



Illinois Public Health Institute works through partnerships to promote prevention and improve public health systems that maximize health and quality of life for the people of Illinois.

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NEW P.E. PLAN WILL IMPROVE HEALTH AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Chicago - June 5, 2012 – The Illinois Enhanced Physical Education (P.E.) Strategic Plan was released today by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and the Illinois Public Health Institute (IPHI). This plan represents a novel approach to building consensus among diverse stakeholders for improving the academic achievement and health of our youth. A voluntary, multi-sector Task Force co-chaired by ISBE and IDPH, and convened by IPHI, helped develop the vision and strategies captured by this seminal report, which has been a year in the making.

The Strategic Plan is a call to action to the education and health advocates and stakeholders to make daily, high-quality physical education a reality for all Illinois K-12 students. It highlights the critical role of local school boards, superintendents, and principals in enhancing P.E. and key opportunities for them to provide leadership.

Building on ISBE and IDPH's leadership on this issue, the Illinois legislature has approved a statutory Enhance P.E. Task Force, through Senate Bill 3374, that will "promote and implement enhanced physical education programs that can be integrated with a broader wellness strategy and health curriculum in elementary and secondary schools" through strategies that align with the Strategic Plan released today. The statutory Task Force will also recommend updates to the state's P.E. standards, based on the growing body of neuroscience research connecting physical activity with improved learning.

Elissa Bassler, CEO of the Illinois Public Health Institute, pointed to this legislative accomplishment, and applauded the General Assembly's initiative. "This effort highlights Illinois' leadership in the growing movement nationwide to create healthier, more economically vibrant communities through improving the health and well-being of children. Teaching kids how to be physically active throughout their lives is one of the key strategies needed to stem the obesity epidemic."

Christopher A. Koch, State Superintendent of Education and Co-Chair of the Task Force underscored the value of the Strategic Plan. "We shouldn't have to choose between teaching students how to read and teaching them the skills to live a healthy life. This plan is a guidepost for how we can do both and improve our children's educational outcomes at the same time."

"Public health and education are fundamentally related," said LaMar Hasbrouck, MD, MPH, the director of the Illinois Department of Public Health. "In May, the Institute of Medicine called on schools to be a focal point for obesity prevention, with a core strategy being access to and participation in quality physical education. By enhancing P.E., we make a critical step towards ensuring that all K-12 students have the chance to participate in the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day."

Illinois has a track record of prioritizing children’s education and health. It was the first state to require daily P.E. for all K-12 students. Although some Illinois schools are implementing model P.E. programs, many others struggle to meet this requirement. A third of schools have or previously had a P.E. waiver, many of which will expire soon, and they are looking for effective and economical ways to enhance their P.E. offerings.

The Task Force is comprised of state agencies, advocates, public health and non-profit organizations, disability experts, and professional associations across the public health and education sectors.

The American Heart Association (AHA) agrees that daily P.E. is an important investment in our future. “The new Phys-Ed is about participation, simply getting kids moving, not a call for extreme athletics. Research from the AHA shows that the simple act of exercising 30 minutes a day confers life-long health benefits. If all K-12 schools implement a comprehensive physical education curriculum that is based on best-practices, we will save money and save lives,” said Stephen Archer, MD, President of the Metropolitan Chicago American Heart Association Board of Directors. “The money it takes to provide a child with daily PE is a drop in the bucket compared to the escalating medical costs that are our nation will face when our children grow up to become adults suffering from a host of chronic diseases, including heart disease and stroke.”

To achieve the full potential of this plan, a broad range of stakeholders must use it to help guide their work. Strategies discussed in this document should be undertaken by members of the Enhanced P.E. Task Force, dedicated teachers, school administrators, school boards, public health advocates, community leaders, and organizations throughout Illinois who strive to improve the lives of children every day.

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Read the full report at:

See cross-postings on state agency websites at:

Illinois State Board of Education –
[Illinois Department of Public Health](#) –

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About the Illinois Public Health Institute: The Illinois Public Health Institute works through partnerships to promote prevention and improve public health systems that maximize health and quality of life for the people of Illinois.