



86TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION

TEXAS PTA LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Support policies that reduce childhood obesity through education, healthy food choices, and physical activity.

BACKGROUND

- Texas PTA is a member of The Partnership for a Healthy Texas (PHT). This coalition of over 50 organizations develops and promotes state policies that prevent and combat obesity in Texas. PHT works to:
 - Encourage collaboration among all parties interested in policy change to reduce obesity
 - Inform and educate policy makers about the consequences of obesity
 - Promote evidence-based obesity reduction strategies in policy making
 - Disseminate policy information and resources to stakeholders interested in obesity prevention
- Texas PTA will support legislation to:
 - Increase quality physical education (PE) in elementary and middle schools
 - By adolescence, 33% of Texas youth are overweight or obese.¹
 - Only 27% of Texas children get the recommended amount of daily physical activity.²
 - Physically active children are more likely to thrive academically and socially. Children who participate in physical activity tend to have better grades, and higher levels of activity and physical fitness are associated with improved memory and concentration among students.³
 - PE provides students with a planned, sequential, K-12 standards-based program of curricula. Instruction is designed to develop motor skills, knowledge, and behaviors for active living, physical fitness, sportsmanship, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence.⁴
 - PE reduces obesity and related chronic diseases. Physical inactivity and poor nutrition are contributing to high rates of heart disease, diabetes, and other related chronic diseases.⁵
 - PE has shown to provide a positive Return on Investment. Research has found a benefit of more than \$33 for every \$1 invested in school-based physical activity and PE programs, such as reduced healthcare costs and increased labor participation.⁶
 - 73% of young adults in Texas between the ages of 17-24 would not qualify to serve in the U.S. military. One of the leading medical disqualifiers is being overweight.

- Reinstate the health requirement for high school
 - Roughly 10 years ago the Texas Legislature removed the requirement that high school students take one semester of health in an effort to reduce the number of required classes so that students would have more elective choices.
 - Our increasingly sedentary lifestyle has led to dramatic levels of obesity among children and youth.
 - Schools can serve as an important support to families teaching about healthy eating and healthy activity. Learning how to live a healthy lifestyle and understanding the impact of food and physical activity on your overall health are essential to a student's growth and their ability to learn.⁷
 - Research shows a strong connection between healthy behaviors and academic performance. Healthy students are better learners and academic achievement bears a lifetime of benefits for health.⁸

¹The State of Obesity. (2018). The state of obesity in Texas. <https://stateofobesity.org/states/tx/>

²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014). Texas action guide. https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/downloads/state_pdfs/14_248165_tx_tag508.pdf

³Active Living Research. (2015). Active education: growing evidence on physical activity and academic performance. https://activelivingresearch.org/sites/default/files/ALR_Brief_ActiveEducation_Jan2015.pdf

⁴Spark PE. (2018). Physical education and physical activity. <https://sparkpe.org/safe-and-healthy-students/physical-education/>

⁵Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018). Physical activity facts. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/facts.htm>

⁶The State of Obesity. (2018). School based physical education and physical activity. <https://stateofobesity.org/policy/physical-education/>

⁷CDC. (2015) Making the Connection: Dietary Behaviors and Academic Grades.

https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/health_and_academics/pdf/factsheetDietaryBehaviors.pdf

⁸Department of Defense. (2017). Qualified Military Available (QMA). Acquired from the Accession Policy and Joint Advertising, Market Research and Studies teams at DoD in November 2017. Also see Jordan, M. (2014, June). Recruits' ineligibility tests the military. Wall Street Journal.