

**Virginia Board of Education  
Physical Education Program Guidelines  
For Public Elementary and Middle Schools**

**I. Introduction**

The 2012 General Assembly approved HB 1092 requiring the Virginia Board of Education to develop physical education program guidelines for public elementary and middle schools in collaboration with the American Heart Association; the American Cancer Society; the American Academy of Pediatrics, Virginia Chapter; the Virginia Association of School Superintendents; the Virginia School Boards Association; and other interested stakeholders.

These guidelines pertain to physical education, which should not be confused with physical activity. Physical education is a planned, sequential, quality instructional program that helps students learn the skills necessary for performing a variety of physical activities and understand the benefits of achieving and maintaining a physically active lifestyle. By contrast, physical activity is any bodily movement that is produced by the contraction of skeletal muscles that increases energy expenditure.

**II. Guidelines**

Physical education programs should:

1. Provide students with an opportunity to learn health-enhancing concepts and skills.

Indicators:

- In accordance with the Standards of Quality, § 22.1-253.13:1 (D) of the *Code of Virginia*: Local school divisions shall incorporate art, music, and physical education as a part of the instructional program at the elementary school level and implement a program of physical activity available to all students in grades kindergarten through five consisting of at least 20 minutes per day or an average of 100 minutes per week during the regular school year and available to all students in grades six through 12 with a goal of at least 150 minutes per week on average during the regular school year. Such program may include any combination of (i) physical education classes, (ii) extracurricular athletics, (iii) recess, or (iv) other programs and physical activities deemed appropriate by the local school board. Each local school board shall implement such program during the regular school year. Any physical education class offered to students in grades seven and eight shall include at least one hour of personal safety training per school year in each such grade level that is developed and delivered in partnership with the local law-enforcement agency and consists of situational safety awareness training and social media education;
- Local school boards shall develop and implement a program of instruction for grades K through 12 that is aligned to the Standards of Learning and meets or exceeds the requirements of the Board of Education. The program of instruction shall emphasize reading, writing, speaking, mathematical concepts and computations, proficiency in the use of computers and related technology, computer science and computational thinking, including computer coding, and scientific concepts and processes; essential skills and concepts of citizenship, including knowledge of Virginia history and world and United States history, economics, government, foreign languages, international cultures, **health and physical education**, environmental issues, and geography necessary for responsible participation in American society and in the international community; fine arts, which may include, but need not be limited to, music and art, and practical arts; knowledge and skills needed to qualify for further education, gainful employment, or training in a career or

technical field; and development of the ability to apply such skills and knowledge in preparation for eventual employment and lifelong learning and to achieve economic self-sufficiency;

- Schools offer instructional periods of physical education in elementary and middle schools consistent with the provisions of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (8 VAC 20-131 et seq.);
- Qualified health and physical education teachers provide instruction for all students, including students with disabilities; and
- Schools provide adequate equipment, technology, and facilities that provide healthy, safe, active, and equitable learning experiences.

Guidance:

All elementary and middle school students in Virginia have the opportunity to benefit from physical education. Students with special needs receive physical education instruction in the least restrictive environment, and physical education is available equally to children with disabilities and children without disabilities.

Students are taught by qualified health and physical education teachers who deliver instruction that supports learning for all students. Schools provide adequate facilities and equipment, adequate time for instruction, and class size that supports high-quality instruction and ensures student safety.

2. Ensure meaningful content and skills are included in the physical education curriculum.

Indicators:

- School division curricula are based on the *Physical Education Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools*, which identifies the concepts, processes and skills for physical education in kindergarten through grade twelve.
- Physical education standards are grouped into five strands:
  - a. Motor Skill Development;
  - b. Anatomical Basis of Movement;
  - c. Fitness Planning;
  - d. Social and Emotional Development; and
  - e. Energy Balance.
- School divisions adopt an instructional sequence and program that best serves their own students.

Guidance:

The *Physical Education Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools* establish minimum expectations for what students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade or course in physical education and are intended to support the following goals for students:

- Demonstrate competence in motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities. (Motor Skill Development)
- Apply knowledge of the structures and functions of the body and how they relate to and are affected by human movement to learning and developing motor skills and specialized movement forms. (Anatomical Basis of Movement)
- Achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of personal fitness. (Fitness Planning)

- Demonstrate the aptitude, attitude, and skills to lead responsible, fulfilling, and respectful lives. (Social and Emotional Development)
- Explain the importance of energy balance and the nutritional needs of the body to maintain optimal health and prevent chronic disease. (Energy Balance)

Additional information about the *Physical Education Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools* and related resources are available at <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/instruction/physical-education>.

3. Ensure students are taught by qualified health and physical education teachers.

Indicators:

- Health and physical education teachers meet or exceed the [Board of Education Teacher Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers](#).
- Health and physical education teachers are supported through regular, high-quality professional development opportunities.

Guidance:

Effective classroom management techniques and engaging instruction are used to maximize student learning time. Instructional planning begins with a curriculum scope and sequence that is aligned to the Standards of Learning; connects instruction with prior learning; makes topics relevant to students' lives and experiences; and ensures mastery of knowledge, concepts, and skills.

Delivery of instruction in physical education includes strategies, resources, materials, and tools for the sequencing of learning experiences that are designed to engage all students in active learning.

4. Encourage students to be physically active and become physically fit for life.

Indicators:

- Curricula provide students, teachers, and parents with the necessary information to design an individualized program of fitness.
- Daily physical activity outside of physical education is encouraged.

Guidance:

A well-designed physical education curriculum integrates fitness education and provides students, teachers, and parents with the necessary information to design an individualized program of fitness for each student. Students who participate in physical education programs that promote personal fitness and encourage daily physical activity will be more likely to become physically fit and responsible in their physical activity choices and behaviors for a lifetime.

### **III. Virginia Laws and Regulations Related to Physical Education**

#### **Code of Virginia**

Virginia Standards of Quality

<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter13.2/>

[§ 22.1-200](#). Subjects taught in elementary grades.

[§ 22.1-207](#). Physical and health education.

[§ 22.1-253.13:1](#). Standard 1. Instructional programs supporting the Standards of Learning and other educational objectives.

### **Regulations**

*Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*

[8 VAC 20-131-80](#). Instructional program in elementary schools.

[8 VAC 20-131-90](#). Instructional program in middle schools.

[8 VAC 20-131-240](#). Administrative and support staff; staffing requirements.

## **IV. References and Resources**

Joint Committee of the Board of Education and Board of Health Final Report, September 2004:

<https://www.doe.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/1426/637947278019300000>

The Board of Education Report to the Governor and the General Assembly :

<https://www.doe.virginia.gov/data-policy-funding/virginia-board-of-education/reports>

Scorecard for the Governor's Nutrition and Physical Activity and Program:

<https://www.doe.virginia.gov/programs-services/school-operations-support-services/school-nutrition/governor-s-scorecard-on-nutrition-and-physical-activity>

Virginia Department of Education [Health Education](#), [Physical Education](#), and [Driver Education](#) Webpages.

Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE America) Appropriate Instructional Practice Guidelines:

<https://www.shapeamerica.org/Common/Uploaded%20files/uploads/pdfs/Appropriate-Instructional-Practices-Grid.pdf>