

Michigan Re-Entry Plan 2020 and Beyond

Health and Physical Education

Considerations and Recommendations

Executive Summary

Health and Physical Education may be taught in-person, online or a combination of the two to support the health, active lifestyle of students. The conditions imposed by COVID-19 have directly impacted students in many ways. Physical inactivity has facilitated incidence of obesity. Physical distancing has promoted social isolation and emotional instability. The content of health and physical education provide unique opportunities to promote skills in the motor, fitness, cognitive and social emotion domains that support student achievement. Among these skills are stress management, cross-curricular learning, perceptual motor skills that enhance academic achievement, weight management, nutrition, substance abuse and communicable disease control.



In these times of a national pandemic in a state that is in the top ten in the nation for cases and deaths due to COVID-19, the mental, emotional and physical well-being of students is paramount to their success as learners. Health and Physical Education has much to contribute towards this end. The Michigan Department of Education recommends the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model as a framework for promoting and supporting the whole child and its' application to the current pandemic. The core tenets of students' health, safety, engagement and support have never been more important whether the school year starts with distance, in-person or a hybrid approach to instruction.

Health and Physical Education teachers are prepared to be at the forefront of helping students navigate through these unprecedented times. Current conditions call for a shift to prioritize social and emotional–health skills, infectious disease prevention and individualized nutrition and fitness goal development. Health and Physical Education teachers are trained to teach skill development in these and related areas. Efforts are already underway to assist and support health and physical education teachers in Michigan to adapt their teaching methods and strategies for remote and in-person instruction under COVID-19 restrictions.

Of all subject areas taught in schools, Health and Physical Education are the ONLY two that address the “physical” aspects contributing to developing a well-rounded and healthy student. The goal is to teach students to be individuals who are health literate, which is “the ability to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services to make appropriate health decisions which is essential to promote healthy people and communities” (SHAPE America). Focusing on lifetime fitness, wellness, hygiene and social and emotional learning will help our students develop both physical literacy and health literacy in these uncertain times.

The content suggested in this plan (SHAPE-MI) focuses on the development of health skills that are critical to student success. The recommendations for in-person physical education focus on conducting courses outdoors in stations or restricted personal spaces where the emphasis is skill instruction. Strategies to motivate students to practice and play with a purpose at home is encouraged. It is recommended that both health and physical education post and prepare online materials to support students and their parents. In addition, health and physical education teachers should take the lead to provide activity resources for classroom teachers to promote physical activity across the school day and staff wellness programs to support the wellbeing of all teachers and staff in the schools.

Finally, school districts are encouraged to utilize technology tools (i.e., activity trackers, heart rate sensors) and applications that support personal contact (ZOOM, Google Meet) between the teachers and the students regardless of instructional format. Using such tools support the acquisition of data that will help drive curricular decisions to study program impact.