



The Association Between State Physical Education Laws and Student Physical Activity¹

Background



Children should get at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise a day.

For high school students, only:

- 26% meet this requirement.
- 52% attend physical education (PE) classes.
- 23%–28% live in states that require 90 minutes or more of PE per week.



Strong, specific PE laws (i.e., time requirements) can help students progress towards the daily PE recommendations and could help reinforce physical activity outside of school.



Goals of the study

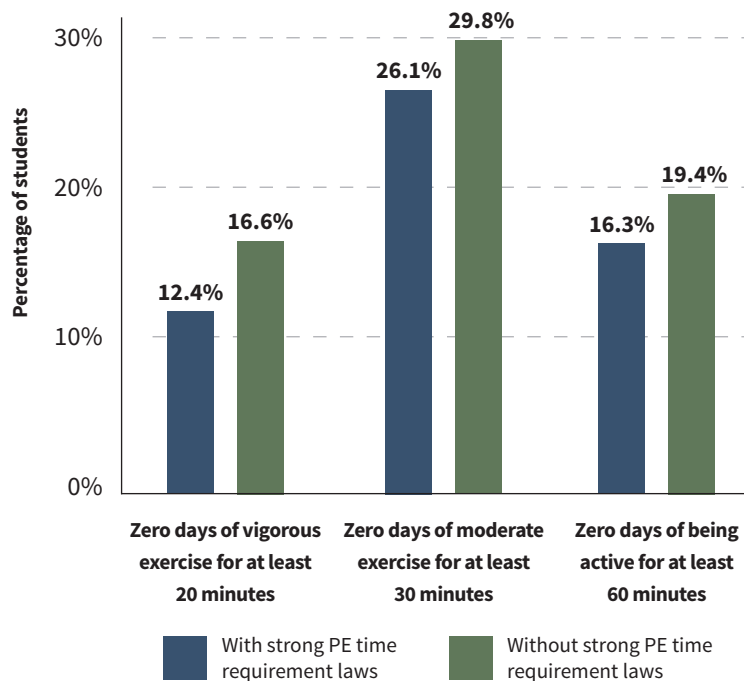
- Examine physical activity of high school students using the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) to see if it is related to states' PE time requirement laws as measured by the Classification of Laws Associated with School Students (CLASS) initiative.
- Assess if there are any gender differences in the relationship between physical activity and PE time requirement laws.

Key Takeaways

High school students in states that have specific PE time requirement laws are more likely to:

- Take a PE class.
- Engage in daily, moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes.

High school students in states with strong (i.e., specific) PE time requirement laws are less likely to have no days of physical activity for at least 60 minutes. Strong state PE time requirement laws increased the likelihood of both male and female students engaging in physical activity or playing sports during PE—and that relationship was even stronger for female students.



Reference

¹Lin, W., Leider, J., Shang, C., Hennessy, E., Perna, F.M., & Chriqui, J. F. (2020). The Association Between State Physical Education Laws and Student Physical Activity. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 58(3), 436–445. doi: 10.1016/j.amepre.2019.09.018



About CLASS

- State PE time requirement laws were taken from the CLASS initiative.
- Laws were coded as either strong (i.e., requiring at least 90 minutes of physical education per week) or weak (i.e., requiring less than 90 minutes of physical education per week).

Access **CLASS** data here:

<https://class.cancer.gov/StateProfiles>

About YRBS

- YRBS monitors health behaviors in youth and young adults in the United States.
- This study examined variables tracked by the YRBS dataset from 2005 to 2017. The outcome variables include questions about being physically active for at least 60 minutes a day, attending PE class, and exercising vigorously for at least 20 minutes a day, among others.

Access **YRBS** data here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/data.htm>

