



In partnership with:

## FACT SHEET

# HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS: STATEWIDE REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### THE PROBLEM

We are unable to attain a clear picture of the physical education quality in our state.

### BACKGROUND

Physical Education (PE) classes teach lifelong healthy habits that will help children grow up into healthier adults with less risk for chronic diseases like heart disease and diabetes. When students get more time for PE they have improved educational outcomes, focus more and behave better in class. Unfortunately, there is a strongly-held assumption that far too many students are not getting the PE opportunities that are important to their physical and brain development. Students in Grades 1-8 in Washington are required to have an average of at least one hundred instructional hours of PE per week throughout the year. While this falls short of current national standards for PE, it is a start. However, there are no statewide reporting requirements for the current PE standards so it is not known to what extent schools are complying with current statewide standards. Thus, before developing any new policy proposals regarding PE standards we clearly need to get a handle on current reality.

*Our young people – no matter where they live or what grade they are in – benefit from physical education.*

### WHAT'S TO GAIN?

#### SHORT-TERM: BETTER INFORMATION

We need to have a serious conversation about the importance of health and fitness in our K-12 schools, including physical education. This conversation needs to be based on data provided by our teachers statewide that are in the trenches and can provide a current snapshot of physical education quality.

#### LONG-TERM: STRONGER BODIES, STRONGER MINDS

Active kids learn better. There has been a trend of schools shifting away from physical education and activity to allow more time for academic subjects. But numerous studies have shown that physical activity improves health, which in turn strengthens academic performance.

### SOLUTIONS FOR WASHINGTON STATE

Increase accountability for schools around physical education by requiring schools to provide data that can be aggregated at the state level. Critical information could include: *quantity of PE offered, PE curriculum standards, PE teacher credentials, student assessment, equipment and facilities, substitutions and waivers, punishment, and additional physical activity opportunities.*

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# COALITION MEMBERS

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