



Oregon's Children Need Physical Education

Childhood obesity is a serious problem in Oregon. But, we have an opportunity to reverse this trend. By requiring physical education for all of Oregon's children, we help them learn healthy habits that last a lifetime – for better health and lower health care costs in the future.

Who are we?

In 1999, health care advocates and teachers came together to find solutions to combat rising childhood obesity rates. The coalition has since grown to include more than 40 organizations and private companies.

What is the scope of the problem?

In Oregon, **24.5 percent of 8th graders are overweight or at risk for becoming overweight** and this number is increasing every year. The rise in childhood obesity is partly due to the fact that physical education is no longer a mandatory part of the school day. Only 54.8 percent of Oregon eighth graders participated in daily PE in 2005. Lack of physical activity not only leads to overweight, unhealthy children, but also makes children less ready to learn in the classroom. And, obesity has a serious economic impact. In 2003, \$781 million was spent in Oregon on obesity-related medical costs. (Source: DHS)

What can be done to reverse the trend?

We must pass legislation in 2007. Using the best available science, we have crafted legislation to give Oregon's children quality physical education. We are proposing three bills to the Oregon Legislature:

Minimum Minutes (SB 370): Establishes a weekly minimum amount of participation in physical education for public school students: 150 minutes for students kindergarten through grade 5 and 225 minutes per week for grades 6 through 8.

Inventory (SB 360): Directs Department of Education to collect data from school districts and public charter schools about number of minutes of physical education currently provided from kindergarten through grade 8.

Assessment (SB 372): Directs Department of Education to develop statewide assessment system to be implemented by every school district to find out if students are being taught quality physical education.

Why must we bring PE back to our schools?

- **Physical education teaches healthy habits.** The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's research has proven that, "well-designed, well-implemented school programs can effectively promote physical activity, healthy eating, and reductions in television viewing time."
- **Health and success in school are interrelated.** The National Association of State Boards of Education believes, "Schools cannot achieve their primary mission of education if students are not healthy and fit physically, mentally and socially."

Schools alone cannot solve the obesity epidemic, but strong school-based policies and programs can help reverse the trend.

For more information, please contact:

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Endorsed By:

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American Cancer Society
American Diabetes Association
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
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Council for Children's Expanded Physical Education
Eastern Oregon University
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Oregon American Association of University Women
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