

2013 HEALTH P.E. & CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

The Health and Physical Education Curriculum Committee of the Archdiocese of Denver met in the fall of 2012 to review and revise the Archdiocese of Denver Health and P. E. Curriculum. The committee reviewed current research and the Colorado State Standards for physical education as guidelines for the review. Additionally, the health and physical educators from throughout the Archdiocese were surveyed to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the 2008 guidelines.

A common concern expressed through the survey was the need to make sure physical educators had sufficient time to provide physical education instruction. Some physical educators were being asked to cover a significant amount of the health curriculum which was difficult to accomplish in the limited meeting time with students.

Through the survey it became apparent to the committee members that teachers wanted clarity with regard to which health objectives were to be taught and assessed by the physical education teacher verses the classroom teacher. It was decided that the health curriculum should be reviewed by both the physical education teachers and the science curriculum team to determine which health objectives should be embedded in each curriculum. The intention is to make sure that the health objectives are met and that it is clear which teachers are responsible for specific objectives.

The physical education curriculum addresses five key concept strands across grades pre-school through 8th and four concepts strands in the high school curriculum. The previous health education curriculum was presented as a separate series of concepts to be taught; the curriculum committee determined that health education objectives should be written as the fifth critical concept of the physical education curriculum for the elementary schools. The high school health curriculum will be published as a separate set of objectives allowing each of the high schools to best determine how to incorporate those objectives in the course offerings

Many thanks to these members of the Health and Physical Education Curriculum Committee for their thoughtful work:

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PHILOSOPHY

The Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools strive to educate the whole person: mind, soul, body and spirit. A well-educated person has respect for his/her body and understands the workings of that marvelous gift from God. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* says, "The human body shares in the dignity of 'the image of God'" (364). "Life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to us by God. We must take reasonable care of them, taking into account the needs of others and the common good" (2288).

The teaching of Physical Education, therefore, is an important component of the total Catholic school program and not a "frill" or an "extra." In the United States, where childhood obesity has become an epidemic, schools have a responsibility to provide enjoyable, safe, appropriate opportunities for exercise and physical play for students. Students who enjoy participation in sports and games may develop habits of life-long physical activity.

Teaching Physical Education goes well beyond the learning and playing of games. Education of the total person includes education that supports a lifestyle that cares for and appreciates the workings of the human body. Recent research indicates that physical activity impacts how the brain develops, increasing the ability to learn and be creative. This is especially true for school-age children. Guidelines from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education published in 2004 suggest that children should accumulate at least 60 minutes per day—and up to several hours—of age appropriate physical activity, that this should come in bouts of activity lasting 15 minutes or more, and that extended periods – two hours or more – of inactivity are discouraged for young children. Instruction in cooperative play, individual and team sports support an active life style.

Students learn to appreciate and understand their bodies and that a healthy body requires exercise and care. They learn to be sensitive to their own abilities, to different abilities in others, and to the gifts and challenges of individuals with special needs. Individual and team sports/games not only provide a source of exercise and relaxation, but also teach cooperation and team-work. Lessons learned on the court or playing field can be applied to a student's broader life experience.

Students need to understand how nutrition impacts health. They need to have a sense of the workings of the human body and understand what is needed to maintain the health of that body. Students who have this information should be able to make better decisions regarding what they put into their bodies, how to care for the needs of their bodies in the different stages of life, how to avoid illness, and what to do in case of illness. They need to have appropriate information to engender a responsible attitude about behaviors that could put themselves or others into harm's way. Education in Physical Education supports moral decision-making and a healthy life.