**Curriculum Design**

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**Statement of Purpose**

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), “Healthy People 2010 identified overweight and obesity as 1 of 10 leading health indicators and called for a reduction in the proportion of children and adolescents who are overweight or obese, but the United States has made little progress toward the target goal.” In addition, the CDC states that from 1976-80 to 2007-2008 the increase in obesity in children age 12-19 increased from 5% to 18.1% (NCHS Health E-Stat, 2010). There are many theories as to why these obesity rates in children have climbed to such inappropriate levels. Lack of moderate to vigorous activity and increasing rates of sedentary behavior among adolescents are two of these theories. A 2001 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance revealed that 9.5% of students did not participate in any moderate to vigorous physical activity over the previous seven days, 13.6% of the students surveyed were at risk for becoming overweight due to their current dietary and exercise behaviors. These alarming trends and statistics provide a call to action to provide a physical education curriculum to children that emphasizes the health benefits that regular physical activity can provide throughout the students’ lifetimes.

A health-related physical education curriculum will provide students with the knowledge of concepts related to physical fitness so that they can become effective at managing their own physical fitness throughout their lives. According to Physical Best, which is a health-related fitness program developed by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), physical education curriculums which are based on health-related fitness aim to develop students who “view physical activity as a worthwhile, pleasurable, and lifelong endeavor… and produce members of society who take lifelong personal responsibility for engaging in health-related physical activity,” (NASPE 2005)

NASPE, who has set the national standards for physical education, states that “it is the unique role of quality physical education programs to help all students develop health-related fitness, physical competence, cognitive understanding, and positive attitudes about physical activity so that they can adopt healthy and physically active lifestyles (NASPE, 2004). The CDC has stated that physical education curriculums that embrace using health-related fitness as its core should emphasize the following criteria:

* A sequential curriculum that encourages lifelong physical activity for all grades with emphasis on lifetime activity over competitive sport
* Use of NASPE national standards to promote the development of the physical, cognitive, and affective domains in children through physical education
* Develop students’ knowledge, confidence, & motor skills to promote enjoyable participation in lifelong physical activity
* Provide the opportunity for regular physical activity.

Traditional physical education curriculums were based on motor skill development and often focused on competitive sports. A health-related physical education curriculum should focus on developing the students’ knowledge of the components of health-related fitness, training principles, and the many health benefits (physical, mental-emotional, and social) of regular participation in physical activity. This health-related focus, however, does not need to come at the expense of motor skill development. Motor skill development can be embedded into health-related fitness lessons and health-related fitness lessons can be embedded into units that focus on sports and games.

The goal of school-based physical education should be to give students the skills and knowledge to effectively manage their health through involvement in lifetime physical activity. This can occur by ensuring that the emphasis in the physical education curriculum is on developing students’ knowledge of the health-related components of fitness and training principles; providing units, lessons, and activities that provide for a high level of physical activity, and allow for motor skill development; and progress the students’ ability to be able to independently manage their personal health throughout their lifetime.

**REFERENCES**

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