

California Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance
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Educators Applaud New Study Showing Physical Education is “Worth the Time”

Cost Effective Programs Boost Achievement.

The new California Department of Education study, released earlier today, showing a significant relationship between academic achievement and the physical fitness of California students is heralded by thousands of teachers in California who teach physical education and health.

“This is news we have been waiting for”, said Mike Heffernan President of the California Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, “it sends a compelling message to school boards, school district administrators, teachers, and parents. Physical Education and Health programs can no longer be pushed to the bottom of the priority lists in our schools.”

The study matched scores from the spring 2001 administration of Stanford 9 Test (SAT-9) with results of the same 954,000 students’ performance on the state-mandated 2001 physical fitness test, and found that students’ academic achievement is related to their levels of health related physical fitness.

“We’ve seen health experts across the nation express concern for the raging epidemic of childhood and adolescent obesity and yet our schools have failed to act, This is not a budget issue. Public school students are mandated by California law to receive 200 minutes of physical education every 10 school days when they are in elementary school, yet very few California students do.” Heffernan said. “Our schools must address all factors that affect achievement”.

This emphasis should not require new funding sources in this bleak budget year, Heffernan said, because funding for physical education and health programs is allocated annually to each school district in the state through the general fund. Physical education proponents decry the tendency of school districts to channel funds to other uses and neglect physical education programs. With the new study release, **health and physical education teachers have called upon** school

superintendents and school boards to **acknowledge** the importance of physical fitness when trying to improve achievement at all schools, **particularly those** (delete while noting the impact this could have at school) designated as low-performing. (delete schools.)

“The connection between physical fitness and academic achievement is clear,” said Mike Heffernan, CAHPERD President. “Parents and teachers need to insist on quality physical education programs for ALL of California’s children, from kindergarten to 12th grade.”