

Executive Summary: Policy 9535 Physical Education Substitution

Information to Date:

In addition to a copy of Policy 9535, two letters from the Pennsylvania Department of Education regarding our Physical Education substitution are also attached. There is also a document which summarizes the requirements for Health and Physical Education in the state of PA. The main points in that document that deal with high school include the following:

1. Planned instruction aligned with academic standards in health and physical education must be provided to every student in the senior high program.
2. Schools must provide sufficient time and planned instruction to allow students to achieve at a proficient level on the standards.
3. School districts must have in place a local assessment to determine proficiency.
4. Physical education and physical activity are not considered to be the same by the PDE since physical activity is only one component of physical education.
5. Students may not receive credit for participation in ROTC or in marching band.
6. Physical education instruction must be taught by an individual who holds a valid PA certification in Health and Physical Education if a student is to receive credit.

Options Discussed:

1. We have discussed continuing to offer PE Sub and making it a non-credited requirement for graduation. If this were to occur, we would need to have students complete a final assessment in health and physical education to demonstrate proficiency. In addition, we would need to show how the activity selected by the student meets all of the standards in Health and Physical Education.
2. There has also been discussion of eliminating PE Sub and requiring all students to take Physical Education which would require additional staff in the physical education department.
3. Independent study has been suggested as an option for students as well. If independent study were to occur on the same scale that PE Sub is occurring (approximately 1/3 of the high school population), we would still need to provide for additional teacher time to meet with students, make assignments, evaluate portfolios or other evaluations tools and engage in record keeping to document the work of the individual students.

Considerations:

1. Students do have the opportunity to take additional academic coursework if the PE Sub Policy were to stay in place in some form.
2. The number of Physical Education teachers needed could remain unchanged if we continue with the PE Sub Policy.

3. The Physical Education staff spent a great deal of time, thought and collaborative work in developing a core curriculum for high school physical education that takes students beyond what they can learn through participation in a single sport. This curriculum also includes the components of the standards that include safety, nutrition, first aid and other life skills that are seldom taught through participation in a sport.
4. A planned physical education course allows the level of proficiency of a student to be assessed consistently.
5. The goal of a physical education course should be to provide students with the knowledge, skills and confidence to be successful in participation in physical endeavors throughout their lives, improving nutrition and teaching safe behaviors with regard to drugs and alcohol among other risk factors.
6. Research (see attached articles) shows us that students who receive additional instruction in physical education often perform better in the classroom, are less likely to become involved in drug and alcohol usage and may have fewer disciplinary incidents in school.

Administrative Recommendations:

It might be best to look at this problem as one with a long term solution. It is perhaps, unreasonable to change the rules for students in the middle of their high school experience. Therefore, it might be best to begin with the Class of 2014, the incoming ninth graders and require them to schedule physical education with the goal of eliminating PE Sub entirely by 2014. The policy could remain in effect for the graduating classes of 2011, 2012 and 2013 to allow them to complete their high school courses as they have them planned out at present. This resolution would also allow time for the administration to consider some scheduling changes that would permit students to schedule physical education without an adverse effect on their academic opportunities. Finally, this would allow us to plan to absorb additional physical education teachers into the existing number of positions by looking carefully at open positions created by retirements which might be able to be reclassified, therefore reducing the likelihood that the Board would need to create new positions.

Recommended Motion:

That the Board of Directors adopts Policy 9535 as amended.