultimately the obligation of each local educational agency (LEA) to determine how each particular class, as conducted in its district, supports its course of study for grades 9 through 12, inclusive. The course of study must include the eight required content areas and substantially meet the objectives and criteria of EC Section 33352(b)(7) and 5 CCR Section 10060. While it is not required that every class for which PE course credit is given includes all eight areas, each LEA is required to structure its course offerings such that all areas are included over the course of study offered to all students.

May a student be granted physical education (PE) course credit for participation in Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC)/Cadet Corps?

It is ultimately the obligation of each local educational agency to determine how each particular class, as conducted in its district, supports its course of study for grades 9 through 12, inclusive. Whether JROTC/Cadet Corps may be awarded PE credit is the decision of the local governing board. In making this decision, the local board may consider the district's course outline of the JROTC/Cadet Corps, the PE model content standards and framework, and the 2009 letter from the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

May a student be granted physical education (PE) course credit, or an exemption under Education Code Section 51242, for participation in marching band?

It is ultimately the obligation of each local educational agency to determine how each particular class, as conducted in its district, supports its course of study for grades 9 through 12, inclusive. Whether marching band may be awarded PE credit is the decision of the local governing board. In making this decision, the local board may consider the district's course outline of the marching band, the visual and performing arts content standards and framework, the PE model content standards and framework, and the 2009 letter from the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Does a school need to write specific policy regarding high school graduation requirements for physical education (PE) or should it just put the California Education Code into its local governing board policy?

The governing board of a school district or the County Office of Education superintendent of schools determines the local governing board policy. Local educational agencies should contact their legal counsel for additional assistance on this issue. The California School Boards Association [External link](#) opens in new window or tab. Web site provides guidance to districts on establishing policies.

What are the current physical education (PE) assignment codes for the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS)?

The PE course codes for CALPADS can be found in the CALPADS Code Sets file, which is located on the CALPADS System Documentation Web page. (You will find the CALPADS Code Sets under the "CALPADS File Specifications [CFS]" heading; the document is provided in Microsoft Excel format.)

Independent Study

What is independent study (IS) in physical education?

IS is a voluntary alternative instructional strategy for providing regular education. Students work independently, according to a written agreement, and under the general supervision of a credentialed teacher. Attendance in IS is based on the time value of the student's work product, as determined by the student's supervising teacher. Because IS is an alternative instructional strategy, not an alternative curriculum, students follow the same course of study and meet the same academic standards as classroom-based students. IS students must adhere to EC sections 51222, 51225.3, 51241, and 60800, the latter requiring all students in grades five, seven, and nine to be tested in the state's physical performance test (FITNESSGRAM®). Note: IS is offered at the option of the district, and not all districts offer this alternative instructional strategy.

Exemptions from Physical Education

When discussing the requirements surrounding physical education (PE), what is meant by an exemption and what is meant by a waiver of Education Code (EC)?

A waiver speaks to the ability of the governing board of a local educational agency (LEA) or county office of education (COE) to request, under EC Section 33050, the State Board of Education to excuse the affected districts(s), county, and/or school(s) from the requirements of a specific provision of EC or 5 CCR. The purpose of a waiver is to provide flexibility to the petitioning governing board, without undermining the basic intent of the law.

An exemption, for the purpose of PE, refers to a process by which a governing board of an LEA or the superintendent of a COE may excuse a particular pupil from attending courses in PE if specified criteria are met.

What exemptions are available under California Education Code (EC)?

Under EC Section 51241, there are three distinct and separate exemptions:

Temporary:

"The governing board of a school district or the office of the county superintendent of schools of a county may grant a temporary exemption to a pupil from courses in physical education, if the pupil is one of the following:

Ill or injured and a modified program to meet the needs of the pupil cannot be provided.

Enrolled for one-half, or less, of the work normally required of full-time pupils" (EC Section 51241[a][1][2]).

Two-year:

"The governing board of a school district or the office of the county superintendent of schools of a county, with the consent of a pupil, may grant a pupil an exemption from courses in physical education for two years anytime during grades 10 to 12, inclusive, if the pupil has met satisfactorily at least five of the six standards of the physical performance test administered in grade 9 pursuant to Section 60800" (EC Section 51241[b][1]).

Permanent:

"The governing board of a school district or the office of the county superintendent of a county may grant permanent exemption from courses in physical education if the pupil complies with any one of the following:

Is 16 years of age or older and has been enrolled in grade 10 for one academic year or longer.

Is enrolled as a postgraduate pupil.

Is enrolled in a juvenile home, ranch, camp, or forestry camp school where pupils are scheduled for recreation and exercise pursuant to the requirements of Article 24 (commencing with Section 880) of Chapter 2 of Part 1 of Division 2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code” (EC Section 51241[c][1][2][3]).

Under EC Section 51242, "The governing board of a school district may exempt any four-year or senior high school pupil from attending courses of physical education, if the pupil is engaged in a regular school-sponsored interscholastic athletic program carried on wholly or partially after regular school hours."

Under EC Section 51222(a), "Any pupil may be excused from physical education classes during one of grades 10, 11, or 12 for not to exceed 24 clock hours in order to participate in automobile driver training. Such pupil who is excused from physical education classes to enroll in driver training shall attend upon a minimum of 7,000 minutes of physical education instruction during such school year."

Under EC Section 52316, "Any pupil enrolled in grade 10, 11, or 12, and who is also attending a regional occupational center or regional occupational program may be excused from attending courses in physical education by the governing board of the school district maintaining grade 10, 11, or 12, and in which the pupil is enrolled, if attendance upon such classes results in hardship because of travel time involved. If a pupil is excused from physical education classes pursuant to this section, the minimum schoolday for him [or her] in his [or her] regular high school is 180 minutes."

Under EC Section 51246, "The governing board of a school district may exempt any pupil enrolled in his [or her] last semester or quarter, as the case may be, of the 12th grade who, pursuant to EC Section 46145 or 46147, is permitted to attend school less than 240 or 180 minutes per day, from attending courses of physical education; provided, however, that such pupil may not be exempted pursuant to this section from attending courses of physical education if such pupil would, after such exemption, attend school for 240 minutes or more per day."

Who can exempt a student from physical education (PE)?

The governing board of a school district or the office of the county superintendent of schools of a county, as specified in EC sections 51222, 51241, 51242, 52316, and 51246, can exempt a student from PE.

Can a local governing board grant a permanent exemption to an entire class or grade span?

No. The exemption must be granted to each individual student and only if that student meets the provisions of EC Section 51241(c).

If a school district requires two years of physical education (PE) credits for its high school graduation requirements, has the district essentially invoked the two-year PE exemption?

No. The governing board of a school district or the office of the county superintendent of schools of a county may grant exemption to a pupil only if the requirements set forth in EC Section 51241(b) are met, including the consent of the individual pupil. The district is required to offer courses in PE to those students who do not qualify for, or consent to, an exemption (EC sections 51222, 51241(a), 51241(c), 51242, 51246, 52316).

Do all exemptions require the consent of the pupil?

No. Exemptions that may be granted without the pupil's consent include EC sections 51222, 51241(a), 51241(c), 51242, 51246, and 52316.

How did the passage of Senate Bill 78, Chapter 459, Statutes of 2003; Senate Bill 601, Chapter 720, Statutes of 2007; and Senate Bill 602, Chapter 32, Statutes of 2008, affect exemptions under California Education Code (EC) Section 51241?

These three bills affected only the "Two-Year Exemption" (EC Section 51241[b]), not the Temporary Exemption or Permanent Exemption. Students who began grade nine on or after July 1, 2007, are affected by the law.

How does California Education Code (EC) Section 51241(b) define passing for the purpose of the Two-Year Exemption?

For the purpose of the Two-Year Exemption from high school physical education (PE) courses, a student has passed the physical performance test if the student has met satisfactorily at least five of the six standards. A student has satisfactorily met the standards of the FITNESSGRAM® if the student performs within the Healthy Fitness Zone in at least five of the six areas.

Districts must continue to offer students who are exempted under relevant EC a variety of elective PE courses for not less than 400 minutes each 10 schooldays (EC sections 33352[b][6], 51222[b]).

What physical education (PE) courses shall be available for high school students who have been exempted from two years of PE?

"The governing board of each school district that maintains a high school and that elects to exempt pupils from required attendance in physical education courses pursuant to paragraph (1) or (2) or both of subdivision (b) of Section 51241 shall offer those pupils so exempted a variety of elective physical education courses of not less than 400 minutes each 10 schooldays" (EC Section 51222[b]).

Environmental Factors

When should physical education (PE) instruction be modified or moved indoors due to environmental factors?

Because of California's diverse climate conditions, these decisions are best made by local educational agencies, often with the assistance of other local agencies that monitor air quality and weather. Unhealthy air quality, extreme temperatures, high winds, etc. may present conditions where it is appropriate to modify activity levels or move PE instruction indoors.

Coaches

What is a temporary athletic team coach?

A "temporary athletic team coach" is a certificated or non-certificated employee, other than a substitute employee, hired to supervise or instruct interscholastic athletic activities as a temporary employee in a limited assignment capacity. The term is applicable to a certificated employee who supervises or instructs interscholastic athletic activities in addition to his or her regular assignment.

What are the certification requirements of a temporary athletic team coach?

In accordance with 5 CCR Section 5593, any person serving at any grade level as a temporary athletic team coach must be certified by his or her district to be knowledgeable and competent in the areas of:

Care and prevention of athletic injuries, basic first aid, and emergency procedures;

Coaching techniques;

Rules and regulations in the athletic activity being coached; and

Child or adolescent psychology, whichever is appropriate to the grade level of the involved sports activity.

How do local boards of education certify their temporary athletic team coaches?

In accordance with 5 CCR 5594, "At the first regular board meeting or within 30 days after selection of a temporary athletic team coach, whichever is sooner, the district superintendent shall certify to the local board of trustees that the provisions in section 5593 have been met."

Athletic Insurance

What is Assembly Bill 2684 (Chapter 108, Statutes of 2006)?

Assembly Bill 2684 amended EC Section 32221.5 requiring local educational agencies with interscholastic teams to send information to parents via a prescribed statement:

"Under state law, school districts are required to ensure that all members of school athletic teams have accidental injury insurance that covers medical and hospital expenses. This insurance requirement can be met by the school district offering insurance or other health benefits that cover medical and hospital expenses.

Some pupils may qualify to enroll in no-cost or low-cost local, state, or federally-sponsored health insurance programs. Information about these programs may be obtained by calling 1-800-880-5305.

The statement described in subdivision (a) shall also be incorporated into any other letters or printed materials, in boldface type of prominent size, that contain the name or logo, or both, of the school district and are sent to members of school athletic teams to inform them of the provisions of this article, or any other applicable provision of state law, regarding the provision of insurance protection" (EC Section 32221.5[a][b]).

The California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) has rules and regulations which list approved regular athletic activities. If a school has athletic teams participating in CIF-sanctioned competitions, is it then interpreted that it has entered into a voluntary association with the CIF and that the CIF should be the determining factor for what defines a "regular school-sponsored interscholastic athletic program" for that school district?

School districts that have joined the CIF are bound by their rules and regulations, as they apply to the preparation for and participation in athletic competitions between schools. However, while the definition that governs the CIF may be helpful in determining whether an activity is a "regular school-sponsored interscholastic athletic program," as defined in EC Section 51242, it is not definitive. There are potentially interscholastic athletic events that are not included in CIF's agreements and are therefore left to individual districts or schools to negotiate the rules of competition. The purpose of EC Section 51242 is to exempt a pupil from courses in physical education because he or she is participating in a substitute physical education program. There is no clear limit on these programs, nor any authority of the CIF to influence curriculum offered in California's public schools. Therefore, CIF's definition of "regular school-sponsored interscholastic athletic program" may not be the sole factor in determining what is a regular interscholastic athletic program for that school or district.

Aquatics Instruction

If a school site does not have a pool or access to a pool, is aquatics instruction required to be provided as part of the eight required content areas of high school physical education instruction?

Yes. If the school site does not have a pool or access to a pool, aquatics can still be taught. Instruction can be provided on water safety rescue techniques, dry-land strokes, kick practice, and buoyancy principles. (See Chapter 4 of the Physical Education Framework for California Public Schools.)

May students be charged any fees for accessing pool facilities off site?

No. Local educational agencies may not charge student fees. Students are entitled to a free public education per Article 9, Section 5 of the 1849 California Constitution which states, "The Legislature shall provide for a system of common schools by which a free school shall be kept up and supported in each district at least six months in every year, after the first year in which a school has been established."

In addition, 5 CCR Section 350 states, "A pupil enrolled in a school shall not be required to pay any fee, deposit, or other charge not specifically authorized by law."

When teachers provide instruction in aquatics, what kind of certifications must they hold?

California Health and Safety Code Section 116033 requires that anyone "providing aquatic instruction, including, but not limited to, swimming instruction, water safety instruction, water contact activities, and competitive aquatic sports, at a public swimming pool shall possess current certificates from an American Red Cross or YMCA of the U.S.A. lifeguard training program, or have equivalent qualifications... In addition, these persons shall be certified in standard first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation."

Dressing and Lockers

Must a district require students to change clothes for physical education (PE) instruction?

This is a decision of the school district. Each local educational agency needs to establish a PE dress policy for its district. It is appropriate for students to change their clothes for hygiene, safety, and movement efficiency purposes.

May a student's grade be affected if the student does not wear standardized physical education apparel?

EC Section 49066(c) states that a student's grade cannot be adversely affected if the failure to wear appropriate apparel arises from circumstances beyond the control of the student.

Must a district provide locker room facilities for student use?

EC does not address requirements for schools to build or utilize locker room facilities for student use. Students should be provided with appropriate locations to change their clothes for physical activity.

Is supervision required while students are in locker rooms?

Yes. Locker rooms must be supervised by a school staff member. Locker rooms should be safe and clean, and provide privacy. All measures should be taken to provide an appropriate location. School districts and schools are responsible for decisions related to supervising locker rooms.

Charter Schools and Physical Education

Do charter schools have to offer physical education (PE)?

Charter schools are required to provide PE consistent with their individual charters. If the charter school does have PE included in its charter, then it is required to provide PE consistent with the charter, even if that exceeds the EC requirements for non-charter schools.

Does a charter school have to administer the physical fitness test (PFT)?

Yes. All charter schools, whether they have physical education included in the charter or not, must administer the PFT to all students in grades five, seven, and nine as required by EC Section 60800 and 5 CCR Section 1040.

Physical Fitness Test

What is the California physical fitness test (PFT)?

Public school students in grades five, seven, and nine are required to take the PFT during the months of February, March, April, or May, whether or not they are enrolled in a physical education class or participate in a block schedule. These students include those enrolled in elementary, high, and unified school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools. School districts should also test all students in alternative programs, including, but not limited to, continuation schools, independent study, community day schools, county community schools, and non-public schools. Students who are physically unable to take the entire test battery are to be given as much of the test as conditions permit (EC Section 60800; 5 CCR Section 1041). For more information on the PFT, visit the CDE physical fitness test Web page.

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Last Reviewed: Friday, March 18, 2016