



REFERENCE GUIDE FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS



January 2025 Edition





Introduction

The aim of this document is to support the implementation of quality physical education programming. It reflects current State and National policy and is consistent with the [Physical Education Framework for California Public Schools](#) in service of pupils' achievement of [Physical Education Model Content Standards for California Public Schools](#). The document will:

- Describe the intended outcome(s) of physical education
- Clarify California Education Code (EC) and regulations
- Address common issues, questions and misunderstandings
- Provide opportunity to assess and rethink Physical Education traditions
- Guide course design, as well as curriculum and instructional practices
- Provide access to resources

It is crucial to prioritize the regular review and updating of board policies and procedures for physical education in California schools to ensure alignment with current best practices, safety guidelines, and educational standards, thereby fostering a healthier and more effective learning environment for our students.

This document is a result of collaboration between representatives from the California Physical Education-Health Project, Los Angeles County Office of Education, Orange County Department of Education and San Diego County Office of Education.

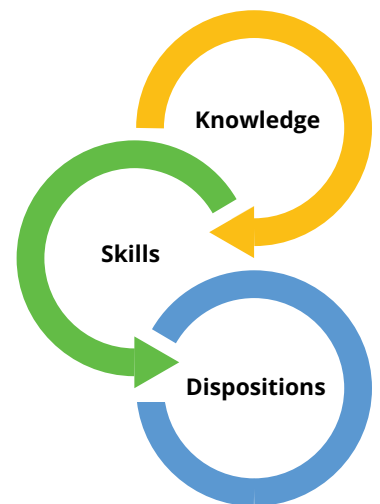
Intent of Physical Education

“The aim of physical education is to equip each pupil with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to

**plan,
carry out,
evaluate
and adjust**

their own physical activity endeavors and responses across their lifespan.”

- California Physical Education-Health Project



Physical Education Is . . .

Pupils advancing their knowledge, skills, and dispositions for movement.

An appropriately credentialed teacher facilitating pupil-centered instruction that provides pupils with the autonomy to personalize their learning.

Standards-based content provides a well rounded and balanced foundation for instruction and is available to all pupils. The evidence of pupil learning is utilized in all teaching and learning processes.

Rather Than . . .

Simply being physically active.

Coach/teacher directed physical activity and sport participation (athletics), where adults make all the decisions and pupils are placed in the role of compliance rather than as learners with the autonomy necessary to personalize their learning.

Based on sport or singular/ limited physical activity where learning may be assessed and used for making decisions about playing time or performance opportunities.

We must challenge existing systems and mindsets to ensure consistency with policy (including California Education Code) and to meet the needs of students. Learning in physical education is driven by content standards to provide age appropriate, grade-level specific experiences. The [*Physical Education Model Content Standards for California Public Schools*](#) provide all Californians with a broad set of pupil learning outcomes that prepare pupils to be physically active for life.





Considerations for Quality K-12 Physical Education Curriculum and Instruction

- Curriculum and instruction in physical education should align with organizational initiatives and should be supported by site and district leadership
- Curriculum, instruction and assessment are specific to grade level standards
- Grade level standards drive the identification and communication of clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils daily
- Pupils receive required minutes of physical education instruction
 - Elementary (grades 1-6): A minimum of 200 minutes of instruction each 10 school days (*EC Section 51210*)
 - Middle & High School: A minimum of 400 minutes of instruction each 10 school days (*EC Sections 51222, 33352*)
 - Schools who serve pupils in grades 6-12, with alternative schedules (4X4, trimester, etc), may offer terms of at least 18 weeks to provide grade 6 students with 400 minutes of physical education instruction every 10 school days (for a total of 3600 minutes per academic year) and grades 7-12 with 800 minutes every 10 school days (for a total of 3,200 minutes per academic year) (*EC Sections 51210, 51222*)
- Exemptions from physical education are not available for pupils in grades 1-8.
- Instruction is provided by an appropriately credentialed teacher (*EC Sections 33352, 44258, 45343-45367*)
- Independent Study is only offered as an alternate format for instruction, not an alternate curriculum (*EC Sections 51744-51749.6*)
- Instructional sequences include a variety of meaningful and engaging learning experiences
- Learning is assessed regularly and pupils' results are used by teachers and pupils to further learning
- Sites follow current State Board of Education adopted protocols for Physical Fitness Testing (PFT) and reporting (*EC Sections 33126, 33352, 35256, 60800*)
- Physical education courses are co-educational and inclusive, providing access and equal opportunities for all pupils (*EC Sections 220, 221, 33352; CCR, Title 5, Sections 4900, 4930, 4931, 4940, 4960; Title IX 106.33, 106.34; Code of Federal Regulations Section 300.108*)



Physical Education Programming

Assessment of Pupil Learning in Physical Education

Assessing learning in physical education holds the same significance as it does in all academic disciplines – collecting evidence of learning while contributing to learning. Pupil learning in physical education takes place in three domains (psychomotor, cognitive, affective), and each should be assessed regularly and utilized to adjust instructional decisions and share progress with pupils and families. The content standards provide the “what” to assess, and a variety of assessment tools can easily be used/embedded into lessons. Connections to the Physical Fitness Testing (PFT) data can be used to support learning related to health-related fitness and may include pupils using scores to track performance, set personal goals and develop individual physical activity plans. It is not recommended to solely evaluate fitness-related learning, as this approach only considers a limited aspect of the broader spectrum of learning in physical education. Instead, it is essential to encompass the entire range of learning that students require to effectively plan, execute, assess and adapt their own physical activities.

Opportunities for Equal Access

Equal opportunities and equal access are crucial aspects of promoting inclusivity and addressing the needs of all pupils in physical education. In a society that values diversity and seeks to provide equitable opportunities for all individuals, it is essential to ensure that physical education programs are accessible and inclusive for everyone, regardless of their background or characteristics.

All physical education classes shall be conducted in the coeducational, inclusive manner prescribed by law. Schools must provide instruction in physical education that provides equal access and equal opportunities of participation for all pupils in grades 1-12, regardless of gender, gender expression, sexual orientation and mental or physical disability. (*EC Sections 220, 221.5[f], 33352[b] [8]; CCR, Title 5, Sections 4900, 4930, 4931, 4940, 4960; Title IX 106.33, 106.34; Code of Federal Regulations Section 300.108*). As amended, *EC Section 221.5[f]* allows a pupil to participate in sex-segregated school programs and activities, including athletic teams and physical education classes, using locker rooms and facilities that are consistent with their gender identity, irrespective of the gender listed on their records.



Supporting Teachers of Physical Education to Best Meet Student Needs

All teachers of physical education can benefit from support in regard to making decisions for accommodations, adaptations, or modifications for their students. The adapted physical education teacher may be a resource to the general or specially designed physical education teacher by suggesting adaptations, accommodations and modifications for children with long-term and/or temporary conditions. The adapted physical education teacher should endeavor to be a supportive resource by maintaining knowledge of temporary disabilities and the resources to research them as necessary.

Physical Education Program Options for All Students

Every individual should have access to all available physical education program options. In cases where students possess an Individualized Education Program (IEP), the team responsible for the IEP must decide on the optimal combination of services to address the individual's requirements. This plan should also ensure compliance with the specified minimum minutes of physical education mandated for different grade levels (200 minutes/10 days for grades 1-6, and 400 minutes/10 days for grades 7-12), all while promoting the least restrictive environment, as stipulated by *EC Section 51210[g]*.

Example: A student receives 60 minutes per week in adapted physical education; with the remaining mandated physical education minutes being fulfilled in general or specially designed physical education.

General Physical Education

Instruction is provided by the general physical education teacher and may include accommodations, adaptations, or modifications, which are made by the general physical education teacher.

Specially Designed Physical Education

Physical education programming, for a special education class, that requires minimal or limited adaptations, accommodations, or modifications, and is taught by the person, general or special educator, who normally teaches physical education for this population.

Adapted Physical Education (APE)

Adapted physical education is a physical education program for children with disabilities who have needs that cannot be solely met in general or specially designed physical education.

It is taught by a credentialed adapted physical education teacher either independently, with or without aides, or in a team teaching situation with either a general or a special educator.

Frequency and duration of services, and goals and objectives/ which are monitored by the APE teacher, are identified on the IEP. Students receiving adapted physical education are counted on the APE teacher's caseload.

Collaborative Consultation

Could be identified on the IEP as a service that is provided on behalf of the student and assists the student in participating in the least restrictive environment of general or specially designed physical education. If a student is receiving collaborative consultation service from an adapted physical education teacher, the student may be counted on that teacher's caseload. Goal(s) and supporting objectives have been identified on the IEP and are monitored by the APE teacher.

Medical Excuses

Long-term or permanent medical excuses among pupils are exceptionally uncommon. In instances where an educator is unable to make accommodations for such medical conditions, the consideration of a 504 Plan should be considered.

Section 504 is a federal civil rights law that protects pupils with disabilities, not temporary injuries. In general, if a condition will resolve in six months or less, then the pupil is injured and not disabled, and therefore is not eligible for a 504 Plan. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal law that requires public schools to provide reasonable accommodations to pupils with disabilities so that these pupils can access the school's general education curriculum and learning opportunities. Examples of physical impairments that may qualify a pupil for Section 504: diabetes, severe asthma, juvenile arthritis and sickle cell disease.

Students with temporary injuries or disabilities are not eligible for special education and/or related services since these conditions may resolve or improve over time. Examples of such conditions include broken bones, pulled ligaments, and muscles. In temporary cases, modifications such as "no running" or "use of crutches" may be necessary. These modifications are determined by a physician and discussed with the guardian to assess the extent to which the student can participate in the physical education program. If the injury and/or disability evolves into a long-term condition then a Section 504 plan, modified physical education, or a program change is recommended. School districts should consider updating policy and procedures for medical excuses in physical education. Some considerations include the following:

- Purpose and scope
- Definitions of medical excuse and qualified medical professional
- Medical excuse requirements
- Acceptable conditions for medical excuses
- Duration of excuse submission/review process/reinstatement
- Communication with guardians/confidentiality
- Alternative assignments
- Compliance with State/Federal Laws

When a student is excused from physical education due to injury or illness, expectations for the students learning remain the same, and the “excused” status should be considered as an alternative to “how” the learning takes place rather than “what” the student learns.

Teachers should plan for “how” all students will learn the content in a lesson/ unit when planning units and lessons (including those known and not yet known medical excuses). This will enable teachers to meet students’ needs when a medical excuse presents itself, and to provide focused learning for each student. (See examples below)

Injury/Illness Medical Excuse	Learning (Grade level standard)	Adjustment to Instruction	Rather than . . .
Sprained ankle	Pass a ball with a partner using a chest pass.	Student may sit in a chair (rather than stand) and pass the ball to a partner using a chest pass.	Watching classmates and keeping count of correct passes made.
Broken arm	Diagram, explain, and justify offensive and defensive strategies in modified and team sports, games, and activities.	Student participates in the learning activities for diagramming, explaining and justifying the strategies.	Making up the classwork at another time with a one-mile run.

Religious Fasting and Physical Education

Pupils will be granted accommodations in physical education classes during periods of religious fasting upon a written notification to the school principal. Accommodations allow pupils to complete alternate activities and/ or assignments while still receiving credit for required physical education instructional minutes. (EC Section 51240.5)

Outdoor Conditions for Physical Education Instruction

Given the diverse climate conditions in California, decisions are most effectively made by local educational agencies, often in collaboration with other local entities monitoring air quality and weather. Unhealthy air quality, extreme temperatures, high winds, etc., may necessitate modifying activity levels or relocating physical education instruction indoors. In all instances, when planning physical education lessons, teachers should develop lessons that facilitate content delivery and learning in potential indoor environments such as classrooms, libraries, cafeterias, and gyms. These conditions should not automatically prompt decisions to alter instruction in content areas but rather to adjust the learning activity while maintaining the overall learning objectives.

For example: If the day's learning was to be centered on assessing the effect/outcome of a particular strategy in dual activities (badminton, tennis, etc.), pupils may review the purpose of the strategy as well as the conditions when the strategy may be used best. They can examine, discuss, and determine best uses of the strategy in a small indoor environment. This will set the stage for pupil success when conditions permit instruction to take place outdoors and pupils can put their new learning into practice. For detailed information see [California Department of Public Health Guidance for Schools During Extreme Heat](#) and the [California Air Districts Resources Board Webpage](#) for air quality information by county.

Access to Facilities

The importance of accessibility to facilities in providing high-quality physical education cannot be overstated. While having well-equipped facilities certainly enhances the learning experience, a lack thereof should never be a reason to neglect teaching various content areas. In addition, recess, lunch, athletics and other school events should not displace physical education from their designated learning stations.



Independent Study

Independent Study is a voluntary alternative instructional strategy for providing regular education. Pupils work independently, according to a written agreement, and under the general supervision of a credentialed teacher. Because Independent Study is an alternative instructional strategy, not an alternative curriculum, pupils follow the same course of study and meet the same academic standards as classroom-based pupils. Independent Study pupils must participate in Physical Fitness Testing in grades 5, 7 and 9 (*EC Sections 51222, 51225.3, 51241, 60800*) and meet the instruction and assessment requirements in each of the eight physical education required high school content areas (*EC Sections 33352[b][7], 51014, 51220[d]; CCR, Title 5, Sections 10060[a], 10060[g]*). Note: Independent Study is offered at the option of the district, and not all districts offer this alternative instructional strategy. For more information visit [CDE Physical Education FAQs Webpage](#).

Example: Single Physical Activity

A pupil who participates in tennis outside of school may best have their learning needs met in those conditions - for individual/dual activities. However, their learning needs and the requirements for instruction in the remaining required content areas are not addressed. In this example, the pupil may utilize their tennis activities for the individual/dual requirement while the physical education class (they are enrolled in - Course I) is engaged in learning individual/dual sports. When the physical education class is addressing all other content, the pupil should return to the class and learn the additional required content of physical education.

Should the decision be made to use the Independent Study model for tennis as the individual, a well designed plan should be agreed to by teacher, pupil and family, and school leadership.

Emergency Action Plans

Schools that offer interscholastic athletic programs must develop and implement written emergency action plans that include procedures for addressing heat illness, alongside existing protocols for sudden cardiac arrest and other medical emergencies. While physical education is not specifically mentioned in this legislation, physical education departments should be aware of and follow site emergency action plans and procedures per district guidance which may include a detailed list(s) and location(s) of all medical supplies, including AEDs and procedures for medical emergencies for cardiac arrest, concussions and heat related illnesses. (*EC Sections 35179.4, 35179.8*)

Physical Education Credit for Physical Activity Outside of School

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) have the responsibility to provide all students with instruction in physical education rather than participation in physical activity. An approach must be taken to communicate this with students and families, as well as establish and monitor policies and practices that ensure students are receiving instruction in physical education rather than participation in physical activity.

Participation in physical activity is not the same as physical education instruction – even when physical activity takes place at an advanced skill level, includes high level competition, or significant time spent in activity. LEAs should establish and utilize tools which clearly communicate the benefits and characteristics of instruction in physical education as well as establish and monitor policies and practices at all grade levels which ensure equitable instruction in physical education for all students.

Online Programs

Online physical education programming is difficult to implement due to the nature of learning associated with physical education. Pupils' ability to achieve many grade level standards are limited without teacher/learner feedback on skill development (more than one-third of the content), opportunities to respond to feedback with amended performance, access to appropriate equipment and the participation of others as partners, teammates and opponents. In addition, online offerings of physical education courses focused on individual participation in physical activity and fitness, often via logs of completed physical activity, do not provide pupils with critical instruction and evaluation of their learning as required in Title 5 of the *California Code of Regulations*. Activity logs should not be the primary assessment of pupil learning in physical education.

It should be noted, the online delivery model for instruction does not remove the responsibility schools have to meet the following Ed Code requirements:

- Instruction is facilitated and monitored by an appropriately credentialed teacher
- Physical Fitness Testing (PFT) must be administered in-person by a school employee for every 5th, 7th and 9th grade pupil (*CCR, Title 5, Section 1043*)
- Pupils receive required minutes of physical education instruction
 - Elementary (grades 1-6): A minimum of 200 minutes of instruction each 10 school days (*EC Section 51210*)
 - Middle & High School: A minimum of 400 minutes of instruction each 10 school days (*EC Sections 51222, 33352*)
- Every high school pupil must receive a course of study and participate in an assessment of progress in each of the following eight required content areas (*EC Sections 33352[b][7], 51014, 51220[d]; CCR, Title 5, Sections 10060[a], 10060[g]*):
 - The Effects of Physical Activity Upon Dynamic Health
 - The Mechanics of Body Movement
 - Aquatics
 - Gymnastics and Tumbling
 - Individual and Dual Sports
 - Rhythms and Dance
 - Team Sports
 - Combatives

"The *Physical Education Model Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* affirms the standing of physical education; rigor is essential to achievement, and **participation is not the same as education.**"

- A Message from the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction



Physical Education Framework for California Public Schools

Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve

*Adopted by the
California State Board of Education*

*Published by the
California Department of Education
Sacramento, 2009*



HEALTH EDUCATION

FRAMEWORK



FOR CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve

Adopted by the California State
Board of Education
May 2019

*Published by the California
Department of Education
Sacramento, 2021*



The Relationship Between Health and Physical Education

In California, health education and physical education are separate and distinct content areas, each with requirements for instruction outlined in education code, and supported with content standards and frameworks.

Physical Education Guiding Documents:

- [Physical Education Model Content Standards for California Public Schools, K-12](#)
- [Physical Education Framework for California Public Schools, K-12](#)

Health Education Guiding Documents:

- [Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools, K-12](#)
- [Health Education Framework for California Public Schools, K-12](#)

If LEAs consider providing instruction in health education as an element in the physical education curriculum, care must be taken to ensure each of the following:

1. Teachers must be credentialed to provide instruction in both health education and physical education which requires two teaching credentials.
2. Pupils must receive the mandated minimum instructional minutes in physical education (rather than health education) during each 10-school day period. (See the sample schedule below)
3. The health education content must be provided to pupils with fidelity and effectiveness.

For more information and resources to support health education visit the [California Health Education Website](#).

Example School Schedule with 49-minute Classes

DAY 1 49 min.	DAY 2 49 min.	DAY 3 30 min. (Early Dismissal)	DAY 4 49 min.	DAY 5 49 min.
DAY 6 49 min.	DAY 7 49 min.	DAY 8 30 min. (Early Dismissal)	DAY 9 49 min.	DAY 10 49 min.

Physical Education
 Health Education

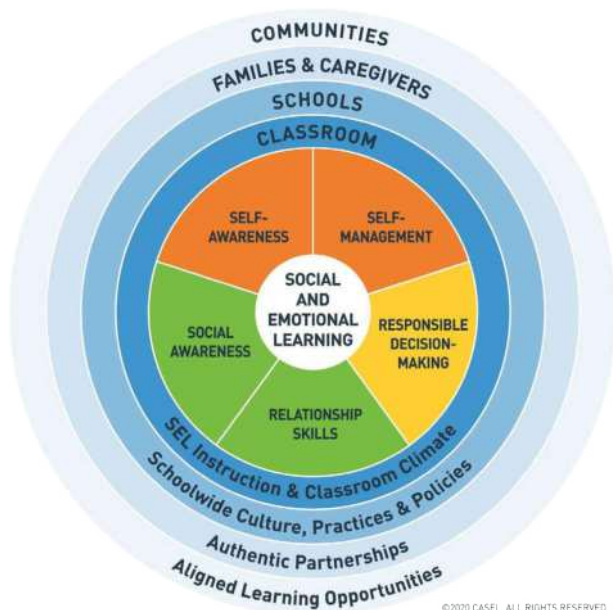
California Physical Education Standards Align with CASEL Social Emotional Learning Competencies

Competencies

Physical education provides optimal opportunities for pupils to authentically develop Social Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies while engaged in psychomotor, affective, and cognitive learning. In fact, Overarching Standard 5 (K-8) and Standard 3 (High School) in the *Physical Education Model Content Standards for California Public Schools, K-12* states:

“Pupils demonstrate and utilize knowledge of psychological and sociological concepts, principles, and strategies that apply to the learning and performance of physical activity.”

This overarching standard sets a critical foundation to develop pupils’ SEL competencies including:



- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making

There are many specific SEL standards for each grade level, which may be connected to other content areas, including those featured in the following chart based on *Physical Education Model Content Standards for California Public Schools, K-12*.

Additional information on SEL, SEL Competencies and SEL Framework is available on the [CASEL Website](#).

Grade Level Examples of Standards that Develop Pupils'...	CA Physical Education Standard 5 (K-8) Pupils demonstrate and utilize knowledge of psychological and sociological concepts, principles, and strategies that apply to the learning and performance of physical activity.	CA Physical Education Standard 3 (HS) Pupils demonstrate and utilize knowledge of psychological and sociological concepts, principles, and strategies that apply to the learning and performance of physical activity.
<p style="text-align: center;">Self-Responsibility</p> <p>CASEL Competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Self-Awareness ✓ Self-Regulation 	<p>Grade 1: 5.5 Identify and demonstrate acceptable responses to challenges, successes, and failures in physical activity.</p> <p>Grade 5: 5.1 Set a personal goal to improve an area of health-related physical fitness and work toward that goal in nonschool time.</p> <p>Grade 8: 5.1 Abide by the decisions of the officials, accept the outcome of the game, and show appreciation toward participants.</p>	<p>HS Course 1: 3.2 Act independently of negative peer pressure during physical activity.</p> <p>HS Course 2: 3.2 Examine and explain the ways in which personal characteristics, performance styles, and preferences for activities may change over a lifetime.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Social Interaction</p> <p>CASEL Competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Social Awareness ✓ Relationship Skills 	<p>Kindergarten: 5.4 Describe how positive social interaction can make physical activity with others more fun.</p> <p>Grade 3: 5.5 Demonstrate respect for individual differences in physical abilities.</p> <p>Grade 8: 5.4 Identify the contributions of members of a group or team and reward members for accomplishing a task or goal.</p>	<p>HS Course 1: 3.7 Analyze the role that physical activity plays in social interaction and cooperative opportunities in the family and the workplace.</p> <p>HS Course 2: 3.7 Explain how to select and modify physical activities to allow for participation by younger children, the elderly, and individuals with special needs.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Group Dynamics</p> <p>CASEL Competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Self-Awareness ✓ Self-Regulation ✓ Social Awareness ✓ Relationship Skills ✓ Responsible Decision-Making 	<p>Grade 2: 5.5 Participate positively in physical activities that rely on cooperation.</p> <p>Grade 4: 5.6 Accept an opponent's outstanding skill, use of strategies, or ability to work effectively with teammates as a challenge in physical activities.</p> <p>Grade 7: 5.5 Identify the responsibilities of a leader in physical activity.</p>	<p>HS Course 1: 3.10 Identify and utilize the potential strengths of each individual in physical activities.</p> <p>HS Course 2: 3.8 Identify leadership skills, perform planned leadership assignments, and assume spontaneous leadership roles.</p>

High School Physical Education

High School Course Sequence

The course sequence featured in the *Physical Education Model Content Standards for California Public Schools, K-12* provides a blueprint for delivering content in a manner that equips pupils with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need to make a successful transition from the physical education instructional program to participation in physical activity during adulthood.

- **High School Courses 1 and 2** provide the foundation for high school instruction. Pupils develop proficient movement skills in each area of physical education; they expand their capabilities for independent learning; and they examine practices that allow for sound decision making to enhance successful participation in movement activities. The eight required high school content areas are addressed in Courses 1 and 2.
- **High School Courses 3 and 4** are electives that provide pupils with the opportunity to explore a variety of physical activities in search of one they can enjoy and participate in for a lifetime. Course 4 electives are designed as a continuation of Course 3 and are intended for pupils who have completed Course 3 and who want an intensive experience in an activity that they may wish to participate in for years to come.

Note: LEAs that exempt pupils from physical education are required to offer physical education elective courses. Also, exemptions are only available for pupils in grades 9-12.



Eight Required High School Content Areas

California High schools are required to provide a **course of study** in physical education to pupils in any of grades nine to twelve, inclusive, where instruction and **evaluation of progress** is delivered in a developmentally appropriate sequence that includes (*EC Sections 33352[b][7], 51014, 51220[d]; CCR, Title 5, Sections 10060[a], 10060[g]*):

- The Effects of Physical Activity Upon Dynamic Health
- The Mechanics of Body Movement
- Aquatics
- Gymnastics and Tumbling
- Individual and Dual Sports
- Rhythms and Dance
- Team Sports
- Combatives

Together, these eight areas provide pupils with the learning they need to attempt and maintain meaningful physical activity as adolescents and throughout their lifetime.

NOTE: Pupils' participation in athletics or other activities does not replace the requirement for a course of study and assessment of progress in the eight required content areas.

“With only 3% of adults in the U.S. utilizing team sports as the way they get their physical activity, why do the majority of our school physical education programs emphasize team sports?”

- California Physical Education–Health Project

The Effects of Physical Activity On Dynamic Health



Content Standards

HS Course 1:

2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9,
2.10, 2.11, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8

HS Course 2:

2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9,
2.10, 2.11, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7

Definition

Understanding and utilizing the specific effects of different physical activities on a person's health and choosing to participate in physical activities that empower them to attain and maintain a lifestyle while monitoring progress, setting goals and applying fitness concepts/strategies.

It Is: Developing the knowledge, skills and mindsets pupils need to thrive physically, mentally, emotionally and socially throughout their lifetime.

It Is Not: Pupils participating in physical activity without implicit connections to their physical, mental, emotional and social health

Assessment of Progress

It Is: Assessing pupils' ability to identify the effects of different physical activities on a person's health and apply this knowledge to attain and maintain physical, mental, emotional and social health

It Is Not: Credit for participating in physical activity without collecting evidence of pupils' understanding of its specific effects on their overall health

NOTE: Pupils' experiences in K-8 physical education should be designed to prepare pupils for participation and assessment of the eight required high school content areas

Mechanics of Body Movement



Content Standards

HS Course 1:

1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12

HS Course 2:

1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12

Definition

The study of human movement and how such movement is influenced by gravity, friction, and the laws of motion. It involves the analysis of force, including muscle force that produces movements and impact force that may cause injuries. It explains why motor skills are performed in explicit ways in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

It Is: Pupils identifying, explaining and/or consciously using and adjusting skill-related components of balance, reaction time, agility, coordination, explosive power, and speed to optimize performance.

NOTE: Concepts and Principles of Biomechanics are featured in Appendix D in [Physical Education Framework for CA Public Schools](#)

It Is Not: Pupils only listening to and/or performing skills

Assessment of Progress

It Is: Assessing pupils' understanding and ability to use/adjust biomechanics to optimize performance

It Is Not: Pupils' performance of skills or participation in physical activity without consciously addressing biomechanics

NOTE: Pupils' experiences in K-8 physical education should be designed to prepare pupils for participation and assessment of the eight required high school content areas

Aquatics



Content Standards

HS Course 1:

1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9,
1.10, 1.11, 1.12

Definition

Water safety principles and actions in preparation for safe physical activity in water which may include motor activities performed in water

It Is: Swimming, diving, synchronized swimming, water polo, water safety principles and practices, kayaking, canoeing, paddle boarding and/or surfing

It Is Not: Solely practicing swimming movements outside of water; not a single day or limited time for instruction, rather an appropriate sequence of learning; watching videos of others performing aquatic activities

Assessment of Progress

It Is: Assessing pupil understanding of water safety principles and actions which may include performance of a variety of swimming and/or water-based skills

It Is Not: Pupils participating in class without documenting performance/progress/learning.

NOTE: Pupils' experiences in K-8 physical education should be designed to prepare pupils for participation and assessment of the eight required high school content areas

Gymnastics and Tumbling



Content Standards

HS Course 2:

1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9,
1.10, 1.11, 1.12

Definition

Skill themes of balance, weight transference, and rolling in combination with jumping, landing, and traveling. Content also includes concepts as directions, levels, pathways, time, shapes and the actions of stretching, curling, and twisting.

It Is: Tumbling, gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics, parkour and other fitness floor routines that include balance, weight transfer, jumping, landing, traveling and performance of stunts

It Is Not: Solely participating in single movements (jumping, landing, etc.)

Assessment of Progress

It Is: Assessing pupils competence in balancing, traveling, jumping, landing and performing stunts in combination.

It Is Not: Pupils participating in class without documenting performance/progress/learning.

NOTE: Pupils' experiences in K-8 physical education should be designed to prepare pupils for participation and assessment of the eight required high school content areas

Individual and Dual Sports



Content Standards

HS Course 1:

1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9,
1.10, 1.11, 1.12

Definition

Individual: Physical activities that require only one participant

Dual: Physical activities that require two participants

It Is: Individual activities like weight training, yoga, archery, jogging, track & field, golf

It Is: Dual sports like beach volleyball, tennis, racquetball, badminton, pickleball

It Is Not: Two individuals working together on a task that includes movement

Assessment of Progress

It Is: Assessing movement skills in individual and dual activities; analysis of movements to improve performance; explanations of the principles of biomechanics in individual/dual activities.

It Is Not: Keeping score of matches and counting wins; participation in individual/dual activities without assessing learning.

NOTE: Pupils' experiences in K-8 physical education should be designed to prepare pupils for participation and assessment of the eight required high school content areas

Rhythms and Dance



Content Standards

HS Course 1:

1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9,
1.10, 1.11, 1.13, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3

Definition

Activities that focus on dance/rhythms and enable pupils to:

- Develop a variety of movement skills and movement experiences with rhythms/music.
- Experience dance as an enjoyable physical activity

(See Facility Impact on Eight Required High School Content Area Instruction for more information further addressing rhythms and dance)

It Is: Creative movement or dance forms such as ballet, modern, ethnic or folk, hip hop, Latin, line, ballroom, social, square

It is Not: Participation in rhythmic movements such as marching or drill activities. Performing any movement activity to a rhythm.

Assessment of Progress

It Is: Demonstrating proficient movement skills in rhythm/dance activities; Analyzing and implementing feedback on skill development to improve performance.

It Is Not: Participation in activities which include elements of rhythm.

NOTE: Pupils' experiences in K-8 physical education should be designed to prepare pupils for participation and assessment of the eight required high school content areas

Team Sports



Content Standards

HS Course 2:

1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9,
1.10, 1.11, 1.12, 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4,
3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9

Definition

Team sports are physical activities that include each of:

- Use of a range of movement skills
- Individual and collective strategies and tactics,
- Decisions made by individuals and the group toward common goals

It Is: Pupils explain and demonstrate offensive, defensive, and transition strategies and tactics in team sports

It Is Not: Interscholastic athletics, club sports, recreational games, or any group activity that includes movement.

Assessment of Progress

It Is: Explaining and demonstrating advanced offensive, defensive, and transition strategies; evaluating the relationships of physical, emotional, and cognitive factors affecting individual and team performance.

It Is Not: Simply participating in team sports during class.

NOTE: Pupils' experiences in K-8 physical education should be designed to prepare pupils for participation and assessment of the eight required high school content areas

Combatives



Content Standards

HS Course 2:

1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9,
1.10, 1.11, 1.12, 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4,
3.5, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9

Definition

A group of physical activities that utilize basic combative skills including pulling, pushing, stands, and guards

It Is: Self-defense, wrestling, fencing, kickboxing, martial arts

It is Not: Dances that mirror combative movements, blocking in football activities, activities that do not include each of the basic combative movements.

Assessment of Progress

It Is: Creating improvement plans based on evaluative feedback. Assessing the performance and outcome of a strategy used in a combative activity. Demonstrating proficient movement skills in combative activities.

It Is Not: Accumulating victories in competition with another pupil; participation in combative activities.

NOTE: Pupils' experiences in K-8 physical education should be designed to prepare pupils for participation and assessment of the eight required high school content areas

Facility Impact on Eight Required High School Content Area Instruction

School facilities, or lack of specific facilities, do not alter the responsibility schools have for providing instruction and evaluating pupil progress in each of the eight content areas. Decision making may be initially challenging based on the availability of some facilities, however in all cases, instruction can be provided and pupil learning assessed in each of the eight content areas. See the examples below of appropriate decision making related to facilities.

Swimming Pools

When a high school does not have an on campus swimming pool, instruction can be provided for by using community facilities such as recreation department facilities, homeowner association facilities, and universities aquatic facilities.

Gymnastics and Tumbling

Instruction in gymnastics and tumbling can be provided utilizing a variety of on-campus spaces (both indoor and outdoor), with the need for safe and comfortable mats, ground, or flooring being essential, without specialized facilities.

Dance

Dance instruction and its associated learning activities can take place in many on-campus spaces, and does not require a dance room or elements of dance facilities such as specialized flooring or mirrors.

Combatives

The content area of combatives can be taught and learned in a variety of on-campus spaces provided safety has been considered and supported with appropriate mats and limited equipment without specialized facilities.

Making Sound Decisions About Courses in Physical Education

When LEAs evaluate and designate which courses meet the requirements for physical education credit, it is common for other courses to surface in the conversation. As indicated - movement alone does not meet the definition of, and policy requirements for, physical education instruction in California schools. Common misconceptions include: marching band and auxiliary units, athletics, dance, and other courses in which movement might be included.

As outlined in Education Code and Title IV, physical education courses must be designed and delivered so as to meet the requirements designated for physical education (teaching credentials, course content based on content standards, and the eight content areas included in the course of study requirements). Other courses that may include movement should not grant pupils physical education course credit as they do not meet requirements.

A note about dance - while dance is included in both physical education and the arts, each has significantly different learning goals:

Dance in Arts Education	Dance in Physical Education
<p>The learning communicated in the dance standards enable pupils to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discover the expressive elements of dance;• Know the dance-based theory, terminology, and symbolic language that is used to comprehend dance;• Have a clear sense of embodying dance;• Being able to reflect, critique, and connect personal experience to dance and the dance community.	<p>The learning communicated in the physical education standards enables pupils to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a variety of movement skills and movement experiences with rhythms/music.• Experience dance as an enjoyable physical activity.

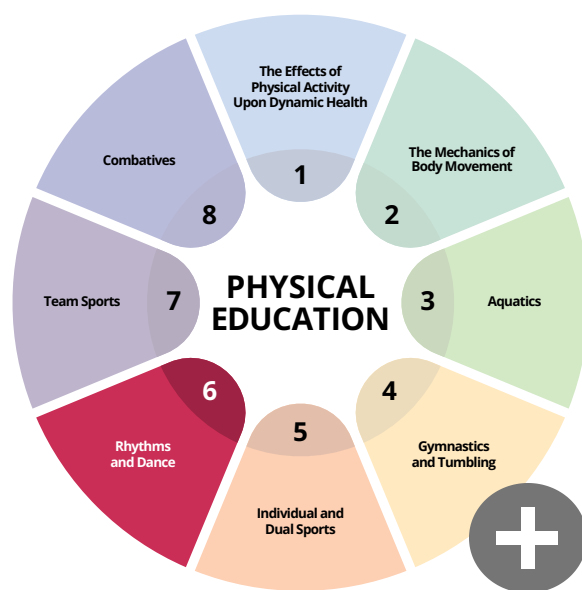
Criteria for Course Design, Delivery and Course Credit

Requirements	Dance	Physical Education
Teaching Credential	Dance Credential or Physical Education Credential Issued prior to January 2022	Physical Education Credential
Content Standards	California Arts Standards for Public Schools, PK-12	Physical Education Model Content Standards for California Public Schools, K-12
Eight Required Content Areas		Course of Study Requirements Eight Content Areas (unless the student has completed the eight required areas in high school)

NOTE: The decision to determine course design and designation of course credit should be based on the above, rather than teacher or student choice.



VS.



Exemptions

Since physical education is a required course for all pupils in each of grades 9-12, all pupils must remain enrolled in physical education until they qualify and opt in to one of the following distinct and separate exemptions (*EC Section 51241*).

- 1. 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.
- 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. NOTE: This exemption is not currently available due to State Board of Education (SBE) directed modified administration of Physical Fitness Testing (PFT).
- 3. 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.
 - Is enrolled in a juvenile home, ranch, camp, or forestry camp school where pupils are scheduled for recreation and exercise.

Further, when pupils are granted an exemption from physical education, the LEA is required to offer the exempted pupils a variety of elective physical education courses of not less than 400 minutes every 10 school days, taught by an appropriately credentialed teacher.

Considering Course Credit for Athletics

When a high school pupil is not enrolled in physical education courses in any of grades 9-12, the LEA must ensure that the pupil has been appropriately exempted.

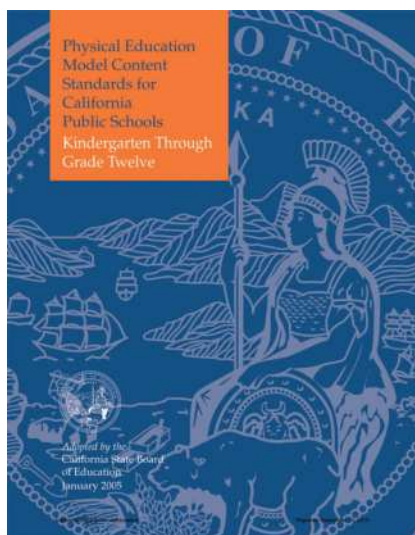
Pupil participation in interscholastic athletics and physical education instruction are not the same, thus they are not interchangeable. As a result, a number of factors must be evaluated when LEAs consider athletics and physical education course credit. LEAs who wish to award physical education course credit for participation in athletics must ensure these pupils are appropriately exempted to ensure compliance with mandates related to:

- Instructional minutes for physical education (a minimum of 400 minutes each 10 school days)
- The mandated course of study requirements (instruction in each of the eight content areas as well as assessment of pupil progress in each of the eight content areas. (*EC Section 51222; CCR, Title 5, Section 10060*))

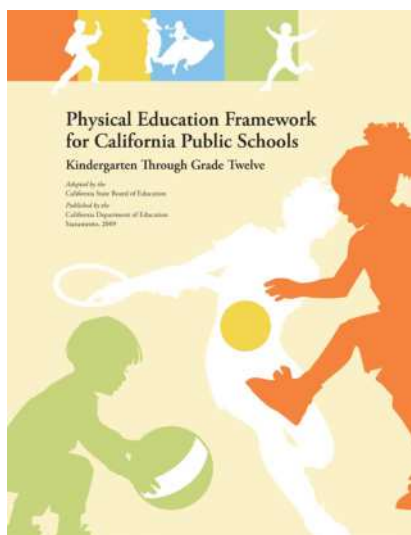
When LEAs elect to offer athletic physical education courses (Athletic PE), pupils enrolled in these courses should receive physical education elective credit. Course work must include opportunity for each pupil to receive instruction in each of the eight required content areas, as well have their learning assessed in each of the eight required content areas as defined in *EC Section 51222; CCR, Title 5, Section 10060*.

Resources

Content Standards and Frameworks:



[Physical Education Model Content Standards for California Public Schools, K-12](#)



[Physical Education Framework for California Public Schools, K-12](#)

Federal Program Monitoring (FPM) Physical Education Instrument: [CDE Program Instruments - Physical Education](#)

California Department of Education: [PFT Frequently Asked Questions and Answers](#)

Example of Model School Board Policy:

The Governing Board recognizes the positive benefits of physical activity on pupil health and academic achievement. The district shall provide all pupils the opportunity to be physically active on a regular basis through high-quality physical education instruction and may provide additional opportunities for physical activity throughout the school day. The district's physical education program shall provide a developmentally appropriate sequence of instruction aligned with the state's model content standards and curriculum framework.

For grades 9-12, the overall course of study shall include the effects of physical activity upon dynamic health, the mechanics of body movement, aquatics, gymnastics and tumbling, individual and dual sports, rhythms and dance, team sports, and combatives. (EC Section 33352; CCR, Title 5, Section 10060)

