

**Kinesiology Regents Academic Advisory Committee**  
**“The Value of a Health & Physical Education Graduate”**  
**November, 2016**

**1. What is Health & Physical Education?**

Health & Physical education (HPE) provides students with a planned, sequential, K-12 standards-based program of curricula and instruction designed to develop healthy behaviors, motor skills, knowledge and behaviors for active living, physical fitness, sportsmanship, self-efficacy and emotional intelligence<sup>1</sup>. K-12 system professionals must be certified in the HPE content area by completing an approved teacher preparation program in HPE.

HPE is an integral part of the total education of every child in kindergarten through high school<sup>2</sup>. Schools are becoming more and more aware of the opportunities to promote and to integrate health and wellness. Currently, state schools receiving federal funds for wellness programs must also have wellness policies including the following minimum requirements: Nutrition guidelines, nutrition education and nutrition promotion goals; physical activity goals and wellness policy development and compliance<sup>3</sup>. The Georgia school lunch program ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in the U.S.<sup>4</sup> and 68.8% of public school students participate in physical education (PE)<sup>5</sup>. Despite these efforts, the high school students in Georgia display the following statistics: 17.1% overweight, 12.7% obese, 76% physically inactive and 19% completely sedentary. Only 41% of the students who completed the annual fitness assessment are out of the healthy zone on the body composition measure; and 19% of the students eat the recommended daily amount of daily fruit and vegetable<sup>3</sup>. There is a clear need to invest in the health and physical education of our youth in Georgia by training and graduating HPE professionals.

Higher education in Georgia produces well-rounded scholars as outlined in the University System of Georgia's Mission Statement for State Colleges<sup>6</sup> showing a commitment to public service, continuing education, technical assistance, and economic development activities that

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas, K. T., Lee, A. M., & Thomas, J. R. (2000). Physical education for children: daily lesson plans for elementary school. 2nd edition, Champaign, IL: Human Kinetic

<sup>2</sup> Le Masurier, G., & Corbin, C. B. (2006). Top 10 reasons for quality physical education. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 77(6), 44-53.

<sup>3</sup> Kibbe, D., Campos, R., & Khalaf, M. (n.d.). The physical activity and nutrition toolkit for Georgia K-12 public schools and school districts. (Center for Disease Control Cooperative agreement 1U58DP0048801). Atlanta, GA: Georgia Health Policy Center and the Georgia Department of Public Health.

<sup>4</sup> QuickFacts, 2012 data from the U.S. Census. Available online at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/index.html>

<sup>5</sup> Annual Fitness Assessment Program Report. Georgia Department of Education. October 2013. Available online at <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Documents/HPE/Georgia%20Annual%20Fitness%20Assessment%20Report%202013.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Core Mission Statement for State Colleges." USG Institutions. Accessed February 23, 2016. [http://www.usg.edu/inst/mission/category/state\\_colleges](http://www.usg.edu/inst/mission/category/state_colleges).

address the needs, improve the quality of life, and raise the educational level within the state college's scope of influence.”

In regards to HPE, the University system of Georgia and the appointed Regents Academic Committee are on a mission to adopt the 2010 National Physical Activity Plan for higher education through the following strategy #6<sup>7</sup>: “Encourage post-secondary institutions to provide access to physical activity opportunities, including physical activity courses, robust club and intramural programs, and adequate physical activity and recreation facilities”. The state has been supportive financially and built extraordinary health and fitness facilities for the wellness of the students, staff, faculty and its surrounding community. Different tactics from trained professionals have been and will continue to be to advocate for state and federal funding to ensure that post-secondary institutions have resources (e.g., facilities, equipment, staff) to provide quality physical activity programming; to develop and implement local policies and joint use agreements that allow students in post-secondary institutions to have access to physical activity facilities, such as school gyms and community recreation centers; and to encourage USDE/CHEA accrediting agencies to require all institutions receiving Federal (Title IV) funding to hold a class focusing on the impact of physical inactivity, resources and opportunities for physical activity, and positive health behaviors such as an institutional graduation requirement.

## **2. How does an Undergraduate Training in HPE Benefit Students?**

HPE programs increase the physical competence, health-related fitness, self-responsibility and enjoyment of physical activity for all students so that they can be physically active for a lifetime<sup>8</sup>. School HPE programs should provide these benefits when they are well-planned and well-implemented by trained HPE teachers. To date, research has demonstrated that programs exhibiting the characteristics of quality physical education lead to increased physical activity levels<sup>9</sup>, improved self-concept, increased self-efficacy<sup>10</sup> improved motor skills, increased motivation<sup>11</sup>, and increased physical activity over the long-term<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> The U.S. National Physical Activity Plan: Education Sector Strategies and Tactics. (2010). The U.S. National Physical Activity Plan: Education Sector Strategies and Tactics. Retrieved on February 23, 2016. [http://www.physicalactivityplan.org/education\\_st6.php](http://www.physicalactivityplan.org/education_st6.php). Education: Strategy 6.

<sup>8</sup> Lee, S. M., Burgerson, C. R., Fulton, J. E., & Spain, C. G. (2007). Physical education and physical activity: Results from the School Health Policies and Programs Study. *Journal of School Health*, 77, 435-463.

<sup>9</sup> Pate, R. R., Ward, D. S., Saunders, R. P., Felton, G., Dishman, R. K., & Dowda, M. (2005). Promotion of physical activity among high-school girls: A randomized controlled trial. *American Journal of Public Health*, 95(9), 1582-1587.

<sup>10</sup> Dishman, R. K., Motl, R. W., Saunders, R., Felton, G., Ward, D. S., Dowda, M., et al. (2004). Self-efficacy partially mediates the effect of a school-based physical-activity intervention among adolescent girls. *Preventive Medicine*, 38(5), 628-636.

<sup>11</sup> Prusak, K. A., Treasure, D. C., Darst, P. W., & Pangrazi, R. P. (2004). The effects of choice on the motivation of adolescent girls in physical education. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 23, 19-29.

<sup>12</sup> Trudeau, F., Laurencelle, L., Trembley, J., Rajic, M., & Shephard, R. J. (1998). A long-term follow-up of participants in the Trois-Rivieres semi-longitudinal study of growth and

Those choosing to major in HPE are exposed to the most up-to-date information on effective pedagogical skills and content information. Additionally, HPE majors are given extensive experiential education as they spend many hours in schools learning from experienced specialist teachers and practicing their own teaching with children. The end result is an informed and well-trained HPE specialist who is equipped to provide children and adolescents with a quality HPE experience. It is this quality HPE experience that is the underpinning of a physically active and healthy adult whom will be knowledgeable and skilled to make substantive contribution to society and the economy.

A HPE major is not limited to teaching in school settings. The HPE major learns instructional methods for teaching physical activity, sport skills and teamwork at various age levels as well as the latest health and wellness principles. This furnishes an individual with the background to use their degree in other settings outside of schools such as in directors of youth sport programs, and recreation programs.

An HPE degree benefits students by enabling them to obtain employment in areas in which opportunity is growing and present competitive salaries and benefits. In Georgia, projected annual openings for school-based HPE teachers are anticipated to continue growing and the typical annual wage in for Georgia teachers was \$45,568 - \$65,636 compared with a mean of \$56,266<sup>13</sup>. At the same time, employment of recreation workers was projected to grow 10% from 2014 to 2024, faster than the average for all occupations. As more emphasis is placed on the importance of exercise, more recreation workers will be needed to work in local government parks and recreation departments, sports centers, and camps specializing in younger participants.

### **3. How does a HPE Graduate Benefit the State of Georgia?**

According to the United Health Foundation (2015), Georgia is the 13th unhealthiest state in the United States. Having well-trained HPE teachers is important for Georgia's schoolchildren as 27.2% of Georgia's adolescent population are overweight or obese. Given these and the latest data from the *Centers for Disease Control (CDC)* indicating that Georgia's adult obesity rate is 30.7% (CDC, 2014) and over 60% are either overweight or obese<sup>14</sup>, it appears to be even more important now than ever for Georgia to have a physically active and physically literate populace. Obesity is directly related to health-related issues such as diabetes, hypertension, arthritis, and cancer not only decrease Georgian's quality of life but are a significant impact on health-care costs. When Georgia's citizens are healthier, there is a significant economic benefits because obesity has a significant impact on personal and state economies. While there are no data available for Georgia, it has been estimated that the national medical care costs of obesity-related illness in adults is \$209.7 billion and 20.6% of U.S. national health expenditures are spent treating obesity-related illness<sup>15</sup>. A report from the *Harvard School of Public Health* indicated that obese employees miss

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development. *Pediatric Exercise Science*, 10, 366-377.

<sup>13</sup> Georgia State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates Georgia (2015). Accessed on October 31, 2016 <http://www.projectionscentral.com/Projections/LongTerm>

<sup>14</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2015). Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data. Accessed on October 17, 2016. URL: [www.cdc.gov/yrbs](http://www.cdc.gov/yrbs).

<sup>15</sup> Cawley, J., & Meyerhoefer, C. (2012). The medical care costs of obesity: An instrumental

more days from work due to short-term absences, long-term disability, and premature death than non-obese employees and may also work at less than full capacity.

One of the most direct and effective ways to decrease obesity-related health conditions is to develop a more physically literate citizenry. A foundational step toward this goal is to provide a quality physical education to Georgia's youth and adolescent population. In order for this to happen, Georgia's schoolchildren must be taught by HPE Specialists who can foster the learning of knowledge and skills necessary for a lifetime of being physically active. When Georgia's schools are staffed with competent HPE Specialists who not only have the content knowledge and pedagogical skills but are able to stay abreast of the latest and always changing information on health and physical activity, the likelihood of a healthier Georgia is increased. When Georgia has healthy citizens, quality of life is improved and the economy benefits.

### **Conclusion**

The benefits of the presence of HPE programs and trained professionals in grades K-12 in Georgia are obvious: We must attempt to collaborate in resolving the health epidemic too many face. In order to successfully have citizens in Georgia adopt a healthier lifestyle, they must be exposed to the benefits when they are children. Early habits of culture for health increase healthy behaviors' adherence. The opportunity for our children to become actively engage in Health and Physical Education classes is palpable. In order to stop the negative trends of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases increase, we need more supportive wellness policies in place written by trained HPE professionals in our state and supported by our state leaders.