

Back to School RI: Health Education, Physical Education, and Physical Activity SY20-21

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RIDE Rhode Island
Department
of Education

Vision

Since Governor Gina Raimondo and Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green announced the closing of school buildings on March 13, 2020, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), and the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) along with community and school leaders have been preparing for the reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year (SY20-21). RIDE and RIDOH are committed to leveraging the latest public health information and best education practices to deliver innovative solutions and partnerships that ensure a safe reopening of all Prek-12 schools.

The Active Schools organization has outlined the importance of physical education and activity in this brief [statement](#). Of note, this statement highlights the heightened importance of health and physical education in a pandemic. It also notes that the United States Department of Health and Human Services, "Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommends that children and adolescents ages 6 through 17 years participate in 60 minutes or more of physical activity daily. Extensive scientific evidence demonstrates that regular physical activity promotes growth and development in youth and has multiple benefits for physical, mental, and cognitive health." The COVID 19 pandemic has fostered numerous innovations and creative approaches in supporting our students. Information in this document is provided to assist in preparing for the SY20-21 to ensure the continued health and physical education of our students.

Specific Considerations:

- Health Education and Physical Education are required courses per State statutes and the Basic Education Plan (BEP). The [RI Rules and Regulations For School Health Programs](#) includes: *All children in grades kindergarten (K) through twelve (12) attending schools, are required to receive instruction in health and physical education as prescribed and approved by RIDE, for during periods which shall average at least twenty (20) minutes in each school day in accordance with the provisions of R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [16-22-4](#) and [16-1-5\(14\)](#).*
- Health Education curriculum must be aligned with [the Health Literacy for All: The Rhode Island Health Education Framework](#) and with the [RI Comprehensive Health Instructional Outcomes](#).
- Physical Education curriculum must be based on the [RI Physical Education Framework](#).
- Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommends
"Children and adolescents ages 6 through 17 years participate in 60 minutes or more of physical activity daily. Extensive scientific evidence demonstrates that

regular physical activity promotes growth and development in youth and has multiple benefits for physical, mental, and cognitive health."

RIDE recognizes that there are particular challenges in implementing Physical Education and physical activity. This guide is designed to share creative approaches to Physical Education, Health Education, and physical activity.

Best Practices

Systems

- Physical Education (PE) provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to be physically active throughout their lifetimes.
- Health education teaches about physical, mental, emotional and social health. It builds students' knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes about health. Health education motivates students to improve and maintain their health, prevent disease, and reduce risky behaviors.
- District Health and Wellness subcommittees, established by statute in 2005, are responsible for nutrition and physical activity policies, health education and physical education. This group, along with health and physical education staff, can play a key role in developing site specific strategies to promote health education and physical education.
- The [CDC/ASCD Whole School Whole Community Whole Child Framework](#) can help schools and districts think about creative solutions to bring movement into classrooms while meeting the RI Physical Education Standards. This will be particularly helpful when students are spending all day in one classroom. Frequent physical activity breaks will be key for social/emotional health and learning.
- The subject of Health and Physical Education are often considered together, scheduling practices that maximize outdoor time in seasonable weather for Physical Education is recommended with indoor physical activity and Health Education provided in cold weather months or inclement weather.
- The Society for Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) America produced: [School Reentry Considerations for K-12 Physical Education, Health Education, and Physical Activity](#) This guidance includes creative activities for Physical Education and Physical Activity with attention to physical distancing along with other health and safety considerations. There are also classroom-based activities. Both movement breaks and Physical Education are essential. One does not replace the other.



- Cairn Guidance, a national professional development provider for health education, developed a [Systems Approach to Integrating Health Education](#) to provide a framework to consider opportunities to integrate health within current USDOE and CDC guidance.
- [RIDE's Distance Learning Resource Guide](#) includes tabs for health and physical education, as well as active learning and mindfulness.
- Tables including the RI and National Health Education and Physical Education Standards can be found in Appendix A for ease of reference. RI Standards are comparable to National Standards and the following recommendations have been adapted from the SHAPE America resources included herein.

Health Education

- Teachers can utilize a [skills-based approach](#) for delivering high-quality health education. The seven key health skills are: analyzing influences; accessing valid and reliable information, products, and services; interpersonal communication; decision-making; goal setting; self-management; and, advocacy for self and others
- Teachers may consider focusing on certain skills and content that are more relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic. The [SHAPE America](#) has resources for organizing virtual learning and hybrid learning scenarios
- Identify activities and units that can enhance the development of health education skills (e.g., self-management, interpersonal communication).

Physical Education

- Address all of the State Standard for k-12 Physical Education by selecting associated activities that require little or no use of shared equipment by students.
 - This may mean that the focus of the curriculum shifts to emphasize standards including health-enhancing fitness, personal and social responsibility and the value of physical activity. Incorporate activities that include motor skills, movement patterns, and movement concepts that are safe and appropriate.
 - There will be greater opportunities for movement outdoors versus indoor environments.
- Follow CDC guidance on Physical Education classes.
 - Vigorous exercise in a confined space (e.g., indoors) may contribute to transmission of COVID-19 and should be limited.
 - Social distancing helps protect students at recess or in physical education class.
 - Consider conducting activities in an area with greater ventilation or air exchange (e.g., outdoors).



- See CDC's guidance on youth sports for more information.
- Adaptations and alternatives should be considered whenever possible to increase the feasibility of wearing a cloth face covering or to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading.
- Any shared materials should be cleaned between individual student uses. Students should wash their hands before and after PE class.
- Teachers and students must adhere to all face covering and physical distancing protocols. Microphones and speakers could be considered to provide instruction while students are physically distant from each other in a large outdoor space. They too should be cleaned and sanitized frequently.
- Keep the focus of instruction on life time physical activity including individual pursuits or skills rather than traditional team sports or activities. For example, activities could include:
 - dance and rhythms
 - exercises without equipment
 - fitness activities
 - mindfulness
 - outdoor pursuits
 - track and field
 - throwing underhand, kicking or target games

Physical Activity

- Classroom teachers can provide opportunities for student choice and incorporate student-suggested movement break activities when appropriate. Physical Education and Health Education Teachers can work with classroom teachers to incorporate kinesthetic activities into didactic lessons and structured activity breaks. These strategies can help increase physical activity throughout the day and limit the amount of time that students are sedentary. Additionally, providing classroom-based physical activity can be used as a strategy to mitigate feelings of stress and anxiety
- Schools must provide recess to engage in safe physical activity daily for students in grades k-6. Recess should provide opportunities for all students to be active and allow for free choice by students.
- Schools can use painted play spaces or create play areas with stencils or cones to designate zones to help students identify how to safely comply with physical distancing guidelines during physical education class or recess.



- Information on pods, physical distancing and playground equipment is detailed in the Return to Schools [FAQ](#).



Appendix:

Table 1

Rhode Island Health Education Standards (1996)	National Health Education Standards (2007)
Students will in understand the concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention as the foundation for a healthy life.	Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.
Students will demonstrate the ability to access valid health information and health promoting products and services.	Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.
Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and reduce health risks.	Students will demonstrate the ability to access valid information, products, and services to enhance health.
Students will analyze the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors on health.	Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.	Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.
Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal setting and decision making to enhance health.	Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health.
Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, community and environmental health.	Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.
	Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health.



Table 2:

Rhode Island Physical Education Standards (2003)	Society of Health and Physical Educators National Physical Education Standards (2013)
A physically educated person demonstrates competency in many movement forms and proficiency in a few movement forms.	The physically literate individual demonstrates competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns.
A physical educated person applies movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of motor skills	The physically literate individual applies knowledge of concepts, principles, strategies and tactics related to movement and performance.
A physically educated person understands the implications of and the benefits derived from involvement in physical activity	The physically literate individual demonstrates the knowledge and skills to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness.
A physically educated person applies physical activity related skills and concepts to maintain a physically active lifestyle and a health enhancing level of physical fitness	The physically literate individual exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others.
A physically educated person demonstrates responsible personal and social behavior in physical activity settings	The physically literate individual recognizes the value of physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and/or social interaction.
A physically educated person understands that internal and external environments influence physical activity.	

Resources:

Active Schools (2020)., [Physical Education and Physical Activity are an Integral Part of the Education Process During COVID 19.](#)

[Cairn Guidance](#)

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2020)., [Distance Learning Resource Guide.](#)

[RI Healthy Schools Coalition](#)

[Society of Health and Physical Educators \(SHAPE\) America](#)

[Spring Board to Active Schools](#)

[The Society of State Leaders of Health and Physical Education](#)

[Thrive – Rhode Island Coordinated School Health Program](#)

[United States Department of Health and Human Services \(2019\)., Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.](#)

