

An Act to Evaluate and Improve Quality Physical Education

Childhood obesity and diabetes are growing to epidemic proportions. One link to the increasing number of children suffering from obesity and diabetes is lack of physical activity and sedentary lifestyles. But obesity is not just about overeating. Researchers suggest that the childhood obesity epidemic is largely the result of a decline in regular physical activity. To make matters worse, many schools are cutting back on traditional physical education (PE) programs because of budgetary concerns and competing academic demands, such as federally mandated standardized tests under the No Child Left Behind Act. Massachusetts law requires Physical Education (PE) to be taught in the public schools. However in 1996, the Board of Education repealed regulations that had mandated minimum annual hours of instruction. In reality, PE is one of the first programs to suffer when budgets are cut and over time many Massachusetts schools have reduced or eliminated physical education programs.

ENSURE QUALITY PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- ♥ Amend Chapter 71 section 3 of the General Laws to require that:
 - physical education shall be taught as a required subject in all grades
 - physical education be taught by licensed and certified teachers
 - that there be no substitution of other instruction or activities for physical education and
 - physical education coursework shall be regulated under the National Association for Sport & Physical Education (NASPE)
- ♥ An evaluation of current physical education standards, practices and the instruction provided to students in all grades and report their findings for each individual school to the General Court.
- ♥ Within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education a designated full time equivalent staff person will serve as a physical education coordinator for the state.

Schools are potentially attractive settings in which to promote positive healthy behaviors because students spend large amounts of time in the school environment. Although schools are under increasing pressure to increase student scores on standardized tests, the recent dramatic rise in the prevalence of obesity in children and adolescents in the United States suggests that there is a pressing need for the nation's schools to systematically and effectively promote behaviors that will prevent the development of overweight children. Through expanded physical education in schools, the prospects for better health among our young people will be significantly improved.

***THE LEAD SPONSOR OF THE LEGISLATION IS SENATOR TOM MCGEE.
TO CO-SPONSOR SD #1515, PLEASE CONTACT: Senator McGee's Office at 617-722-1440***

***FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE MASSACHUSETTS GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
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