



WHPE Position Statement

The use of waivers, exemptions and substitutions for Physical Education

It is the position of WHPE that physical education is an academic subject. WHPE believes that all K-12 students should take all required physical education courses and that no substitutions, waivers, or exemptions should be permitted. The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) does not support the use of waivers or exemptions for physical education.

The Difference Between Physical Education and Athletics

Physical Education	Athletics
Goal is to develop the physical literacy of <i>all</i> students	Focused on one sport, limited number of students
All students have equal access to physical education classes	Students may be cut from the team or have less playing time than their peers
Inclusive by nature	Exclusive by nature
Knowledge and skill based	Skill based
Focus on learning for life	Focus on winning today
Cooperative	Competitive
Lifetime activities, healthy lifestyles, and activity/sport specific instruction	Sport specific instruction only
A right for all students	A privilege for a few
Addresses and makes connections to fitness education throughout duration of the course	Limited scope of fitness, specific to the sport. Potential to lead to overuse injuries caused by repetitive motion
No cost	Financial cost
Taught by certified physical education teachers who are trained to deliver developmentally appropriate curriculum and instruction	Coach's experience may be limited.
Full year or semester	Length of season



Questions to consider if a school is proposing/ considering waivers for physical education:

1. **Are athletics a right or a privilege regardless of a student's ability?**
2. What happens if the student breaks a code of conduct his/her senior year and that is the sport or activity for which the student seeks approval based on this statute?
3. Is a six to seven week golf team season equal to an 18-week varsity basketball season or to a semester of physical education? Time spent on the sport or approved physical activity is variable.
4. Are sports or activities where cuts occur preventing equal opportunity to all students that want to pursue this option? These may include swing choir, marching band or cheerleading.
5. Should sport participation approval only occur when it is at the varsity level or is any level agreeable?
6. Can the board approve of a sport or physical activity in the same year as the student takes a physical education course? It is possible that the student could finish his/her PE requirement by the sophomore year instead of the three year profession presently in law¹?
7. What happens if the student is injured during the sport or activity?
8. Should ROTC or club sports be included as a physical activity?
9. What happens if the coach kicks the student off the team during the season?
10. Should the board consider the licensure of the coach in the sport approval process?
11. Are items like exercise principles covered or addressed by the coach?
12. What about managers - are they exempt from waivers?
13. Who is responsible for providing the credit and providing accountability?

Please also see the SHAPE America position statement on the difference between physical education and physical activity:

http://www.shapeamerica.org/publications/resources/teachingtools/qualitype/pa_vs_pe.cfm

¹ WI DPI requirements state that physical education credits in grades 9-12 must be earned over 3 separate years:
<http://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/physical-education/school-district-standards>