

**News Alert:** After tobacco, obesity is the second leading cause of preventable death in our country.1 Two in three U.S. adults are obese, and childhood obesity has tripled in the past 30 years.2-3

**The Problem?**

* More than 1 in 4 Virginia youth, and 3 out of 5 Virginia adults, are obese or overweight.4-5
* Virginia spends $1.6 billion a year in healthcare costs related to obesity.6
* Only 1 in 5 kids are active for the CDC-­‐recommended 60 minutes a day.7-8
* Physical education is not a requirement in the Virginia school system.9 In fact, fewer than 10% of Virginia’s K-5 schools provide 30 minutes of physical education per day.10

**The Solution?**

* Youth spend over half their day in school, so it is reasonable to require that they get at least half (30 minutes) of their physical activity in school in each day.11
* Worried about fitting P.E. into the curriculum? Research shows that giving youth more time in physical education in place of another classroom activity **does not** hurt their test scores.12

**Why is physical education so important?**

* Regular physical activity leads to longer, healthier lives – including a lower risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, and some cancers.1,13-17
* Physical activity also promotes mental health, including improving insomnia, depression, and anxiety.1,18
* Quality physical education also **improves students’ academic performance and cognitive ability**, leading to better grades and test scores.11-13, 19-22 Plus it improves concentration, memory, and classroom behavior!23-26

1 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee report*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008.

2 CDC/NCHS, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhanes.htm

3 National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/obesity/facts.htm

4 Virginia Youth Survey, Virginia Department of Health, 2011. http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/ofhs/youthsurvey/

5 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011.

6 Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth. <http://www.healthyyouthva.org/vyop/facts.asp>

7 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth risk behavior surveillance—United States, 2009. MMWR 2010;59(SS‐5):1‐142.

8 How much physical activity do children need? Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/children.html

9 National Association for Sport and Physical Education & American Heart Association. (2010). 2010 Shape of the nation report: Status of physical education in the USA. Reston, VA: National Association for Sport and Physical Education.

10 2006 School Health Policies and Practices Study (SHPPS). http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/shpps/index.htm

11 Youth Physical Activity: The Role of Schools. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Adolescent and School Health

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