

“Why P.E.? Just For the Health of it!”

UTLA PE Campaign

Problem:

The adoption of Proposition 13 in California the late 1970s resulted in severe budget cuts in so-called non-academic subject areas like physical education, art and music. Further, the hyper emphasis on testing and the narrowing of the curriculum has created a health crisis among our students. Currently, Nearly 40% of LAUSD students are at risk of being overweight while a growing number are at risk for Type 2 Diabetes. In 2006 fewer than 20% of 5th, 7th and 9th graders in LAUSD were considered physically fit

The costs of obesity, through increased health care expenditures and lost productivity, are enormous and growing each year. In order to avoid weight gain and enjoy a healthful life, students must develop appropriate eating habits. Students also need to be more active and develop lifelong skills to enjoy recreation and physical activity. Yet, LAUSD’s physical education programs are insufficiently funded, resulting in overextended staff and under active students.

Mounting evidence directly connects students’ activity level with academic performance. The benefits of physical education extend from students’ waistlines to the classroom, as research demonstrates the positive impact of physical education on test scores.

CHANGES:

Provide adequate personnel. By establishing a 55-1 instructor-student ratio cap, unsafe and unmanageable class sizes will be reduced at middle and high schools. Students will be able to more effectively learn key skills and spend more of their physical education class moderately or vigorously active. By hiring one credentialed physical education instructor at each elementary school, students will receive more consistent instruction and develop skills in line with state content standards.

Make physical education a priority. Require LAUSD to comply with state education code requirements to provide a minimum of 200 minutes of physical education for elementary students every ten days (an average of 20 minutes a day) and 400 minutes for secondary students (an average of 40 minutes a day).

Provide adequate support. Investments are needed in facilities, infrastructure and equipment to provide students with an optimal activity environment.

NEXT STEPS:

LAUSD should adopt the “Active Children, Active Minds” motion to establish a 55-1 cap, provide minimum minutes of physical education, and hire a credentialed physical education instructors for each elementary school.