



**Texas House Public Education Committee  
Formal Request For Information Response Interim Charge 1C  
September 30, 2020**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the following information regarding Interim Charge 1C & Question 10 – both relating to the status of SB 1873 (85<sup>th</sup> Regular) which would evaluate the amount of quality physical education our students are receiving.

While we understand the isolated nature of virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic makes these initiatives more difficult, physically active and educated children are more likely to thrive academically and socially. A well-rounded physical education program includes professional development for teachers, adequate resources, and sufficient time and space for physical education and activities. Access to quality physical education has national security implications. According to the Department of Defense, 71 percent of all young Americans between the ages of 17 and 24 are unable to join the military, with the leading disqualifier being overweight.

The goal of SB 1873 is to enhance the information that the Texas Education Agency is currently collecting through the annual School Health Survey and to make it publicly accessible on a district by district basis. This information would be used to identify the resources needed to strengthen the physical education curriculum, financial resources, staff, and equipment as well as showcase successful programs.

Already, we know that Texas teachers are looking for access to quality age-appropriate equipment (including budget allocation,) appropriate pupil/teacher ratio for maximum student engagement and supervision, and adequate space and facilities to ensure a safe learning environment, certified physical education teachers. This data would serve school districts and SHAC's in long-term planning, and help make evidence-based changes to their curriculum.

We are disappointed that the Texas Education Agency has not implemented the collection of data and been able to share the results. Texas has the 19th highest obesity rate for youth ages 10-17 and the 10th highest adult obesity rate in the U.S. Childhood obesity results in extra health care cost. A child with obesity has \$12,900 more in medical costs than a child with normal weight.

Why is this data critical? We need to ensure all Texas schools are providing adequate, quality physical education. We know that...

- Physical education is an academic subject. It serves as the foundation of a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP) and, as such, demands the same education rigor as other core subjects.
- Physically active children are more likely to thrive academically and socially. Through effective physical education, children learn how to incorporate safe and healthy activities into their lives. Physical education is an integral part of developing the “whole” child for success in social settings and the learning environment.
- Physical education 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.



- Physical education 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.
- Physical education accountability reporting reinforces obesity prevention efforts by state government. Schools should be held accountable for the reporting of physical education, to ensure every student in a Texas school receives adequate, quality physical education.

Respectfully, we request the House Public Education Committee's assistance in ensuring this data is gathered and distributed which will allow stakeholders, schools, and parents to ensure our children are receiving quality physical education. Ideally, our goal is to ensure that students receive at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous aerobic physical activity each day for good physical and mental health as recommended by the 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. It is critical that we keep children active so that the obesity crisis does not worsen while we face the current pandemic and without this data, we are unable to measure the amount of physical education our students receive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.