



Education

This sector incorporates a range of educational contexts that span the entire developmental perspective from early childhood centers to Pre-K-12 schools, to institutions of higher education and related community outreach initiatives serving all age groups. These education organizations represent the heart of many local communities and serve as a bridge to each societal sector. Perhaps most visibly, professionals within our Pre-K-12 schools teach future generations the skills necessary to succeed in life, including how to make healthy decisions and live well. Schools provide a structured and safe environment for children/youth to learn and grow into healthy, contributing members of society. Recognizing the significant impact education has on the lives of students in West Virginia, education professionals (i.e., school administrators, educators, staff) have a crucial role to play in optimizing opportunities for physical activity and healthy decision making. This can be accomplished through advocating for increased quality, culturally relevant physical education programming and opportunities for physical activity across the school day and before and after school. By enhancing the quality of physical activity programming and opportunities, educators should develop partnerships to assist with establishing a school culture that values healthy behaviors across a lifetime and extends beyond the school, and into the homes of students and their communities.

Strategies and Tactics

Priority Area 1: Structural Capacity

Priority Area 1 Strategy

Maintain and improve the quality of physical education/activity programs, instruction, resources, environments, and accountability that maximizes opportunities for increased physical activity for all from early childhood to young adulthood in the school setting.

Priority Area 1 Tactics

1

Increase accountability of schools in implementing the Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program model - quality physical education, physical activity throughout the school day (i.e., classroom, recess, lunch time, drop-in opportunities), and before and after school (i.e., intramural sport, interscholastic sport, active commuting to school, planned school activities), community involvement (i.e., programs, classes, facilities), and staff wellness (i.e., physical activity challenges, incentives).

2	Diversify the school physical education curriculum to include a greater use of lifetime leisure activities; in particular, activities that take advantage of West Virginia's natural resources (i.e., hiking, backpacking, etc.).
3	Support accountability of student learning in physical education through a state assessment plan that monitors program goals and outcomes in meeting the National Standards for K-12 Physical Education (SHAPE America) through ongoing data collection and analysis.
4	Hold physical educators accountable for delivering quality, standards-based, and evidence-based programming.
5	Provide teachers and other school staff with professional development opportunities on physical activity programming that is developmentally and culturally appropriate, and supportive of all students' needs and abilities.
6	Ensure that students with disabilities are provided with adaptations and appropriate instruction to participate successfully in physical education/activity in a supportive learning environment.
7	Promote both opportunities and incentives for college and university students and faculty/staff to adopt and maintain physical activity lifestyles.
8	Provide structured and unstructured physical activity programming throughout the day in early childcare settings.
9	Include a focus on population-based physical activity promotion across higher education curricula in a broad range of programs.
10	Create physical activity opportunities (i.e., facilities, programs, extended active lunch) for school employees, allocate time for physical activity during the workday, and provide related incentives.

Priority Area 2: Public Awareness and Social Marketing

Priority Area 2 Strategy

Promote physical activity and physical education through public awareness and social marketing initiatives, highlighting comprehensive school physical activity programs (CSPAP), community leaders/champions, and the natural resources of West Virginia.

Priority Area 2 Tactics

- 1 Deliver focused physical activity and physical education messages to targeted demographics (i.e., children and their families) through defined media networks.
- 2 Disseminate best practices that exemplify effective physical activity and physical education programs and their influences on health and its associated benefits (e.g., chronic disease prevention, enjoyment, weight control, improved mental health, academic achievement.) to families and communities.
- 3 Improve public awareness by marketing existing opportunities for physical activity programming within the state, including state parks and other natural resources.

4	Educate school administrators, state and local policy makers and stakeholders, and parents/guardians about the elements of quality, comprehensive, school physical activity programming, and the beneficial effects of physical activity on learning and lifelong health and wellbeing.
5	Increase accessibility to physical activity opportunities and wellness information for people of different ages, ability levels, cultures, interests, and demographics within communities across the state.
6	Engage in proactive advocacy to ensure the viability and capacity building of physical education and physical activity programs in daycares, early childhood, K-12 schools, and higher education institutions.
7	Collaborate with media outlets to launch campaigns to promote physical activity opportunities at low or no-cost to students, families, and the general population.

Priority Area 3: Community Engagement and Environment

Priority Area 3 Strategy	
	Advocate for adequate investment of capital by cities, towns, and communities for accessible, affordable physical activity facilities and spaces, and culturally relevant programming.

Priority Area 3 Tactics	
1	Seek partnerships to establish formal joint-use agreements between schools and communities to share space, costs, and related responsibilities to increase local physical activity opportunities.
2	Advocate for improved infrastructure for active transport (e.g., sidewalks, bike infrastructure) and safe environments (i.e., well-maintained equipment, proper lighting, well-qualified supervision) on campus and in neighborhoods near schools to promote physical activity participation.
3	Provide technical assistance (by educational institutions) to communities and individuals/groups in preparing grant applications to fund accessible, affordable physical activities and physical education programming.
4	Encourage local organizations to partner with schools to host/promote intergenerational family-friendly physical activity events at no/low costs outside of school time.
5	Engage with the WV Safe Routes to School to ensure safe active transportation for children and adults of all ages and abilities.
6	Establish walking programs for all ages (children, adults, older adults) and abilities that encourage regular participation and includes a monitoring system to encourage goal setting and increased participation.
7	Ensure that all schools have indoor and outdoor facilities and equipment that encourage physical activity.
8	Ensure that all schools allow community access to available outdoor facilities (i.e., playing fields, courts, playgrounds) for community use.

9	Advocate for culturally relevant physical activity programming that meets the needs of those from a variety of backgrounds, with disabilities, and with other chronic health conditions.
10	Conduct a needs assessment to identify and address disparities in access to physical activity opportunities and resources for marginalized groups.

Priority Area 4: Policy

Priority Area 4 Strategy	
Engage in leadership and advocacy for school physical activity and physical education research and policy development and implementation.	

Priority Area 4 Tactics	
1	Educate key decision makers of the beneficial effects of physical activity on learning and lifelong health and the need for physical activity and physical education for all.
2	Urge local and state policy makers to provide funding for school personnel professional development and quality school environments to promote physical activity.
3	Advocate for state/federal funding for population-based physical activity and school-based physical education programs.
4	Adopt school policies that support implementation of a Comprehensive School Physical Activity program model that make it easier for students to be physically active before, during, and after school.
5	Adopt school policies that preclude withholding or using physical activity as punishment, or allows for waivers and substitutions for physical education.
6	Publicize adopted policies on university campuses that cultivate a physically active environment.
7	Conduct research studies of evidence-informed practices through a collaboration between researchers and practitioners to inform policies.
8	Update School Building Authority policies to ensure they encourage the rehabilitation and/or construction of schools that are within walking/biking distance and have indoor and outdoor facilities for daily physical activity.
9	Establish walking programs for all ages (children, adults, older adults) and abilities that encourage regular participation and includes a monitoring system to encourage goal setting and increased participation by children, adolescents, family members, and friends.

Priority Area 5: Multi-Sector Collaboration

Priority Area 5 Strategy

Develop partnerships across sectors to provide financial support, space, or personnel to develop and implement physical activity opportunities and to increase awareness of the importance of a physically active lifestyle.

Priority Area 5 Tactics

- 1 Coordinate with human resource officers and health insurance providers in managing and incentivizing physical activity programs for employees that would support behavior change.
- 2 Educate health care providers on how to discuss with children, youth, and caregivers the importance of physical activity in the school setting.
- 3 Establish partnerships to fund or implement supportive physical activity policies and programs, especially for underserved groups.
- 4 Increase opportunities for students and their families to engage in physical activity during after school hours, such as evenings, weekends, and summers, using schools and school-based facilities (i.e., tracks, fields, gyms, playgrounds, etc.) as community resources.
- 5 Build cross-sector partnerships with community-based organizations (e.g., recreation centers, healthcare providers, faith-based organizations) that can provide children, adolescents, and families with affordable movement and low-organized game/sports programming beyond the school hours.
- 6 Develop “physical activity kits” through a school/healthcare/public health partnership for distribution to families that includes information such as community physical activities and sport resources and programming and a reminder about annual healthcare visits.
- 7 Encourage adoption of physical activity as a pediatric vital sign in children’s routine health checks.
- 8 Engage community partners and stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds to provide input and feedback on physical activity programs and resources that address the unique barriers faced by different groups (e.g., low income, minority groups, those with disabilities, chronic conditions, or other physical limitations).
- 9 Expand the availability and accessibility of evidence-based physical activity programs appropriate for those with disabilities and chronic conditions to local, regional, and state organizations.
- 10 Collaborate with public health and communities to develop joint policies, processes, and practices that increase physical activity for the whole school (i.e., Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model).