

What do elementary educators think of the current Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum?

Executive Summary - for consideration in Curriculum Review for Health and Physical Education

Overview

In preparation for Ontario Ministry of Education review of the Health and Physical Education Curriculum, OASPHE (The Ontario Association for the Supervision of Physical and Health Education), in partnership with Ophea conducted the *Elementary Health and Physical Education Curriculum Review Survey* with educators from across the province in the fall of 2006 to gather feedback about the current HPE curriculum. Educators from more than 45 school boards from across Ontario responded to the survey. This summary provides an overview of findings, translated into Key Messages, to be considered in the Health and Physical Education curriculum review process. They have been organized to reflect messages in relation to the *overall curriculum*, as well as messages that are *specific to the three strands of the curriculum – Healthy Living, Active Participation, and Fundamental Movement Skills*. A full document, which also makes linkages relevant literature can be accessed at www.oasphe.ca.

Key Messages Regarding the Overall Curriculum

<p>The introduction section of the <i>Ontario Curriculum, Grade 1-8: Health and Physical Education, 1998</i> should be revised and updated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately half of all respondents stated that there were areas that need to be addressed in the introductory section of the curriculum document and suggested various items for revision/addition such as the DPA mandate, internet safety, and more current references to relevant research/literature.
<p>The current H&PE curriculum is inclusive, allowing all students to participate and achieve success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almost 75% of respondents indicated that the current curriculum provides the opportunity for all students to achieve success, although comments suggest there is some room for improvement.
<p>The curriculum learning expectations within all three strands of the H&PE curriculum - <i>Fundamental Movement Skills, Healthy Living</i> and <i>Active Participation</i> - reflect a sequence of knowledge and skills from grades 1 through 8.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 70% of respondents indicated that learning expectations across the strands of the HPE Curriculum reflected a sequence of knowledge, allowing for the developmental progressions from one grade level to the next although there was some indication that practical application can be improved.
<p>The Living Skills should continue to be incorporated into the Active Participation and Healthy Living strands of the elementary H&PE curriculum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two-thirds of respondents indicated that the Living Skills expectations of the curriculum should remain integrated across the Healthy Living and Active Participation Strands, rather than be dealt with separately as is done at the secondary level.
<p>The Health and Physical Education curriculum expectations are better than average in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the preparation of students for lifelong healthy living; and addressing physical activity and current societal concepts and issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60 % of respondents indicated that curriculum expectations generally prepare students for healthy living and 70% indicated the same in relation to physical activity within the context of today's society. <p><i>Active Participation</i> strand: it was generally felt that expectations have good connections to student commitment for lifelong healthy active living and allow for a broad range of teaching/assessment strategies.</p> <p><i>Fundamental Movement Skills</i> strand: 42% felt that expectations are appropriate and doable by most students and 35% indicated that expectations allow for a broad range of teaching assessment strategies, suggesting room for improvement.</p> <p><i>Healthy Living</i> strand 46% indicate that expectations are appropriate and do-able by most students and that 37% indicate that expectations within the strand have good connections to student commitment for lifelong healthy active living, also indicating room for improvement.</p>
<p>Most respondents (84%) indicated that they are able to address 76-99% or 100% of the curriculum expectations for Health and Physical Education in their instruction. The most commonly stated reasons for not accounting for the remainder of the expectations were "too many expectations" and "lack of adequate resources" and "other".</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally respondents indicate that they feel it is possible to implement three-quarters of the curriculum expectations. Comments indicated that the problem was actually related to an inadequate number of minutes timetabled for the delivery of the Health and Physical Education curriculum. The concern over a lack of adequate resources included such issues as equipment, facilities and human resources.

<p>Although some teachers are using the Achievement Chart successfully, many others are having difficulty or are not using it at all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40% of survey respondents identified significant challenges with the current Achievement Chart, indicating a need for some revision and/or supportive teacher education in this area. It is very important that educators feel they have the competence and necessary supports to effectively implement the H&PE curriculum and this is particularly relevant with respect to assessment.
<p>In order for students to lead a healthy and active lifestyle, modifications need to be made to the elementary H&PE curriculum to address topics that are not currently addressed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 62% of all respondents indicated that there is a variety of important healthy active living issues that are not currently addressed in the curriculum. Specific suggestions include increasing leisure/lifetime/low-organized activities, de-emphasizing competition and traditional organized sports and adding topics such as spiritual and mental health.

Key Messages Regarding Specific Strands

Survey respondents were asked to indicate which one of the three strands required the most revision. The key messages reflect these responses and provide additional information on areas of strength and those which need development in each strand.

<p>Healthy Living</p>	<p>While strengths were identified, the Healthy Living strand requires the most revision as there are with particular concerns that there are “too many expectations to cover” and “gaps/overlaps in the knowledge and skills” of this strand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are “too many expectations to cover” in the Healthy Living strand of the curriculum. are “gaps/overlaps in the knowledge and skills”
	<p>There is concern that in the Healthy Living strand is often assessed and reported on by a different teacher than the other two strands although there is only one grade for HPE.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> separate box for Healthy Living distinct from Physical Education on the report card.
<p>Fundamental Movement Skills</p>	<p>While strengths were identified, the Fundamental Movement Skills ranked second with respondents for requiring the most revisions, again reflecting that there are “too many expectations to cover” and “gaps in the knowledge and skills” in this strand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for revision of the Fundamental Movement Skills strand of the curriculum, with comments focusing primarily on the gaps in the knowledge and skills in this strand.
	<p>An overall expectation for safety should be created and added to the Fundamental Movement Skills strand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> indicated the need for an overall expectation in safety this strand. This was considered “essential for a successful program”.
	<p>To address sport/game strategies and tactics (Teaching Games for Understanding), specific expectations should be created within the Fundamental Movement Skills strand for junior/intermediate grades.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> expectations for sport/game strategies should be created for junior/intermediate grades. It was felt that this helps students understand a wider range of games/activities. teachers don’t have the background knowledge to teach/evaluate in this area.
<p>Active Participation</p>	<p>With an number of strengths listed, the Active Participation strand requires the least revision of the three strands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to revise the Active Participation strand of the curriculum
	<p>Student participation (on a regular basis in physical activities) should continue to be the emphasis in the Active Participation strand of Health and Physical Education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and varied participation should be the primary emphasis in the Active Participation strand.
	<p>Specific expectations regarding safety should be created and added in Active Participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for the specific expectations in safety in the Active Participation strand feeling it is critical for teachers, particularly generalists to have something to reference safety procedures.