



Three Bills to Reverse the Trend of Childhood Obesity *Bring PE Back to Oregon Public Schools*

By requiring physical education for Oregon’s children, we help them learn healthy habits that last a lifetime – for better health and lower health care costs in the future.

SB 370: Minimum Minutes

Summary

Establishes a minimum amount of participation in physical education for kindergarten through grade 8 public school students. Specifies requirements for quality physical education instruction.

Explanation

Inadequate participation in physical activity is the major contributor to the epidemic of obesity that has risen in Oregon and throughout the nation. Obesity not only causes serious health problems; it also causes dramatic increases in health care costs when obese children become obese adults. Increased physical activity has also been proven to help academic performance.

To give our children more physical activity during the day, this bill requires every public school student in kindergarten through grade 5 to participate in physical education for at least 150 minutes during each school week and 225 minutes per week for grades 6 through 8.

Since there currently is no statute requiring physical education in Oregon, the amount and quality of PE varies by school. This bill ensures equity for all children in Oregon so certain populations are not denied physical education in school. Schools will be required to devote at least 50 percent of physical education class time to actual physical activity. To ensure quality education, the bill calls for classroom instruction to be:

“...sequential, developmentally appropriate curriculum that is designed, implemented and evaluated to help students develop the knowledge, motor skills, self-management skills, attitudes and confidence needed to adopt and maintain physical activity throughout their lives.”

Background

During the 2005 legislative session, this bill took the form of Senate Bill 228. Even though our coalition had secured strong support from key legislative leaders, the bill died in the very last days of session. We have a strong foundation of widespread support carrying over into 2007. Since 2005, the obesity statistics have only worsened, and the need is even greater to reverse this trend.

SB 360: Inventory

Summary

Directs Department of Education to collect data from school districts and public charter schools about number of minutes of physical education provided to kindergarten through grade 8 students. Directs department to report to Legislative Assembly on data for 2007-2008 school year. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2007.

Explanation

Currently, no data exists to tell us how much time Oregon's children currently spend in physical education classes. To tackle the childhood obesity epidemic and teach healthy lifestyles, we need an accurate understanding of how much physical education is actually being taught.

This legislation is also needed to ensure that standards established by SB 360 are being met.

SB 372: Assessment

Summary

Directs Department of Education to develop statewide assessment system in physical education. Directs school districts and public charter schools to implement statewide assessment system in physical education. Requires Superintendent of Public Instruction to include data on statewide assessment system in physical education in school performance reports.

Explanation

In 1999, the Legislature passed HB 3307 which outlined statewide standards for physical education curriculums. The objective of SB 372 is to make sure that the standards are being followed. Like other core subject areas such as English and Math, we want an assessment to be done by every school district to find out if students are being taught a quality PE curriculum. The assessment would be administered at the 3rd, 5th, 8th, and 10th grade levels.

SB 372 directs the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to develop the assessment tool and share it with each school district. School districts would be charged with implementation, scoring and covering the associated costs. The ODE would collect results and the school districts would report results to the public.

A statewide assessment system will provide an objective evaluation of students' knowledge and skills in physical education. This is a critical component to providing quality physical education that teaches Oregon children healthy habits that last a lifetime – for better health and lower health care costs in the future.