

Physical Activity (PA) & Physical Education (PE)

2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT



Department of
Education

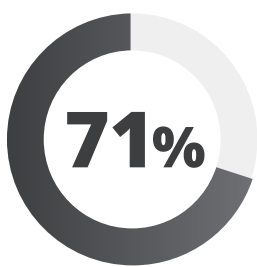
Coordinated
School Health

Schools play a pivotal role in their capacity to support the development of lifelong habits of PA behaviors among their students. By developing and implementing PA policies and practices for students, schools can create environments supportive of not only the development of healthy American adults but also of increasing student academic outcomes.

83%

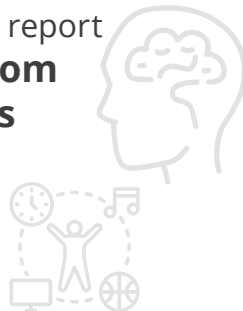
public schools in compliance that integrate the required PA into the instructional school day

Types of Physical Activities Used to Meet the PA Requirement



71% of schools report using **classroom brain breaks**

71% report using **recess**



Other methods: walking breaks, Go Noodle, sensory pathways, action-based learning labs, PowerUp, The Walking Classroom, and curriculum support for classroom teachers and PE teachers

INSTALLED OR UPDATED:



33 new walking tracks



44 student fitness rooms



202 playgrounds

1,453



total school playgrounds in the state

Top Reported Barriers to Compliance

Lack of time available for implementation

1



Teacher & administration concerns about the decrease in instructional time

2



Lack of appropriate space

3



■ High ■ Middle ■ Elementary

Innovative Methods that Schools Use to Comply with the PA Requirement



Walking Trails & Tracks



Weekly PA Logs



Lu Interactive



Intra-murals



Walking & Running Clubs

Relevant Data or Studies Showing Whether Increased PA or PE Lead to Better Health Outcomes

LONG-TERM EFFECTS INCLUDE...

BENEFITS of regular PA

- ★ Helps build and maintain healthy bones and muscles
- ★ Helps reduce the risk of developing obesity and chronic diseases, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and colon cancer
- ★ Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety and promotes psychological health

CONSEQUENCES of physical inactivity

- ⚠ Being overweight and obese, which are influenced by physical inactivity and poor diet and can increase one's risk for diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, asthma, arthritis, and poor health status
- ⚠ Increased risk for premature death, death by heart disease, development of diabetes, colon cancer, and high blood pressure

Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee (2018)

Compliance with the PA Requirement in School Districts with Average Daily Membership of 25,000 or More Students



5 OF THE **8**

urban districts are compliant for the 2024-25 school year, staying consistent with the same percentage in 2023-24.

FOR GRADUATION,
TENNESSEE REQUIRES

0.5 + 1.0

**HIGH
SCHOOL
CREDITS
in PE**

**CREDIT in
a Lifetime
Wellness
course***

**This is a health education course with its own set of standards. It is not a PE class.*

More than half the nation
(30 states) requires one credit or more of PE for high school students to graduate.

Some of these credit totals represent a cumulative total of annual requirements.

Shape of the Nation Report (2016)

Researchers have been examining the association between PA and academic achievement for almost
50 YEARS

Findings conclude that PA has been shown to have a **significant positive association with students' cognitive functioning (concentration and memory).**



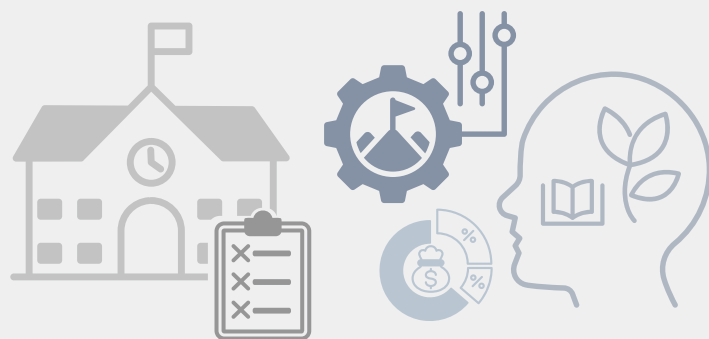
Students participating in PA had improved academic achievement, including better concentration and attention, higher achievement test scores, and higher math scores compared with students who did not.

Michael et al. (2015)

Summary & Recommendations

PA and PE requirements are in place to:

- 1 Support the physical and mental well-being of students through meaningful movement opportunities
- 2 Provide important developmentally appropriate academic instruction in PE
- 3 Better prepare the brain and body to learn



Districts or schools that do not meet the frequency, duration, and/or type requirements are supported primarily through their school health coordinator as a liaison between the district and the department. *These districts are supported through targeted goal-setting and local funding planning to fill gaps, have opportunities to receive professional development, and connect to relevant training and resources.*

Opportunities for Improvement

Tennessee PE teachers stated:

24% Students were withheld from PE class for academic remediation, to prepare for other classes, or for standardized tests. PE is a standards-based, academic class with intentionally designed learning experiences to help students achieve mastery. Intentionally holding students from class is inappropriate. Also, elementary students are required to participate in PE instruction per Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-1021(e).

12% Teachers or administrators withheld PA as punishment. Per Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-1021(b)(2)(B) and State Board Policy 4.206, students may not be withheld from PA as punishment. The practice can inhibit the development of a positive attitude toward PA. In the case of PE specifically, the practice is withholding academic instruction.

23% No grades are given for PE classes. Reporting grades for PE is a best practice because it provides clear, actionable feedback to students and parents about learning progress, communicates the value of PE as an academic subject, and reinforces the development of physical literacy.

14% They spend five hours or more of an instructional week being utilized in other ways than teaching PE, including but not limited to RTI², assisting classroom teachers with academics, tutoring, lunch duty, and bus duty. While additional responsibilities are frequently unavoidable, utilizing the instructional school day for the most-possible instructional time dedicated to an educator's content specialty for professionals like physical educators is a best practice. Positive outcome potential includes additional scheduling opportunities for students, reduced class sizes, and higher job satisfaction among educators.

60% Tennessee physical educators do not use a published, planned sequential PE curriculum. These programs either do not use a curriculum or use a self-designed curriculum. Self-designed curricula should be reviewed using the CDC's Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (PECAT) for rigor, accuracy, and standards alignment.

Successes to Reinforce

60% Tennessee high schools offer electives in PE beyond the minimum graduation requirement, including but not limited to *Kinesiology, Sports Officiating, Lifetime Sports, and Strength and Conditioning*. By giving structured choices that cater to diverse student interests, students are empowered to take ownership of their wellness, increase overall PA levels, and be more engaged.

**40
MIN
DAILY**

As a result of [Chapter 306 of the Public Acts of 2025](#), codified at Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-1021, elementary school students in Tennessee must now have **AT LEAST 40 MINUTES OF PA DAILY** that includes unstructured outdoor play, among other changes. **This is an increase from what was previously a 15-minute daily requirement. Recess is associated with an improvement in student social skills, academic performance, school attendance, and levels of attention.**

Tennessee PE teachers report:

43% Their schools have **PA clubs**. A physically active school culture that encourages students to be engaged and connected with each other in the instructional school day is a best practice as part of a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Pro (CSPAP).

89% On average, their students are **moderately-to-vigorously active at least 50% of class time**. This is a best practice for PE instruction.

This report details compliance with Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-1021.

References

Michael, S. L., Merlo, C. L., Basch, C. E., Wentzel, K. R., & Wechsler, H. (2015). Critical connections: health and academics. *The Journal of School Health*, 85(11), 740–758. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.12309>

Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee. (2018). Physical activity guidelines advisory committee scientific report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Tennessee Department of Education. (2025a). Annual coordinated school health school district applications, 2024-25. Unpublished raw data.

Tennessee Department of Education. (2025b). Physical activity compliance report, 2024-25. Unpublished raw data.

Tennessee Department of Education. (2025c). Quality physical education survey, 2024-25. Unpublished raw data.



Department of
Education

Coordinated
School Health

tn.gov/education/districts/health-and-safety.html

© Tennessee Department of Education