

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN IMPROVED  
HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, AND RECREATION CURRICULUM  
AT PALMER HIGH SCHOOL, COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO

by 4589

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM . . . . .	2
III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE . . . . .	2
IV. LIMITATIONS OF THE UNDERTAKING . . . . .	8
V. THE GROWTH OF HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, AND RECREATION . . . . .	8
Brief Historical Background of Physical Education . . . . .	8
Development of Health Education . . . . .	10
Recreation in the Schools . . . . .	10
The First Academic Program of Physical Education in American Education . . . . .	11
VI. THE OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATION (GENERAL) . . . . .	12
Physical Education Objectives Derived From Educational Objectives . . . . .	15
VII. THE OBJECTIVES OR FUNCTIONS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION . . . . .	15
VIII. REASONS AND OBJECTIVES OF HEALTH INSTRUCTION . . . . .	18
IX. INTERESTS, STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AND NEEDS IN HEALTH . . . . .	21
X. FACTORS AFFECTING THE ACTIVITIES IN THE HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, AND RECREATION CURRICULUM . . . . .	28
XI. FACILITIES AVAILABLE AT PALMER HIGH SCHOOL . . . . .	28
XII. PHYSICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES PREVIOUSLY OFFERED AT PALMER HIGH SCHOOL . . . . .	31

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIII. ALLOTMENT OF TIME IN HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, AND RECREATION . . . . .	31
XIV. NEW CURRICULUM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PALMER HIGH SCHOOL . . . . .	32
XV. AN EXAMPLE PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASS . . . . .	36
XVI. EVALUATION IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION . . . . .	36
Evaluation of Student Achievement . . . . .	36
XVII. SUMMARY . . . . .	42
XVIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	46
XIV. ABSTRACT . . . . .	47

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Health Interests of Secondary School Boys and Girls . . . . .	22
II. Comparison of Percentage of Correct Responses by Health Content Area and by Practices, Attitudes, and Knowledge For Males and Females Within District Groups of the Ninth Grade Health Behavior Inventory . . . . .	23
III. Comparison of Percentage of Correct Responses by Health Content Area by Males and Females Within District Groups on the Twelfth Grade Health Be- havior Inventory . . . . .	24
IV. Health Interest and Health Need Inventory . . . . .	27
V. Time Allotment in Physical Education . . . . .	31
VI. Blanchard Behavior Rating Scale . . . . .	41
VII. Cowell Personal Distance Scale . . . . .	42

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
I. Palmer High School Indoor Athletic and Physical	
Education Facilities . . . . .	29
II. Palmer High School Indoor and Outdoor Athletics and	
Physical Education Facilities . . . . .	30

## INTRODUCTION

Mr. Wilson W. Elkins, President of the University of Maryland, in a speech on education had this to say:

The purpose of education is to develop the potentialities of the individual. Many factors and agencies are involved in this development of which the schools and colleges have the primary responsibility. When the intellect develops within the human body, it needs a proper climate of which, in a large measure, is good health. It is exceedingly important therefore, that physical education be included in any general program designed to improve our human resources. (11)

It is a known fact that if the general curriculum does not include a program of physical development and the essentials of good health, these will be neglected by the student and will not be adequately supplied by the home or other agencies.

There is a strong case for physical education as an integral part of the general program. It must be associated with solid information and the development of habits and skills that will contribute to health and happiness throughout life. (11)

The American people today have more leisure time than ever before. We have more modern labor-saving conveniences today that provide us this leisure time. Therefore, we are doing less physical activity and are more physically unfit today than ever before. (2) Physical educators feel that a good physical education program should help a person understand the attributes of good physical fitness. Also physical education gives him a knowledge of both team and individual sports that will have a carry-over value that can be used as entertainment and recreation in these many leisure hours. Too many times we

confuse people about physical education by not relating the actual values or the "why" of physical education.

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem was to increase the effectiveness of the total educational program through an improved physical education program for Palmer High School at Colorado Springs, Colorado, by (1) reviewing the administrative time allotments and policies for physical education, (2) reviewing literature written in the field of physical education by noted authorities, and (3) making recommendations for more activities and other criteria for the better development of the program.

#### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In a study by Lawrence A. Pope, who had visited and studied physical education programs in many schools, states that in many schools where the physical education programs are poor, can be traced to the fact that physical education is taught only two or three times a week. The instructor is a classroom teacher, therefore, puts much more effort in planning his classroom subjects than preparing to teach physical education. (17) Mr. Pope noted that in a number of the physical education programs physical fitness was the major program objective. Mr. Pope felt that there should be more of an equilibrium between physical fitness and activities that will have some carry-over value. However, he found that "most of the physical fitness conscious programs were found in large city high schools." (16)



Among questions we must ask ourselves is: "Who is responsible for the existing conditions of physical education?" Physical educators must assume the major responsibility for the present conditions that exist within our field. However, administrators may be held partly to blame for some of the poor practices within the physical education program. Without the constant lack of interest, it is doubtful that these conditions could exist within the generally well-administered and well-ordered schools. The following are some questions which the conscientious physical educator and administrator should ask concerning the physical education program:

1. Is the curriculum based upon accepted national studies and standards?
2. Is there progression of the program from the seventh grade on through, based upon the needs and known interests of the students?
3. Are the stated outcomes evaluated against accepted standards to show progress or lack of progress?
4. Do grades received by the students rate their ability in the physical and skill developmental areas as well as knowledge and social outcomes?
5. Must a student pass physical education each year to graduate?
6. Are the skills in regular physical education classes taught with the same enthusiasm and direction as those taught in the athletic programs?
7. Is there sufficient budget to operate your classes in physical education on as high a level as you do the athletic program and other classes?
8. Are physical education teachers compensated for extra duties?
9. Are supervisors interested in the actual learning situation as well as the administrative aspects of the program? (12)

Some things that need to be done by physical educators include the initiation of an all-out membership drive in the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation organization, as many teachers are not members. (2)

Physical educators need to recapture a great pride in the worthiness of

our programs. When physical education teachers become convinced that our prime function is to inculcate in students an appreciation and desire for physical activity that will persist throughout life, they will truly contribute to the vitality of the nation's total population.

Physical educators need to take a good look at their programs, and turn more attention to planning and better instruction. They need an overall concept to realize that it is more than a temporary gain in physical fitness or some sports aspect. (12)

Most state departments are encouraging testing programs, and in most cases, recommending the physical fitness tests endorsed by the President's Council.

California has been developing a cooperative test project for some time, and has issued a bulletin entitled "California Physical Performance Tests." This publication contains new norms, accepted tests and suggestions for both measurement and total evaluation.

Some suggestions that might help improve a physical education program are:

1. Establish a classification profile consisting of information relative to all activities for each student.
2. Provide each student with a personal classification profile of these factors and prescribe classes on the basis of the profile.
3. Utilize a team approach to the physical education curriculum.
4. Provide instruction in motor analysis, scientific knowledge related to exercise physiology, and the emotional factors related to competition.
5. Utilize lecture-discussion courses to compliment laboratory experiences.
6. Evaluate each student's progress in knowledge and skills by means of a comprehensive examination at the conclusion of the physical education experience. (16)

Not all suggestions can be worked into all programs, but it is to the

physical educator's advantage and success, to try to work the appropriate suggestions into his program. These new norms for evaluating physical education programs, developed in California, should be studied in order to improve your specific program.

The Maine State Curriculum Committee, in their physical education brochure stated: "The major purposes of physical education are to develop the physical fitness, stamina and strength of boys and girls, and to help build neuromuscular skills and habits which are lifelong assets." To accomplish this objective they believe that five 50-minute periods each week should be provided for each pupil in grades seven through twelve. (15)

The Maine State Curriculum Committee further states that it should be possible to learn through a testing program when boys and girls have achieved satisfactory proficiency in physical education skills and a satisfactory level of physical fitness. (15)

Students in grade twelve who meet these standards may well be given an opportunity to substitute for formal physical education classes participation in such physical activities as golf, swimming, fishing, hiking, and winter sports. These activities should be carefully selected with emphasis upon their carry-over value into adult life and their consistency with the goals of physical education. (15)

Morton Levitt, who wrote in School and Society, tried to caution us from using too many motor skill tests and physical fitness tests to the extent that all physical education teachers are doing is using the "kids" for guinea pigs for their own knowledge. It was his opinion that physical education should have as its directive, fun; that practically all activities should be of

team types or game types at least, and have carry-over value. He feels physical educators are defeating their purpose altogether and leaving themselves open to criticism when we do otherwise. He connotes that physical skills will develop naturally from a physical education program which encourages spontaneity, enthusiasm, and freedom. Levitt connotes that "this consists principally of the process of supplying children with opportunity for happy expression with sympathetic leadership and untrammelled by confusions which exist in adult minds." (14)

The Fairmont Junior High School at Fairmont, Minnesota, had an accelerated program. Each unit in the curriculum was taught with progress in fundamentals or a goal. The student was encouraged to progress as far as he could, and extra credit is given for a more advanced performance. This special program was developed to challenge students and provide opportunities for maximum achievement. Standards of passing grades and good citizenship were the necessary enrollment requirements. All eighth grade teachers and the principal can recommend boys for the program. In addition to the required health courses, the basic units in this accelerated class were physical fitness tests, special assignments, advanced tumbling and apparatus work, recreational sports, and training. (8)

At Evergreen Park High School in Evergreen Park, Illinois, a new approach to teaching physical education had taken place. Team teaching and a class organization that divides large groups into small ones for special instruction constitutes this new program for boys. Evergreen Park High School is a suburban Chicago area school with an enrollment of about 1,070 students. It operates seven periods a day of 56 minutes each. Three indoor teaching stations

are maintained in physical education for boys. There are three full-time staff instructors and two who share their teaching assignments with another department. Students participate in three days of physical education classes and two days of health instruction each week. Seniors have five days of gymnasium classes.

All students of the same grade level are scheduled into a single class. This arrangement produced a schedule of class meetings four periods a day, replacing the customary program of fourteen classes in seven periods. The new schedule did affect the balance of boys in classes other than physical education. If a girls' physical education program was correlated with the boys' it would obviously eliminate this problem.

A team of four instructors is assigned to each of the four classes. All physical education instructors were scheduled to meet in a common planning period, which takes place of the fifth class. (7)

From the previous literature listed, illustrating several different programs, the physical educator must realize that he should only accept those ideas that are useful, experiment with a new concept or two that he may be able to work into his program. He must not confuse his program with that of someone else.

The consensus among educators in most states is that physical education should be offered on a five-day-a-week schedule to fully realize that potentiality of the program. Organic fitness is a transitory thing, and people have to be constantly active to keep physically fit. Organic fitness "comes and goes" rapidly if we cease to be active.

Many people have asked the question, "Why physical education everyday for twelve- to seventeen-year olds? Aren't they active enough as it is?" Some

of them are, but the majority of them are not active so physical education is very important.

Physical educators also have heard the objection to comparing students with national norms or averages and many other kinds of tests. They have heard the argument that many teachers over emphasize physical fitness to stimulate their students to progress above national norms and tests. Physical education has national norms and tests to compare with in all other types of education, and in mental ability tests; this objection is a problem in classroom subjects as well. Just because some teachers place over emphasis on the importance of national norms and averages is no reason to discard them altogether. Probably a satisfactory solution is in having the student compete with himself for self-improvement, as this should be one of his more important goals anyway. (7)

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE UNDERTAKING

The scope of this report includes only the Secondary School Health, Physical Education and Recreation Program at Palmer High School, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The junior high school program has been omitted completely from this paper although this program is essential for an excellent secondary school program.

#### GROWTH OF HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATION

##### Brief Historical Background of Physical Education (2)

Until recent years rapid progress in the development of a school program of health and physical education has been impeded by a number of factors. The

influence of various European systems of physical education, the attitude toward play held by early American educators, the development and overemphasis of athletics for the few, the lack of properly prepared teachers, and the rapid growth of enrollment in the public schools have contributed to a slow development in the school program of physical education.

The programs of the early Latin grammar school did not provide for any form of physical education, athletics, play, or recreation. With the growth of the academy, the aim of education gradually changed from the narrow religious training of the Latin grammar school to the preparation for college. In comparison with the grammar schools the academy curriculum was broad and manifested a general reform in American educational theory and practice. (2)

The primary aim of the German system of gymnastics founded by Jahn, was to prepare youth for military duty. Although the German system gained a large following and was quite generally used for a time in the American schools, it gradually declined. (2)

The Swedish system like the German one, gained considerable support in America. As in the case of the German system it was not designed to meet with permanent success in the American scheme of education, due largely to the faculty aims and formal methods required. (2)

No organized system of physical education has been borrowed from England, yet the English emphasis on play and recreation has exerted a lasting influence on the American physical education program. Many games of low organization now used in America are distinctly English in origin. Such sports as soccer and tennis came to America from England. (2)

### Development of Health Education

In recent years, however, there has been a growing emphasis on the development of health education materials in the public schools. The recent emphasis has been due largely to the realization on the part of school administrators and teachers of the need of a more functional health program. Teachers gradually became conscious of the need for health education and practice.

Near the turn of the century medical inspection was introduced into the schools. Partly because of the influence of the various procedures of medical inspection, strong emphasis was placed on the development of desirable health practices. Further impetus was given to the development of health education through the formulation of the seven objectives of education by the National Education Association. In these objectives, the health and physical welfare of the child were again considered of primary importance.

In the past two or three decades there has been a noticeable trend for physical educators to take the responsibility for the complete health knowledge of the student although other teachers have cooperated. (2)

### Recreation in the Schools

The industrial development in America brought about a greater need for recreation. Living in urban centers with increasing amounts of leisure time gradually brought groups of people to realize the great need for recreation. (2)

Within the past four or five decades recreation has developed rapidly both within and without the schools. The majority of school authorities have come to realize the need for recreation. In many schools recreation and the



education of youth for leisure, are handicapped by a lack of resources, yet there seems to exist a gradual improvement in the schools as a whole. (2)

#### The First Academic Program of Physical Education in American Education

"The earliest pioneer in the modern American physical-education profession was Dr. Edward Hitchcock, who spent fifty years working to establish a scientific foundation for the profession." (5)

In 1861 Dr. Hitchcock accepted the position as Director of the new Department of Physical Education and Hygiene at Amherst College. Here he established the field of anthropometric measurement in physical education. Dr. Hitchcock, in 1885, was chosen chairman of the meeting at Adelphi Academy, which resulted in the founding of the American physical-education profession, known then as the Association for the Advancement of Physical Education; he served as its first president.

The idea of physical culture has too often been that great muscular development is the only essential element in it, and the fact is indeed true that the well man is muscularly strong. Dr. Hitchcock felt that the problem to be solved was what arrangement of required muscular exercise and recreation combined is the best for the students as a whole. In what way can we best help them to keep body and mind working harmoniously and effectively together. For man to secure full development of his intellectual, emotional, and spiritual being, he must obtain physical fitness.

Dr. Hitchcock felt in order for the students to be in the best condition for work, the muscles should not be trained to their highest powers for the most healthful and intellectual men are not those who have the most muscular

power. They are often well-developed men, and of excellent physical inheritance, but they are not muscle men.

During the first few year of work there, the simpler and easier forms of gymnastic work were required of all the class; every man was expected to practice heavy gymnastics under direction of the leader. This became very tedious work, irksome and impossible for some. It was injurious, both emotionally and physically, to a large part of the class. This activity was then discontinued but once each year a prize exhibition was held, when individual students competed in heavy gymnastics.

The new physical culture at Amherst College included cleanliness of skin, attention to stomach and bowels, relaxation from daily mental work, freedom from certain kinds of petty discipline, and stability to the methods of maintaining health and the men enjoyed these new methods. Physical education at Amherst College was not a program of strenuous exercises but was one of pleasant, vigorous, easy, and graceful movements. Light wooden dumbbells weighing about one pound each were placed in each hand and then a series of movements directed by a member of the class, called the captain, were timed by music, occupying in all about 20 to 30 minutes each day. (5)

#### OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATION

Over the past half century many writers, committees, and commissions have given expression to statements of educational objectives. The Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, spent three years preparing the Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education, published in 1918. This publication proposed a set of seven cardinal objectives for the school. These were:

(1) health, (2) command of the fundamental processes, (3) worthy home membership, (4) vocational competence, (5) effective citizenship, (6) worthy use of leisure, and (7) ethical character.

It is worth noting in this connection that the Educational Policies Commission (9) was a high-level committee of the National Educational Association. The National Education Association had this to say concerning the Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education: "It is probably the most influential educational document issued in this country."

In 1938 the Educational Policies Commission (9) in The Purposes of Education in American Democracy, developed four objectives, each with various subobjectives. These were:

I. The Objectives of Self-Realization.

- A. The inquiring mind.
- B. Speech.
- C. Reading.
- D. Writing.
- E. Number.
- F. Sight and hearing.
- G. Health knowledge.
- H. Health habits.
- I. Public health.
- J. Recreation.
- K. Intellectual interests.
- L. Esthetic interests.
- M. Character.

II. The Objectives of Human Relationship.

- A. Respect for humanity.
- B. Friendship.
- C. Cooperation.
- D. Courtesy.
- E. Appreciation of the home.
- F. Conservation of the home.
- G. Home making.
- H. Democracy in the home.

### III. The Objectives of Economic Efficiency.

- A. Work.
- B. Occupational information.
- C. Occupational choice.
- D. Occupational efficiency.
- E. Occupational adjustment.
- F. Occupational appreciation.
- G. Personal economics.
- H. Consumer judgement.
- I. Efficiency in buying.
- J. Consumer protection.

### IV. The Objectives of Civic Responsibility.

- A. Social justice.
- B. Social activity.
- C. Social understanding.
- D. Critical judgement.
- E. Tolerance.
- F. Conservation.
- G. Social applications of science.
- H. World citizenship.
- I. Law observance.
- J. Economic literacy.
- K. Political citizenship.
- L. Devotion to democracy.

In 1961, the Educational Policies Commission listed the development of the rational powers of man as the central purpose of American education. The following quotation contains the Commission's concluding statement: (10)

Individual freedom and effectiveness and the progress of the society require the development of every citizen's rational powers among the many important purposes of American schools the fostering of that development must be centered.

Man has already transformed his world by using his mind. As he expands the application of rational method to problems, old and new, and as people in growing numbers are enabled to contribute to such endeavors, man will increase his ability to understand, to act, and to alter his environment. Where these developments will lead cannot be foretold.

Man has before him the possibility of a new level of greatness, a new realization of human dignity and effectiveness. The instrument which will realize this possibility is that kind of education which frees the mind and enables it to contribute to a full and worthy life. To achieve this goal is the high hope of the nation and the central challenge to its schools.

#### PHYSICAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES DERIVED FROM EDUCATION OBJECTIVES (4)

Physical education as part of the school curriculum must share the function of education. That function is related to helping individuals to grow, develop, and adjust to the problems of individual happiness to competent membership in the family, to constructive citizenship in a democracy, and to appreciative understanding of the ethical values that undergird our world society. As a member of the educational family, physical education subscribes to educational objectives and endeavors to make its best contribution to their realization. The only justification for physical education--or any other subject in the school curriculum--is that it contributes to an important way to educational objectives. The criterion applied to every school subject or activity is that it must be in harmony with educational goals. Physical education is not peculiar in the objectives it strives to attain, but is unique in the opportunities that its activities provide, both because of their nature and the methodology, inherent in them.

#### THE OBJECTIVES OR FUNCTIONS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Stoodley (20) has analyzed the physical education objectives as they were stated by 22 different authors. Altogether 493 different items were listed, which were then classified under these headings: (1) health, physical, or organic development, (2) mental-emotional development, (3) neuromuscular development, (4) social development, (5) intellectual development, and (6) recreational development. These six classifications will be discussed briefly in the above order.

(1) The health, physical, or organic development.

One of the primary functions of physical education is to develop each individual to his greatest possible physical capacity within the range of accepted educational objectives. The development in skill and ability as well as organic development. Strength, vigor, vitality, and neuro-muscular coordination must be a part of the development of the physical capacities of youth.

All plans for the physical development of youth must harmonize with the total educational process. Physical development and adjustment must facilitate efficient academic progress.

(2) The mental-emotional development.

The growing emphasis on emotions in education in recent years has served to assure physical educators in their long held belief that emotional development is an important objective in the schools. Now it is generally recognized that the emotions of the individual must be given prime consideration throughout the entire educational program if the best results are to be attained.

It is generally thought that, because of the nature of physical activities, the teachers in physical education are in a position to obtain desirable results in the emotional development of pupils more readily than in most other school activities. Participation in team games, particularly places pupils in situations where they are under pressure and emotional control may easily be lost.

(3) The neuro-muscular development.

Development of motor skills is the synonym of neuro-muscular development, since to mechanism of behavior involved are muscle-nerve structures.

The degree of the development of motor skills depends upon the variety, amount, and intensity of participation in motor activities during the years of growth.

(4) Social development.

It is now generally accepted that the social development of pupils is an important part of general education. Desirable social relationships are extremely important in all phases of school life as well as in adult life.<sup>1</sup> Often, the socializing influence of extracurricular activities of all types is cited as a justification for their inclusion in the total school program.

For many years the social objective in physical education has been accepted by physical educators. Certainly, if the schools realize a duty in the social development of school children, then physical education should contribute to this development the same as do other fields of learning within the total program of education. However, it is frequently claimed that teachers in physical education should assume more responsibility than other teachers for the social development aims of the school, for the nature of physical activities is such that desirable results may be obtained more readily than in most other school activities.

(5) Intellectual development.

Teachers in health and physical education are concerned with the intellectual development of youth in at least three ways. That is, they have a responsibility, first, to impart sufficient knowledge of healthful living so that the pupil will be equipped to make the best possible adjustment in adult life so far as health knowledge is needed; second, to impart a knowledge of the

fundamentals, rules, and strategy of sports; and, third, to assist in providing a medium for the most efficient and effective intellectual development of each boy and girl not only in the physical education program but also in the academic fields.

(6) Recreational development.

It is the duty of the schools to assume a large share of the responsibility in training pupils to make intelligent use of leisure time.

The program of physical education in the schools should be constructed with both the present and the future recreation of the pupils in mind. It is desirable to include activities that are fundamental to physical development and basic to recreation. These activities should be composed of the more strenuous sports in which adults are not likely to participate.

#### REASONS AND OBJECTIVES OF HEALTH INSTRUCTION

Health has been and is accepted as a major objective in education. The following items are specific reasons for including health instruction in the total school curriculum: (3)

1. Although the health of each individual student is the prime responsibility of his or her parent, the school finds itself in the unique social situation in our complex society to obtain and to disseminate the latest reliable information in the health sciences.
2. The school is the most logical place for finding professional people with sufficient information in the health sciences.
3. The school is the most appropriate "clearing house" for differentiating between true health information and health misconceptions.
4. The school has the ability to provide scientific information in an unbiased manner.