



May 8, 2014

TO: Board of Education
CC: Superintendent Carranza, PEEF staff, Supervisors Kim and Yee
From: Shape Up SF Coalition

Since its inception, Shape Up SF (SUSF) has been working closely with SFUSD on a range of issues related to student health and wellness including Rethink Your Drink/Soda Free Summer, Safe Routes to School, the Foods and Fitness/Wellness Policy committee and PE Advocates.

Since 2010, the SUSF PE Advocates have partnered with SFUSD and PEEF to better understand PE for public school students. To date we have conducted two assessments, the first covering K-12; the second K-5. We learned that while there are issues to address at middle and high school, those students were getting the required minutes and in so doing also getting recommended moderate to vigorous activity. Our focus shifted to the elementary level after the first study found that only 20% of elementary schools in the study had scheduled enough PE minutes (scheduling doesn't ensure that students receive the full amount scheduled, however)ⁱ. Our second study found a small increase in the amount of PE K-5 students receive; pointing to the ongoing need to build support for our elementary schools to offer quality PE.

PEEF has been an invaluable resource to bring PE back to our students. PE minutes are mandated by the State Education Code (k-5: 200 minutes every 10 days and 6-12: 400 minutes every 10 days)ⁱⁱ with good reason: fit children perform better academically (and on tests)ⁱⁱⁱ. The research is clear: after 20 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity the brain releases hormones that help with focus, cognition, self esteem and more^{iv}.

As our youth populations grow heavier and are increasingly impacted by diseases like Type 2 diabetes, schools are impacted with increased absenteeism, poorer academic and fitness performance, and bullying and teasing overweight children (as reported on YRBS).

Many children do not get to play sports after school because of financial or transportation issues; their neighborhood parks and streets are deemed unsafe by their parents (and regrettably are often unsafe); and active transportation to/from school isn't an option for a multitude of reasons. PE has the potential to level the playing field for children who do not have the opportunity to be physically active, before, after or on the way to/from school. PE provides children the foundation for a lifetime of physical activity. Our public schools are likely teeming with the next Pablo Sandovals, Jerry Rices, Brandi Chastains, but we'll never know if they don't get the opportunity to learn the basics of balancing, kicking, throwing or batting in elementary school.

As the PEEF discussions have progressed, we understand there have been a range of discussions with different PEEF stakeholders. We received notice of a recent March listening session too late to attend or send representatives. As such, we want to ensure that the value of PE is understood and accounted for as PEEF reauthorization legislation is developed.

For reasons of health, equity and academics, we urge that PEEF funding for physical education is not cut nor subsumed under a generic athletics category. **PE is intended for all**, athletics for the relatively few accomplished athletes. The PE Department serves students across the entire district (K-12), which is either equal to or more than other areas.

PEEF supported the development of a PE program that had languished without the needed resources. Currently all middle and high schools have PE teachers. Elementary schools do not and use a team-teaching model whereby a PE Specialist trains classroom teachers to teach PE.

Our mission is to advocate for and promote environments, systems and policies that make the healthy choice the easy choice for all San Franciscans.

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While an effective approach for limited resources, the most ideal situation is a PE teacher at every school. SFUSD currently funds 34 PE specialists; to get a PE teacher at each elementary school an additional 35 FTEs would be needed. The estimated cost for this model – a PE specialist at all 72 elementary schools - would be \$6.9 million each year.

The PE Advocates and Shape Up SF Coalition are working tirelessly to identify funding streams that will support physical education. The Board of Education voted in support of the proposed Sugary Drink Tax for the November 2014 ballot; if passed, some of those funds would be directed to support PE. Those funds would serve a significant addition to PEEF funds and create the infrastructure and opportunity for quality PE for all.

Sincerely,



Beatrice Cardenas-Duncan
Shape Up SF Coalition Co-Chair



Charles M. Collins
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ⁱ Shape Up San Francisco (2011). Shape Up SF PE Advocates: Recommendations to increase physical activity during the school day. Szeto, M., Goette C. www.shapeupsfcoalition.org.

ⁱⁱ California Department of Education. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ms/po/policy99-03-june1999.asp>

ⁱⁱⁱ California Department of Education, 2005.

^{iv} University Of Illinois At Urbana-Champaign. "Exercise Appears To Improve Brain Function Among Younger People." ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 20 December 2006. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2006/12/061219122200.htm