

# STATUS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN THE U.S.

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Charlene R. Burgeson  
Executive Director

National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE)  
An association of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education  
and Dance (AAHPERD)



# Today's Discussion

- What is physical education?
- What key factors affect the quality of physical education?
- What is happening in physical education across the country?
- Why is physical education critical?
- Is there support for physical education?
- What is Let's Move in School?

What is physical education?

# Difference Between Physical Activity and Physical Education

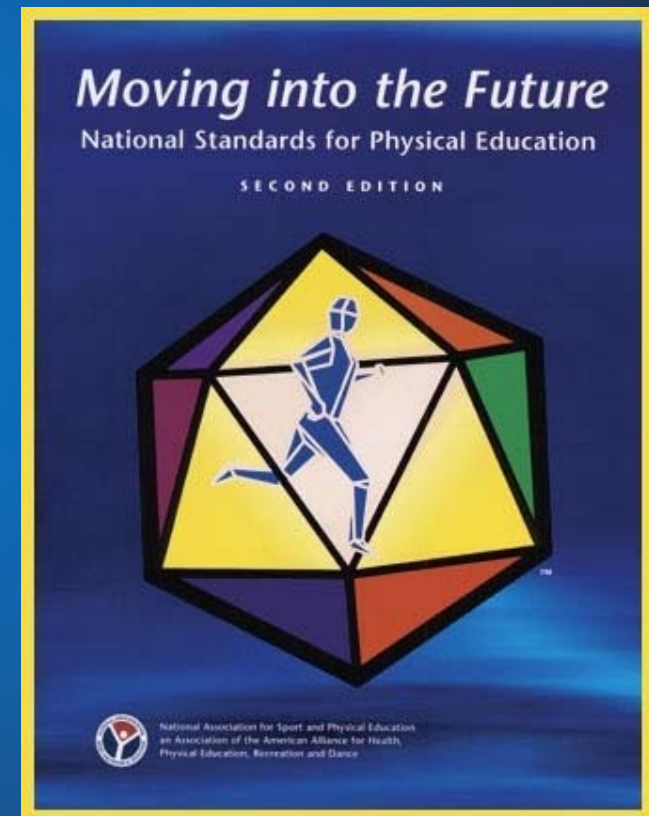
- Physical activity = **behavior**
- Physical education = **curricular area** that teaches about physical activity
- Students are physically active in physical education, but students are not (comprehensively) physically educated through recess, sports, ROTC, etc.

# Quality Physical Education

- Goal
  - To develop physically educated individuals who have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity
- Components
  - ✓ Opportunity to learn policies (“prerequisites”)
  - ✓ Meaningful content
  - ✓ Appropriate instruction
  - ✓ Student and program assessment

# Standards-based Physical Education

- 1: Competency in **motor skills and movement** patterns
- 2: Understanding of **movement concepts**
- 3: Participates regularly in **physical activity**
- 4: Achieves and maintains **health-related fitness**
- 5: **Responsible behavior** in physical activity settings
- 6: **Values** physical activity



What key factors affect the quality of physical education?

# Critical Foundation

- Certified physical education teachers (who receive ongoing professional development)
- Adequate time
  - ✓ ES: at least 150 minutes/week
  - ✓ MS and HS: at least 225 minutes/week
- No exemptions/waivers/substitutions



## Also Critical

- Standards-based curriculum
- Accountability
  - ✓ Student learning
  - ✓ Policies, monitoring, and consequences

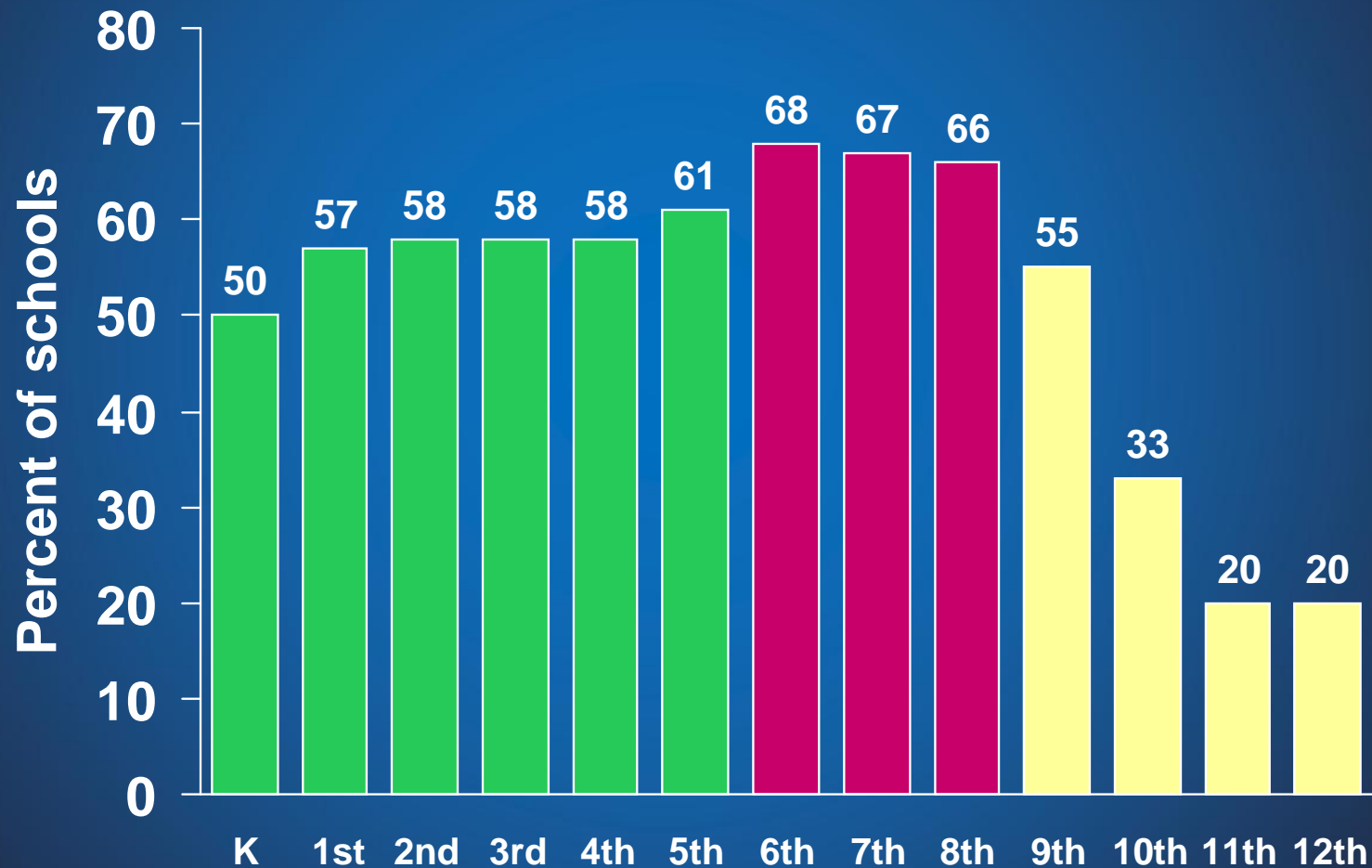
What is happening in physical education across the country?

# The Good News

- Require physical education
  - ✓ 95% of high schools
  - ✓ 84% of middle schools
  - ✓ 69% of elementary schools (not so good)
- Require newly hired PE teachers to be certified
  - ✓ 93% districts for high school
  - ✓ 87% of districts for middle school
  - ✓ 84% of districts for elementary school
- 76% of states required or encouraged districts/schools to follow standards or guidelines based on the National Standards for Physical Education

# The Bad News

# Physical Education Requirements by Grade\*



\*Among schools that had students in that grade.

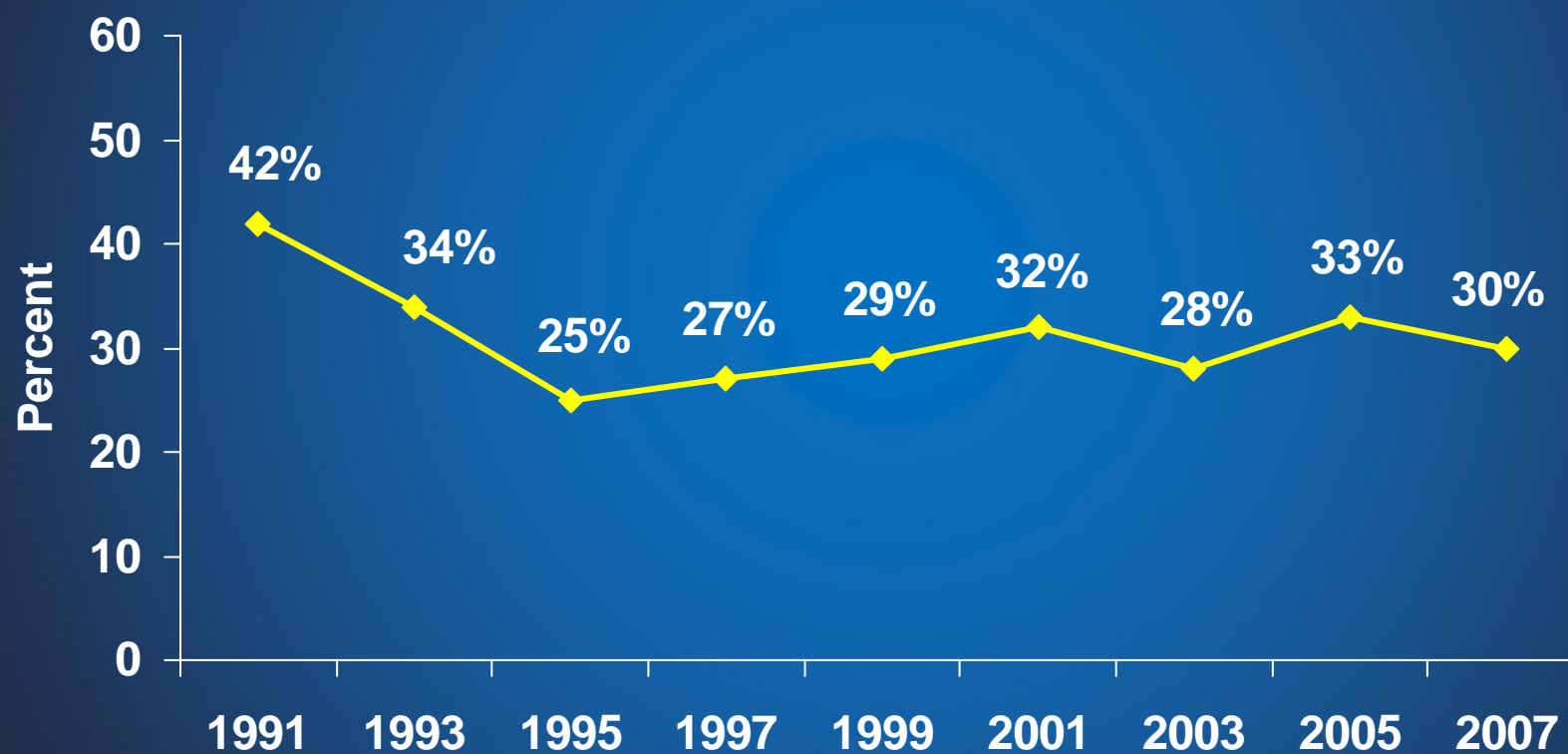
Source: CDC, School Health Policies and Programs Study 2006

# Students Receiving Daily Physical Education

- Daily physical education
  - ✓ 4% of elementary schools
  - ✓ 8% of middle schools
  - ✓ 2% of high schools
- 22% of schools did not require students to take any physical education

CDC, School Health Policies and Programs Study 2006

# Percentage of U.S. High School Students Who Attended Physical Education Classes Daily, 1991 - 2007



CDC, National Youth Risk Behavior Survey

# Bad Practice

- Schools that allow students to be exempted from physical education requirements
  - 20.8% of elementary schools
  - 22.7% of middle schools
  - 30.9% of high schools
- 68% of schools teach dodgeball or bombardment



# Inadequate Professional Development

Percentage of classes/courses with a teacher who received staff development on this topic

- Helping students develop individualized physical activity plans = 25%
- Teaching methods to promote inclusion and active participation of overweight children in PE = 35%
- Using technology for PE = 37%
- Encouraging family involvement in physical activity = 33%

Why is physical education critical?

# Benefits

- Physical education → physically active lifestyle
- Health and well-being
- Academic/work performance

# PE/PA and Academic Performance

CDC Review of Literature, April 2010

- 50 studies reviewed spanning 23 years
- 251 associations between PA and academic performance
  - ✓ 50.5% = positive
  - ✓ 1.5% = negative
- Bottom line
  - Substantial evidence – PA associated with improved academic performance
  - Increasing or maintaining PE time can help, and does not adversely affect, academic performance

[www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth)

# Research on Brain Development

- Indicates that cognitive development occurs in tandem with motor ability
- Physical activity can positively affect:
  - ✓ Blood flow and oxygen to the brain, thereby improving mental clarity
  - ✓ The part of the brain responsible for learning and memory
  - ✓ Connections between nerves in the brain, thereby improving attention and information-processing skills

# Fitness, Motor Skills, and Cognitive Performance

Several studies have shown a positive relationship between:

- Increased fitness levels and academic achievement
- Fitness levels and measures of cognitive skills and attitudes
- Improved motor skill levels and improvements in academic achievement
- Improved motor skill levels and measures of cognition skills and attitudes

Is there support for  
physical education?

# RWJF/AFHG National Survey – 2009

## Parents:

- 92% consider PE and health education as important as English, math and science
- 96% believe that physical activity can boost their children's classroom performance
- 98% want their child's school should offer opportunities for physical activity throughout the day through PE, activity breaks, recess, or afterschool programs
- *Similar findings by RWJF (2004) and NASPE (2003, 2002)*



## RWJF/AFHG Survey (cont'd)

4/5 of parents have undertaken one or more health-related activity or advocacy effort in their local schools

“Parents gets the connection between healthy schools, healthy students and academic achievement. They know that most school environments need to be improved, and it’s incredibly encouraging that they stand ready to help make the changes necessary.”

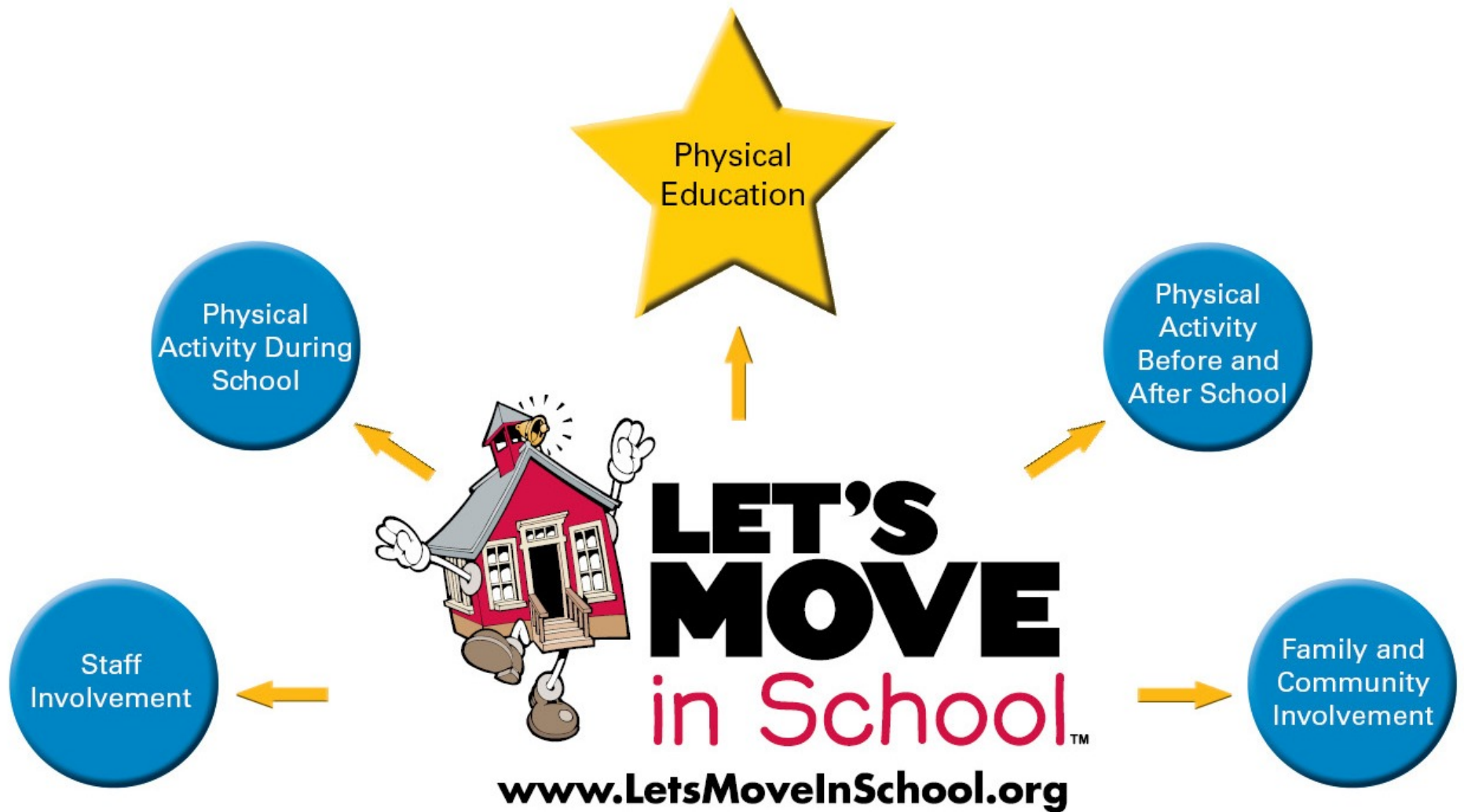
*Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, MD, MBA*

*President and CEO, RWJF*

What is Let's Move in School?

# Goal

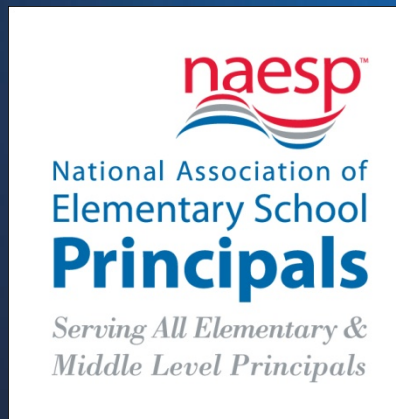
To ensure that every school provides a **comprehensive school physical activity program** with quality physical education as the foundation so that youth will develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to be physically active for a lifetime



National Association for Sport and Physical Education of the  
American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

**Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program**

# Strategic Partners



And over 50 Organizational Supporters

# Contact Info

AAHPERD website: [www.aahperd.org](http://www.aahperd.org)

LMIS website: [www.LetsMoveInSchool.org](http://www.LetsMoveInSchool.org)

Phone: (703)476-3410

E-mail: [naspe@aaahperd.org](mailto:naspe@aaahperd.org)

