



# Physical Education Matters

- Success Stories From California Low Resource Schools That Have Achieved Excellent PE Programs *February 2008*

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*Funded by and prepared for:*

The California Endowment



## INTRODUCTION

Low resource schools face many challenges in meeting the educational needs of their students, and improving physical education (PE) usually ranks low on their list of priorities. However, quality daily PE can contribute to health, academic achievement, discipline, and the development of important physical and social skills. Students attending low resource schools are mostly Latino or African American, groups that are at higher risk for inactivity, obesity, and diabetes.

High quality activity-focused PE can contribute to solutions for these common health problems. An earlier report from The California Endowment (Failing Fitness, [www.calendow.org](http://www.calendow.org)) showed that PE in low resource schools in California was very deficient in both quantity and quality. This report highlights success stories from low resource schools that have overcome barriers to improve their PE programs. There are lessons here that can be applied by others schools.

PE classes in low resource schools are generally less frequent and provide fewer minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity than those in high resource schools. The challenges that make it difficult for low resource schools to meet academic standards

also create barriers to quality PE.

Lack of funds in one school meant PE has been dropped altogether. An inadequate number of credentialed PE teachers results in over 50 students (and up to 100) in each class. The lack of staff makes it difficult to teach skills, supervise games and maintain discipline. Children may not be dressed-out for PE, and fights can break out in the locker room or during a game. Insufficient time scheduled for PE and not enough space or equipment for all students to participate makes running laps easier to manage than skill-building activities that may engage a higher proportion of students. Time devoted to roll call by certified teachers wastes precious activity minutes. With no money to maintain or replace equipment, and

no funds to support staff development, “throwing out the ball” ends up being the norm.

In contrast, affluent schools have many resources of funds and fewer barriers to overcome. They are able to provide quality PE programs to students, who also have greater access to after school activities. These schools can afford new equipment, modern facilities and sufficient staff to deliver quality PE to small class sizes. Extra funds are often supplied by parents, who have connections to other sources of funds and resources. Affluent parents also have more discretionary time to support PE staff as playground monitors or coaches.

Despite major obstacles, some low resource schools have developed very successful PE programs. We sought out these schools to present examples of successful programs to inspire and instruct other schools with similar resource challenges. Schools were selected based on meeting the required PE minutes (200 minutes per 10 school days at the elementary level and 400 minutes at the secondary level), more than 50% of students receiving free or reduced price lunches (FRPL), and more than 50% of the students being Latino or African American. These schools saw improvements in student FitnessGRAM results with their program. We identified elementary, middle, and high schools from urban and rural areas of California, but one limitation was imposed

by our inability to complete assessments of schools in the Bay Area. We spoke with district coordinators, principals, teachers, and students to get multiple perspectives on the program. The stories from each school outline different types of PE programs and different strategies used to improve PE. At the end, we identify some of the common themes contributing to the success of these innovative schools.

# QUALITY PE CASE STUDIES



<b>KEILER LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (KLA) MIDDLE SCHOOL (CHARTER)</b>
✓ 7270 Lisbon Street, San Diego, CA 92114
✓ (82% FRPL, 55% Hispanic, 34% African American)
✓ Program: 3 PE staff implementing California state standards-based curriculum with support of grants.

In 2003 KLA, unfortunately, was considered one of the top 10 most dangerous schools in California. There were frequent fights in the locker room and only 7% of students were passing all 6 FitnessGRAM tests. By 2007, over 60% of 7th graders passed all 6 tests. Although KLA became a charter school in 2005, they face resource challenges like other low income schools. As a charter school they also face the pressure of re-assessment every 5 years with the threat of closure if the school does not meet API (Academic Performance Index) standards.

## FUNDING

One key to their successful PE program has been applying for grants. They were awarded a \$2,500 Michael Jordan Fundamentals Nike Grant, a \$40,000 Chargers Champion Grant, a \$10,000 Cox Communications Grant and in 2007 they received a Federal PEP grant. The PE teachers, with the support of the principal, spend a lot of time writing grant proposals,

but they are sure it has been worth it. The book *Grant Writing for Dummies* provided a great place to start learning this skill.

The Chargers' grant paid for a large exercise room with plenty of equipment for all the children, the Nike grant helped buy active electronic games. The kids love this room because it offers a variety of activities (treadmills, stationary bikes, weights stations, medicine balls, resistance bands, Dance Dance Revolution), and they can learn how to work out on their own. They usually spend half the PE class time in this room. The principal tries to provide new, age-appropriate equipment each year, and the variety of equipment helps to keep the children engaged and interested.

The Cox Communication grant supported the Character Counts program. The kids happily recite the six pillars of character; trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Each PE class focuses on one of the pillars. They have taught the children valuable social skills (such as conflict resolution) and contributed to class discipline, providing talking points and aims for cooperation in team games. Some of the children have had disruptive childhoods and have missed out on these social and personal development skills. The Character Counts Program has been so successful in PE that the school plans to implement it in other subjects, too.

## ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

The improvements in PE could not have been possible without the support of the principal, Patricia Ladd, who tries herself to exercise every day and can attest to the benefits of keeping active. "Perhaps all principals need to experience a fitness regime," she muses, "then they might appreciate the benefits of PE more." She believes that optimal learning can only occur when the body and mind are fit. While financially it would be easier to employ only two PE teachers, Principal Ladd insists on having three qualified PE staff to ensure class sizes can remain small (about 30-35 students per PE class). The students appreciate this as they have more space to be active and more attention from the staff. Small class sizes also help minimize conflicts. The school day is split into 90 minute periods for each subject, including PE. This means there is sufficient time for the kids to be active and learn skills. The children have to "dress out" for PE, class monitors hand out spare clothes to those who have forgotten, and dressing out is enforced by threat of an in-school suspension. Not only does the 90 minute period permit high quality PE, but each day the three PE staff has the first period together for planning, grant writing, curriculum development and training. Pupils at KLA get 90 minutes of PE every other day for a total of 450 minutes of PE every 10 days (50 minutes over the mandated minutes) and pupils in class are from a single grade level.

This allows students to follow the appropriate curriculum for their age each year and means students are at similar skill levels in each class.

## STAFF COMMITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The staff is very creative at KLA, inventing different games. Pickle ball is tennis & ping pong combined, and the Cougar games are a mini Olympics. Many of the kids actually feel like PE is "free time." "We make it fun so it seems like free time, but really it is very structured and disciplined," said Ashley Wirth, a PE teacher. The three PE staff (two female and one male teacher) are clearly very passionate, but most importantly, they work as a team. For example, they make sure that locker room discipline is consistent for the boys and girls. Organization and discipline are vital to maximizing the amount of time spent in moderate to vigorous activity. Lesson plans are posted in the locker room and outside, so the children know the routine and what is expected of them. This sense of purpose means they walk away from PE feeling like their time was not wasted. There are fewer locker room fights, the kids can be active in a safe and positive environment and more are passing the fitness tests. Principal Ladd believes PE teachers can change children's lives. "You can see it in the kids' faces," she says, "They respect these PE teachers." The staff was also able to use their prep period to develop their own curriculum based on the California Content Standards.

In low income schools, like KLA, quality PE allows the pupils to try sports and activities that they would not have access to outside of school, like golf and tennis. Some kids even miss PE on the weekend when they don't have access to programs and equipment. The kids feel pumped up after a PE class where the activities are constantly changing and time seems to fly by. For one student who was grounded at home, because of his parents' concern for his safety, PE was his one time to do fun stuff. Another boy thought it kept him out of trouble. Ashley encourages her children to take the lessons they learn in PE to their homes and encourage their family members to be active.

the school's compliance with the state mandated 400 minutes of PE every 10 days. To get the extra minutes required, the PE department has worked proactively with the other staff to develop a daily five minute PE period with work booklets, and even internally produced exercise videos. The extra five minutes each day provides the additional 50 minutes required to meet the 400 minute mandate. This unique solution demonstrates the creativity and commitment of the three staff in the PE department. They were able to work with the staff in other subject areas to integrate activity breaks into the rest of the school day because the staff appreciates what PE does for the kids, particularly when pupils are less rambunctious after a PE session.



PACIFIC BEACH MIDDLE SCHOOL	
✓	4676 Ingraham Street, San Diego, CA 92109
✓	(67% FRPL, 67% Hispanic, 7% African American)
✓	Program: Three PE staff implementing California state standards-based curriculum and International Baccalaureate with support of additional grants.

For those of you who know San Diego, Pacific Beach (PB) will not immediately spring to mind as a low resource area. But the school certainly faces financial challenges, and 55% of the children are bused in. One consequence of budget constraints in 2007 was the reduction of the 90 minute PE block every other day to 70 minutes, posing a problem for

### ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, FUNDING AND A STRONG PE DEPARTMENT

PB middle school has a very supportive principal. Principal Michelle Irwin appreciates having a strong PE department and notes its many positive effects on the school climate. She believes that a strong PE department results in fewer social problems for the whole school. "PE is when the school culture comes alive," she said. "PE is a lot more than learning to play sports; it is about team building, relationships and communication." She sees the PE department as an integral part of the school. If there are social problems in English or Math and grades are suffering, PE provides an outlet to address them.

Principal Irwin definitely has great respect for her PE staff. PE is not performed within the confines of a classroom; it is outside in view of everyone and in a large open space where it is much harder to enforce discipline. If PE teachers only throw out the ball, then it is hard to support such a program and see the need for certification and training. In contrast, the teachers at PB are always trying to find new and fun ways to keep the children on the go with activities that they will enjoy for life (like orienteering or golf). Principal Irwin believes that if principals could see successful programs, like the one at PB, then they may develop higher expectations for PE and make it a greater priority in their school.

Principal Irwin evaluates her PE staff like other staff members, reviewing their lesson plans, giving feedback and conducting walkthroughs and mini observations. To improve team cohesion, all PE three staff together attend three conferences a year to help with their professional development. They work as a team with a common prep period and use radios to keep in touch and coordinate activity changeovers. The dress-out policy is enforced by the administration, and the PE lesson plan is posted in the locker room so the students know what to expect. Classes are usually a combination of cardio, team building, and skills development.

PB was awarded a San Diego Chargers \$25,000 grant for a fitness room. This room provides opportunity for non-traditional activities like Dance Dance Revolution, which engages many of the less-motivated girls in the school. This may be important, as research has shown that girls are less active than boys in traditional PE programs. Certainly, teaching traditional team sports is easier, but the staff at PB likes to challenge themselves, as well as the students, and a wider range of activities allows more kids to be successful. Part of the education process is teaching both kids and parents about the scope of PE beyond traditional sports. Parents often talk about how their kids love PE, and the Parent-Teacher Organization has been very supportive, having given the PE department several small grants. The school has also developed a relationship with the PB recreation center and can use the grass areas for PE.



EMORY ELEMENTARY	
✓	1915 Coronado Ave. San Diego, CA 92154
✓	(57% FRPL, 66% Hispanic)
✓	Program: SPARK (Sports, Play and Active Recreation for Kids) PE. Classroom teachers instruct students in PE with periodic assistance from a SPARK-trained PE specialist.

### MAKING PE A PRIORITY

The SPARK PE program has been in Emory Elementary for 10 years now. The school was nominated for a No Child Left Behind-

Blue Ribbon Scholars Program. This award is given by the California Department of Education (CDE) to honor public and private schools that are either academically superior or demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement. The principal, Dennis Malek, believes the school's PE program contributes greatly to the academic achievement. Principal Malek had SPARK in his previous school and brought it to Emory. He's read the research and knows how important physical activity is for academic achievement. Even the students seem to know this, as one pupil claimed, "If we didn't have PE, I'd get worse grades because I wouldn't be paying attention in class." They have 60 minutes of PE at least two days a week and run every morning, which helps to wake the students up and readies them to learn in the classroom.

Although the teachers feel the pressure of reading and writing performance demands, they realize that PE helps the kids concentrate in class and achieve higher grades. Most classroom teachers participate in the SPARK program and the few who do not still take their students outside for PE. The lead teacher for PE, Mr. Kinnamon, helps organize the PE schedule, ensuring equipment and space is available for each class at their designated time. Mr. Kinnamon remembers how things were before the school had the SPARK program for PE: teachers took their students out for 20 minutes at the end

of the day and let them play before sending them home. Teachers did not have the training or equipment needed for PE. Now teachers instruct their students in various skills and also focus on fitness. Mr. Kinnamon and other teachers credit Principal Malek for consistently making PE a priority in their school.

### CONTINUED STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Principal Malek believes one of the key elements in the success of the SPARK program at Emory is the monthly specialist consultant. Although the teachers are trained to implement the program, Principal Malek feels the consultant boosts staff motivation and commitment to the program, provides on-going training, and brings in something new each month. Teachers believe the specialist is a key to their success. The specialist comes to the schools 14-16 days each year, and teachers say they are just as excited as the kids to have the opportunity to learn new skills and activities. Naturally there is a cost associated with this, \$6,000-7,000 annually, but the money is found each year through the Parent Teacher Organization, the site council and the Washington Mutual *WaMoola for Schools* program. *WaMoola* is a free program that allows individuals to designate a specific school to receive benefits each time they make purchases with their debit cards. Dennis Malek feels lucky that he has not had high teacher turnover at the school, so little additional training of



how the children enjoy and respond to the program, they are motivated to keep the program going. One teacher saw success reflected in her students' reading levels. At the beginning of the school year, 20% of her students were reading at grade level. By end of the year, all except two were reading at grade level. She states the only difference between this year and the previous year was that the students went out for PE every day.

### PE SPECIALIST'S ROLE

The PE specialist, Adriana Camara, was supported through the HEAC project for two years. To continue the program, the principal hopes to use state funding [SB 601] to hire a certified PE teacher for the school. Before the new program, some of the kids were bored and not confident during PE. Now they have learned new skills and activities, which they like teaching to their friends and family outside of school. The students have a sense of achievement, success and pride, and say that they feel happy, strong and in shape. While the school has benefited from the HEAC program, they have also explored commercial sponsorship and have written many grants, including a successful Nike Jordan Fundamentals award. Classroom teacher, Trish Birk, dedicates time to surfing the internet and finding opportunities for funding or equipment from many different grants, foundations and businesses.

### THE CHILDREN BENEFIT

Principal Goldman at Norwood thinks that, in general, principals do not know what a good PE program looks like or fail to realize its potential to help students. She is grateful for the support Chad Fenwick gives her school by providing opportunities to improve their PE program and training for teachers and principals. She feels PE is an important experience for children who may not be high academic achievers. PE provides them with something they enjoy and are good at, and motivates them to stay in school. The PE program and after school programs are particularly important for children living in the Norwood school neighborhood. It is unsafe for children to play outside because of gangs and drive-by shootings, and most families cannot afford sports equipment for their kids. Although the Norwood program has not yet been evaluated, the principal has observed that the kids seem healthier, classroom behavior has improved, and academic achievement may have improved as well. Principal Goldman feels active PE helps students stay alert in class, and if it helps them lose weight, will also reduce bullying. One student was delighted to have lost three pounds, and another felt that being fit could help him fight back or run away should any trouble arise.



SANGER UNIFIED SCHOOL	
DISTRICT- JEFFERSON ELEMENTARY	
✓	1110 Tucker Avenue Sanger, CA 93657
✓	(88% FRPL, 97% Hispanic)
✓	District Program-PE specialist teaches all students PE 2-3 times per week.

### FUNDING FOR PE SPECIALISTS

Sanger Unified School District is a small, rural school district with a unique program. Thirteen PE specialists are each assigned by the district to teach PE to elementary students. Traditionally, PE was taught by classroom teachers and kick ball or Duck, Duck Goose were the norm. Participation rates and fitness levels were low. Then, to meet requirements for non-instructional time, aides were hired to take children out for PE. It was clear that these aides were not qualified to teach. Consequently, in 1999, the Superintendent hired six full-time PE specialists, using earmarked funds from the general fund. Despite changes in the administration, the program has remained in place and expanded to 13 specialists, as a result of the strong support of teachers and the teachers' union. Classroom teachers saw the improvements in students' behavior and health, and they bought into the program. Some years the equipment budget is used to support the staff, because the district thought that the staff were the key and could be creative even with less than optimal equipment.

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Among the elementary schools, Jefferson Elementary is a prime example of the program's success, despite serving a low-resource area. Students at Jefferson receive PE with a PE specialist for 30 minutes three times a week in grades K-2 and grades 3-6 have 45 minutes twice a week. Classroom staff take the children out for PE for the additional minutes to meet the mandate. School principal, Cathy Padilla recognizes the importance of PE and its impact on academic achievement. She has followed the research on PE and recognizes the importance of getting the blood flowing to the brain throughout the day. Her students' test scores have improved compared to similar schools in other districts. Principal Padilla believes "the PE program can dictate the culture of the school." She feels lucky to be in a district that prioritizes PE and also to have Melissa Contreras, the full-time PE specialist and Andrea Catanesi-Mann, who works at the school part-time.

The schools also try to involve parents and the community in the school. Because Sanger is a small community, this is more manageable. The community has five key values (respect, responsibility, family, caring and trust) which are advertised widely. Melissa is trying to reinforce these values in school by imprinting the words on the PE equipment. Parents will also be encouraged to attend classes, such as folk dance, in the school with their children. Involving

parents in their children’s activities is a high priority. One program gives children extra credit if they exercise out of school with their families.

### DISTRICT SUPPORT

Danella Barnes, Sanger USD Elementary PE Coordinator, recounts their progress, “The year after we first began, 21% of the 5th graders were passing 6 out of the 6 fitness standards. Last year, 35% passed all 6 standards. Our goal for this school year is 40%.” Ms. Barnes is responsible for hiring and assigning the PE specialists. She provides support to the specialists, works with schools to schedule PE and provides staff development. Compared to surrounding districts, she believes the district’s small size has helped her build strong relationships with parents and the community. Sanger also recognized the importance of seeking additional funds and hired a grant writer who was successful in securing a Carol M. White PEP grant. Currently, Danella is working in the elementary level, but she hopes the funds from the Fresno County Office of Education’s PEP grant will allow more development of the PE programs in secondary schools. Danella is proud of what her district has achieved, despite its small size.



SAN FERNANDO HIGH SCHOOL	
✓	11333 O’Melveny Avenue, San Fernando, CA 91340
✓	(81% FRPL, 98% Hispanic)
✓	Program: Daily PE where California Content standards are taught with an emphasis on physical activity.

San Fernando High School is a year-round school where students have daily PE, and the rotating schedule allows 540 students to participate in PE at any given time. Classes are taught by a team of PE teachers, who focus on teaching the PE state standards to their students while keeping them engaged in physical activity for at least 50% of class time. A few years ago, however, the situation was not exemplary. Lead teacher, Jodi Eyraud, recalls the PE program lacked structure and accountability. FitnessGRAM pass rates were low, indicating that something needed to be done. About half the students are now passing their FitnessGRAM test, compared to 20% in previous years. Improving their ability to run and passing the tests gives students a great sense of achievement.

### STATE STANDARDS PROVIDE ACCOUNTABILITY

When the state PE content standards came out, Jodi was on leave, so she had time to read through them and think about how to improve their program. They started by setting up a jogging program, and Jodi

began to give professional development on the standards to the other PE teachers at her school. Through her efforts, the PE staff came together as a group and created lesson plans along with a rotating schedule. The schedule allowed teachers to instruct on specific units they were passionate about. Jodi also believes that the schedule is key to keeping everyone on task. Class sizes average about 55-60 students, and each month every PE class focuses on a different unit. Jodi worked with the head of the PE department and also with Principal Lee to formulate and implement the rotating schedule. Principal Lee is an enthusiastic supporter of PE, given his background as a PE teacher, athletics coach, and former college athlete. He sees the value of PE not only in light of student health and fitness, but also in student achievement. He believes that if the students feel good (physically) then they will have more energy to study and focus better .

### **CREATIVE FUNDING OPTIONS**

Despite a dedicated staff, the school still faces a lack of funding for equipment. Principal Lee supports PE requests for one-time expenses by allocating district funds given to the school, but these funds cannot cover the many needs of the program. One solution has been to find creative solutions using the equipment they currently have. In addition to traditional sports, PE teachers will play games of their own creation with the students.

The school has also received funding and support from outside organizations. Last year, they received a Sound Body, Sound Mind grant, which provided fitness equipment, along with a curriculum and text entitled "Fitness for Life." The grant did not include fixing up an area to house the fitness equipment. Funding came from an unlikely source: the school was approached by a productions company to film scenes from their movie in their gym. The grant also did not provide for maintenance of the equipment, which Jodi hopes to fund by opening the fitness center up to the community at a minimal cost to users. The PE staff has also accepted invitations from companies such as the wave board manufacturers and hula hoop vendors to let students use their products for a 1-2 day demonstration. The variety of activities help keep the students interested, as well as engaging students who are not athletes.

### **DIFFERENT SKILL LEVELS ACKNOWLEDGED**

Students at San Fernando like PE because it allows them to interact with other students, unlike the traditional academic subject format. They are able to learn about teamwork, feel free to be themselves and try new things without fear of embarrassment. Students are able to self-select their level of skill and divide themselves into three groups- Rookies, Semi-pros and Pros. This system, designed by one of the PE teachers, allows students of similar skill levels to

play together and be more active. Before these play-levels were implemented, only the more athletic students played and the others sat or stood-out for the game. Physical activity within PE is important to the students, who recognize most of the exercise they get is during PE class- “if we didn’t have it (PE), we wouldn’t get any activity.” They also think it is important that the teachers participate in the class and also do push ups. To make sure students receive the needed exercise and participate in class, students are expected to dress-out for PE. Three non-suits results in suspension. Principal Lee and the deans were former PE teachers, and they support the PE staff when disciplinary actions are needed. Students do not resent the structure; rather they seem to respond positively to it. One student recalls, “Before I didn’t like PE, now I do...I never dressed-out or listened--now I do, and I enjoy it.”

Students described what they would tell the Governor about PE and what they would like to spend additional funds on. “Money for someone to come to the school to teach us a new sport...one time someone with wave boards came and it was cool. One of the sports could inspire a kid to be something greater than he would have been without it.” One girl said, “He should see that if you were to eliminate PE out of the schedule, there won’t be time to be active...I’d ask for things like skateboards, fun things you can do rather than throwing

a football.” One pupil felt that they were required to pass the fitness test, but that the equipment and class sizes did not support this. She didn’t feel that this was fair, because she understood that supporting PE benefited society as a whole, helping to keep medical costs down.

These schools have had to battle against the odds, yet have managed to overcome the typical barriers that low resource schools face when trying to provide high-quality PE. We summarize below the lessons we have learned from these schools and hope you can apply them to your own situation. Providing quality PE is not easy, but it is worth it.

## LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE CASE STUDIES

- ✓ *In schools located in low resource neighborhoods, PE time may be the only chance children get to be active and try certain sports.* Students who do not have access to parks or sports clubs outside of school rely on schools to provide active and enjoyable PE. Many children love PE because it is fun and teaches them physical and social skills they do not learn elsewhere.
- ✓ *High-performing low-resource schools use supplemental funds to improve PE.* Low resource schools must develop a strategy

for obtaining supplementary funds. District PE coordinators and principals can help their teachers find and write grants and set aside time for grant-writing. Grants can be sought from professional sports clubs, local businesses, or even school and PTA councils. Grant monies tend to be spent on equipment. However, funds should also be allocated for staff development and special curricula, because these are proven ways to improve PE. If equipment grants are not available, principals can assign money each year for updating PE equipment. Kids like having a variety of activities and fun equipment to play with, and new equipment keeps them engaged and interested if staff are adequately trained to organize and supervise their use. If having space for PE is a problem, partnering with a local park or recreation center is a common way to expand facilities.

- ✓ ***Scheduling enough time for PE is critical.*** Principals must prioritize PE and schedule sufficient time. If PE staff has a common preparation period together, this helps them coordinate classes and follow common curricula. Principals who make time for PE consider it a priority because it helps to increase concentration, discipline and academic performance. To understand the importance of PE, the principal

should read the research on the benefits of PE and become physically active themselves as a model for all teachers. Non-PE teachers are also likely to support dedicated PE time because the children return to class awake and ready to learn.

- ✓ ***Ensuring reasonable class size is essential for quality PE.*** Principals need to hire enough staff members to have small PE class sizes (about 30 children) or class sizes comparable to other subjects. Small PE classes give children more space to be active and more attention from the teacher to develop skills and maintain discipline.
- ✓ ***Providing non-traditional PE activities makes PE more active and fun for all students.*** In some schools, PE is mostly traditional team sports, which usually includes more standing around and waiting than activity. In schools where all students experience success, develop skills, and are active for the majority of PE time, modified games and alternative activities are taught. Active, involved PE classes require staff with specialized skills. Training and opportunities to go to conferences or visit other schools with successful programs are needed to develop teacher skills in getting all kids active. District PE coordinators and principals need to be aware

of specialized activity-focused programs and support staff development in adapting traditional games. Teachers should provide a variety of games and activities, including ones that are less competitive, keep the whole class active, and do not require a high skill level for success and engagement. The National Association of Sports and Physical Education (NASPE) provides appropriate PE practice booklets for each age group. (<http://www.aahperd.org/NASPE/peappropriatepractice/index.html>)

- ✓ ***Role modeling and personal investment and involvement in physical activity participation by school staff are important.*** Several people commented that student participation was spurred by teacher participation in their PE activities, and that principals' physical activity experiences influenced their decision-making to prioritize PE and PA.
- ✓ ***Structure and discipline are important for a successful PE program.*** Organization and discipline are vital to maximize the time children spend being active and learning in PE. Locker room discipline and dressing out, enforced by the principal, can help set the tone for a PE class. A regular warm up routine and published lesson plans

also helps students know what to expect and not waste time transitioning between activities. Clear rules, signals, and simple instructions can help PE classes stay orderly.

These lessons from administration and teaching staff of low-resource schools can provide inspiration and instruction for overcoming common barriers to active and enjoyable PE. While there is no one simple solution or model that is likely to work for your school, these examples should provide you with some ideas and action points to improve your own PE program. If your school is not meeting the required minutes of PE, if your students are not active for half those minutes, if the majority of your students are failing their FitnessGRAM tests, if you do not have enough equipment to implement the California State Content Standards, then you may be able to adopt some of the ideas and actions presented in these stories. NASPE also has a list of criteria for high quality PE ([http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/stars/pdf\\_files/criteria\\_super06.pdf](http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/stars/pdf_files/criteria_super06.pdf)) that you can use to judge your school's PE program. Since policy makers respond to stories, you can use the examples provided here to convince others that quality PE programs are possible in all schools.

## PE GRANTS RESOURCES

This list includes sources for funding and grant writing tips:

### *School Grants*

<http://www.schoolgrants.org/>

### *NASPE*

[http://www.aahperd.org/NASPE/grant\\_opp.html](http://www.aahperd.org/NASPE/grant_opp.html)

### *PE Links 4 U*

<http://www.pelinks4u.org/links/advocacy.htm>

### *PE Central*

<http://www.pecentral.org/websites/fundingsites.html>

### *Sportime*

<https://www.sportime.com/sportime-shared/pegrants/opportunities.jsp>

### *California PE Resources Freebies: for companies that will demonstrate activities in schools*

<http://www.stan-co.k12.ca.us/calpe/Freebies.html>

### *National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)*

<http://www.naesp.org/ContentLoad.do?contentId=917>

### *CDC Healthy Youth Funding database*

<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/HYFund/list.asp>

### *Grant Writing Chatboard*

<http://teachers.net/projects/grants/>

### *Sportwall*

<http://www.sportwall.com/grants-sponsorships-education.shtml>

## POLICY GOALS FOR IMPROVING PE IN CALIFORNIA

The California Endowment in partnership with researchers at San Diego State University and University of California Los Angeles has developed a list of fundamental policy priorities for PE. This list was developed after reviewing recommendations provided by California Department of Education, the National Association of School Boards of Education, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance and after consulting with PE specialists at the local, district, county and state level in California. This list emphasizes the priorities of The California Endowment which includes reducing health disparities.

1. Ensure PE minutes provided to each student meet or exceed state requirements by improved monitoring and enforcement.
2. Ensure all PE classes are taught by certified PE specialists who receive continuing professional development. If classroom teachers provide PE instruction, they must receive adequate training in PE instructional methods.
3. Encourage the adoption and implementation of activity-focused PE curricula that are research-based or consistent with content standards.
4. Increase requirements for PE minutes in elementary schools.

5. Eliminate exemptions from PE, except for medical contraindications.
6. Ensure PE class sizes are consistent with those of other subjects.
7. Ensure there are adequate indoor and outdoor facilities and sufficient equipment for PE.
8. Target funding for improving PE quantity and quality to schools serving low income communities.
9. Enhance the value of PE within the education community by including PE in school accountability measures, including PE grades in GPA's used by universities, and add PE as a core subject in the federal No Child Left Behind act.