



Policy Levers to Improve Physical Education, Youth Physical Activity and Social and Emotional Learning

In late spring 2020, the American Heart Association (AHA) convened an internal working group to begin to strategize on how to reimagine its policy work for physical education/physical activity in schools. The organization wanted to engage multiple external stakeholder groups to co-create revised policy priorit

Methodology for Reimagining the American Heart Association's Physical Education/Physical Activity in Schools Advocacy Priorities

We identified four stakeholder groups: Group 1 was comprised of researchers. Group 2 included school board members, administrators including principals, superintendents, and chief diversity officers. Group 3 included physical education teachers. Group 4 consisted of non-governmental organizations, CDC, and professional organizations. We created a series of virtual semi-structured discussions encouraging innovative thinking where everyone could speak openly. We assured no personal attribution would be made (unless participants told us they would not mind being quoted). We also distributed a survey through social media to gather grassroots feedback on the questions we were asking the stakeholder groups. We held two calls with each stakeholder group and then two calls with the groups combined to help develop and respond to the draft policy recommendations in the developing white paper. Through continued feedback and revision, the white paper and recommendations were finalized in early 2021.

Key Themes that Emerged from our Discussions

- The global COVID-19 pandemic likely will have short- and long-term implications for physical education delivery in schools and how physical activity opportunities are offered. There is uncertainty about long-term implications of the pandemic.
- Related to the pandemic themes, understanding resiliency of PA programs (whether PE in school or afterschool PA programs) will be key for sustaining access in future systemic shocks.
- The pandemic underscored the importance of continuing to prioritize physical activity and fitness for student health and well-being, and concern about the detrimental health impacts of physical inactivity and sedentary behaviors.
- The pandemic brought to light and intensified income, race, and ethnic disparities in health and education among children and adolescents.
- The disparities in access to physical activity opportuni

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- Establish a State Children's Cabinet that fosters interagency collaboration for WSCC and CSPAP strategic planning and implementation, emphasizing public and student health, workforce, and barriers to active travel to and from school.
- Establish and update a national re

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- Advocate for collaboration between the National Institute of Education and National Institutes of Health to jointly fund