



SCHOOL POLICIES RELATED TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



Policy to provide daily physical education

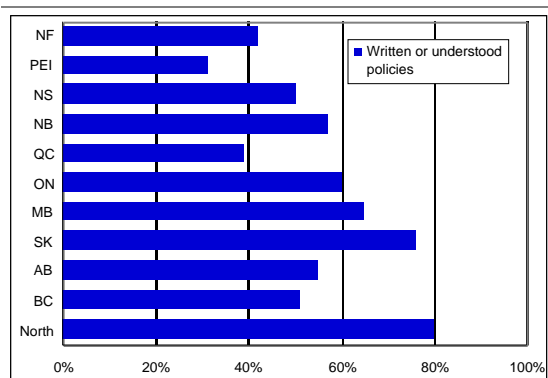
Almost half of all schools (46%) do not have a policy to provide daily physical education classes to students. Of those that do, twice as many schools have written policies rather than generally understood, unwritten policies (36% versus 19%). The proportion of schools having written policies varies, from 26% in British Columbia to 49% in Saskatchewan, and from 30% in communities having 5,000 to 9,999 residents to 42% in large communities with at least 300,000 residents. Elementary schools are slightly more likely to have a policy for daily physical education (57%) than are secondary schools (51%).

Student population size In general, schools with a smaller student population are more likely than those with a larger population to have a policy for daily physical education. However, of those schools that do have a policy, smaller schools are more likely than larger schools to have an unwritten policy.

Language Although equally likely to have a written policy to provide daily physical education, English schools are more likely than French schools to have an unwritten policy (22% versus 6%). French schools are more likely not to have a policy of any sort.

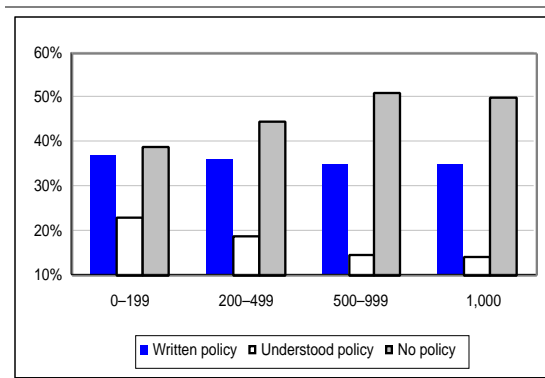
Implications Although about half of schools report having a policy for daily physical education, only 16% report that they provide physical education classes daily. The provision of quality and daily physical education programming in school is an important objective of national strategies in both Canada and the United States. In Canada, the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (CAHPERD) not only advocates for compulsory physical education, but also for the provision of intramural and interscholastic physical activity opportunities which address the needs of all students.⁸ In the United States, the *Healthy People 2010* report recommends that more schools provide daily physical education for students from kindergarten to grade 12, encourage more to participate in physical education classes, and ensure that they are active during these classes for at least half of the time.²²

**POLICIES FOR DAILY PHYSICAL EDUCATION
by province**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

**POLICIES FOR DAILY PHYSICAL EDUCATION
by student population size**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

Policy to hire qualified personnel

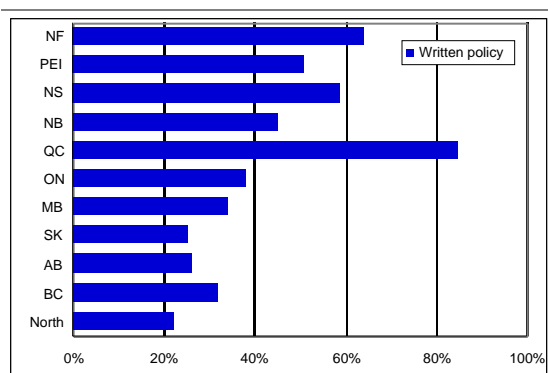
Schools, school boards, or the provincial/territorial Ministry of Education may have policies that require schools to hire physical education teachers with either formal qualifications or university qualifications. Less than half (46%) of all schools have a written policy to hire qualified personnel for physical education instruction, and an additional 28% have an unwritten or otherwise generally understood policy. Rural schools are less likely than the average to have any sort of policy. Elementary schools are less likely than secondary schools to have policies to hire qualified personnel.

Province Approximately one-third of all schools in Ontario (36%), Saskatchewan (31%), Alberta (32%), British Columbia (37%), and in the North (40%) do not have a policy to hire qualified personnel for physical education instruction. In contrast, almost all schools in Quebec (97%) do have a policy to hire qualified personnel. Furthermore, Quebec schools are much more likely than schools in any other province to have a written policy (85%).

Student population size Schools with smaller student populations are more likely than those with larger populations not to have a policy to hire certified personnel for physical education instruction.

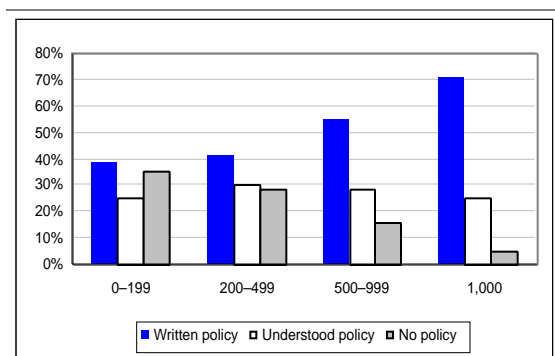
Implications One of the four position statements of the CAHPERD’s Quality Daily Physical Education (QDPE) program advocates for the provision of teachers who are qualified to teach physical education to students. Although almost three-quarters of schools have a policy to this effect, only 46% actually have written policies. Moreover, only 39% of schools report that a physical education specialist is solely responsible for the teaching of physical education to students (see topic entitled “Staff resources for physical education”). Schools could be encouraged to establish policies ensuring the provision of qualified personnel, and to support this with ongoing professional development opportunities to maintain awareness of current developments in the field (see the section “Training and developmental opportunities”).

**HIRING OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL
by province**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

**HIRING OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL
by student population size**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

Policy to provide a broad range of physical activities

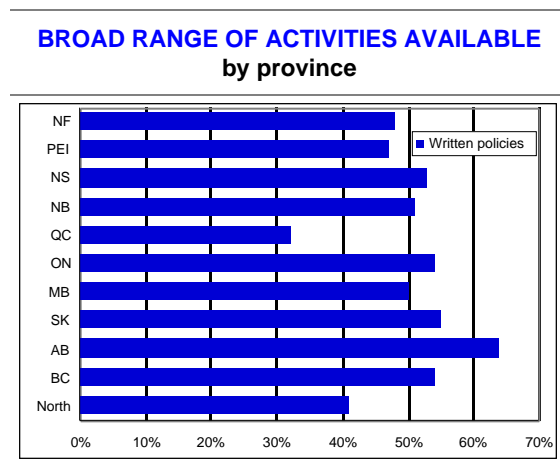
Just over half of all schools (51%) have a written policy to provide a broad range of physical activities to students, with an additional 35% having an unwritten policy to provide the same. Elementary schools are more likely than secondary schools to have this type of policy.

Region Schools in the province of Quebec are less likely than schools in any other region to have a policy for providing a range of physical activities to students. Schools in the West and the province of Ontario are the most likely to have a policy.

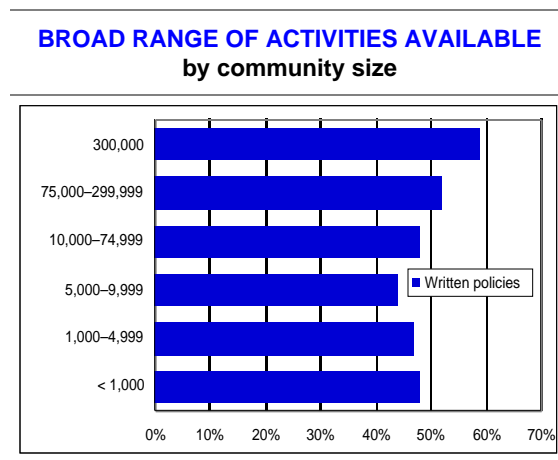
School type Public schools are slightly less likely than other schools to have a policy for providing a range of physical activities to students. Schools with a larger student population are more likely to have such a policy than those with smaller student populations.

Language French schools are less likely than other schools to have either a written or otherwise understood policy to provide a range of physical activities to students. This is due at least in part to the lower prevalence of policies in Quebec schools.

Implications The fact that a large proportion of schools report having a policy to support the provision of a broad variety of physical activities, generally appears to be supported in practice. For example, most schools provide opportunities to develop specialized movement skills, individual physical activities, team and dual sports, as well as seasonal opportunities (see topic entitled “Components of the physical education program”). Whereas a mix of physical activity programming may be used to provide access to a wide range of activities, physical education programming, itself, should provide a variety of activities involving all movement categories, including individual and dual activities, team activities, alternative environment activities, dance, gymnastics, and games.²³ Although secondary schools are slightly less likely to report policies for the provision of a range of activities, it is important to offer a variety of skill- and behaviour-enhancing activities. This is especially important for adolescent females, who typically have lower self-esteem and confidence in their abilities, as well as lower activity levels.¹⁸ Moreover, for Canadian students, a variety of activities that overcome barriers related to season or weather can provide options for increasing activity levels of children all year long.



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Policy for funding of equipment

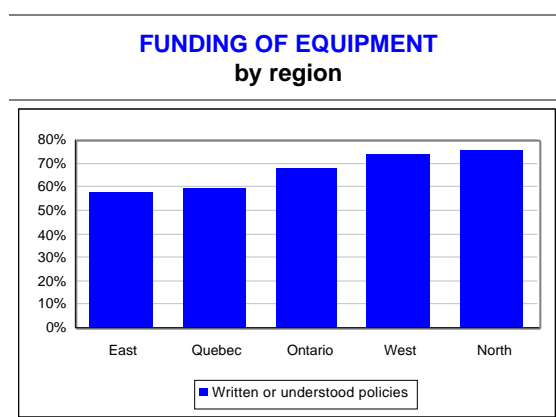
Approximately one-third of all schools do not have a policy to ensure ongoing funding for adequate physical activity equipment to meet the needs of students. Although 67% of schools do have a policy, only 27% of schools have a written policy. Elementary schools are just as likely as secondary schools not to have a policy for equipment funding.

Province There is a general east to west trend in the likelihood that schools have a policy for equipment funding (58% in the East to 74% in the West).

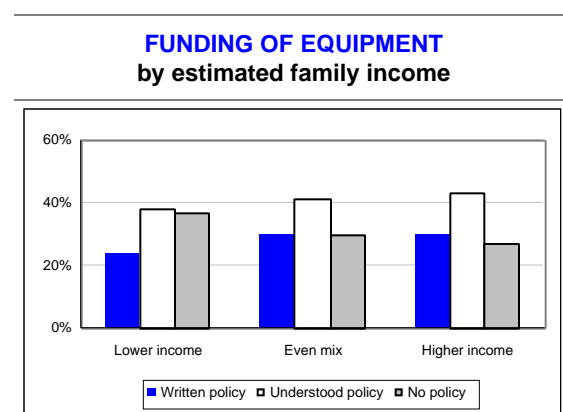
School type Public schools are less likely than other schools to have a policy ensuring ongoing funding of equipment.

Estimated family income Schools with mostly low income students are less likely than other schools to have a policy for equipment funding.

Implications One-third (33%) of schools do not have a policy to ensure ongoing funding for adequate physical activity equipment. This result is somewhat similar to an earlier topic (see topic entitled “Financing of physical activity opportunities”), which reveals that 43% of schools hold students and their families responsible for the cost of equipment for physical activity outside of physical education classes. Establishing policies and practices related to the funding for equipment is critical, as the provision of appropriate and adequate equipment is important to keep students active during physical education classes. Inadequate amounts of resources and equipment result in students “waiting around” (or otherwise being inactive) for access to existing resources and equipment.¹² The provision of adequate equipment and supplies becomes especially important for lower income students, who may otherwise not have access to such resources in their life outside of school and may therefore also miss acquiring associated movement skills to support a variety of active pursuits as adults.



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI



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Policies that support active commuting

Most Canadian schools (73%) do not have a policy to support active transportation to and from school among students. Of those schools that do have a policy, approximately half have written policies and half have policies that are otherwise understood. Elementary schools are more likely to have a policy to support active transportation (28%) than are secondary schools (23%).

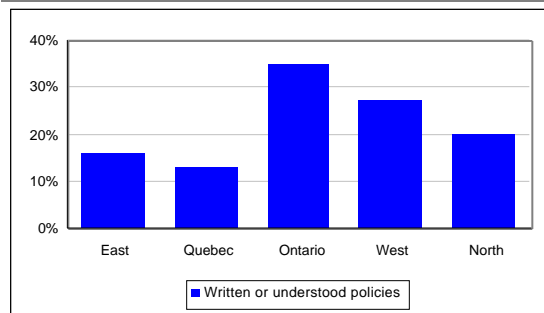
Region Schools in Ontario are more likely, and those in Quebec less likely, than the average Canadian school to have a policy to support active transportation among students.

School setting Rural schools are less likely than other schools to have a policy for active transportation.

Community size Schools in communities with a population of at least 75,000 are more likely than smaller communities to have a policy that supports active transportation.

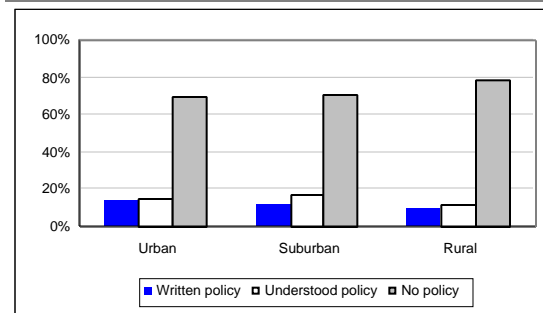
Implications One goal in the Healthy People 2010 report in the United States is to increase the amount of trips children and adolescents make walking and bicycling.²² To promote active modes of transportation, schools could use existing resources, information sources, and programs, such as Go-for-Green’s (a national organization) Active and Safe Routes to School program.²⁴ Schools could work in conjunction with communities to ensure the development and enforcement of safe and maintained sidewalks, paths, trails, and crosswalks. Schools could also assist parents and groups to organize adult “escorts” of children to school to overcome safety concerns.²⁵

**SUPPORT FOR ACTIVE COMMUTING
by region**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

**SUPPORT FOR ACTIVE COMMUTING
by school setting**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

Policy to provide daily physical education

2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools

	Policies to provide daily physical education to all students:		
	Written	Understood	None
OVERALL	36%	19%	46%
Elementary	37	20	43
Secondary	35	16	49
REGION			
East	36	13	51
Newfoundland	31	–	58
Prince Edward Island	–	–	69
Nova Scotia	32	18	50
New Brunswick	47	–	43
Quebec	32	7	61
Ontario	40	20	40
West	34	24	41
Manitoba	42	23	35
Saskatchewan	49	27	24
Alberta	31	24	45
British Columbia	26	24	49
North	47	–	–
STUDENT POPULATION SIZE			
0–199	37	23	39
200–499	36	19	45
500–999	35	15	51
1,000	35	14	50
SCHOOL SETTING			
Urban	38	16	45
Suburban	34	21	46
Rural	36	20	45
SCHOOL TYPE			
Public	35	19	47
Other	40	20	40
ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME			
More lower income	34	18	48
Even mix	36	22	43
More higher income	38	17	44
LANGUAGE			
English	36	22	42
French	36	6	57
Both	32	17	51

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.

Policy to hire qualified personnel

2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools

	Policy to hire qualified personnel:		
	Written	Understood	None
OVERALL	46%	28%	26%
Elementary	42	27	32
Secondary	53	32	15
REGION			
East	56	27	17
Newfoundland	64	22	–
Prince Edward Island	51	–	–
Nova Scotia	59	26	15
New Brunswick	45	31	24
Quebec	85	12	–
Ontario	38	26	36
West	29	39	31
Manitoba	34	49	18
Saskatchewan	25	44	31
Alberta	26	42	32
British Columbia	32	31	37
North	–	–	–
STUDENT POPULATION SIZE			
0–199	39	25	35
200–499	41	30	29
500–999	55	29	16
1,000	71	25	–
SCHOOL SETTING			
Urban	51	26	23
Suburban	45	30	25
Rural	42	29	29
SCHOOL TYPE			
Public	45	29	26
Other	43	27	30
ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME			
More lower income	46	27	28
Even mix	42	31	27
More higher income	50	28	22
LANGUAGE			
English	36	32	32
French	82	11	7
Both	40	37	24

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.

Policy to provide a broad range of physical activities

2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools

	Policy to provide a range of physical activities:		
	Written	Understood	None
OVERALL	51%	35%	15%
Elementary	52	35	13
Secondary	49	35	16
REGION			
East	51	35	15
Newfoundland	48	42	–
Prince Edward Island	–	–	–
Nova Scotia	53	33	14
New Brunswick	51	30	20
Quebec	32	30	38
Ontario	54	37	10
West	57	34	9
Manitoba	50	43	7
Saskatchewan	55	38	–
Alberta	64	30	6
British Columbia	54	33	13
North	–	–	–
STUDENT POPULATION SIZE			
0–199	47	39	14
200–499	53	34	14
500–999	52	32	16
1,000	45	36	19
SCHOOL SETTING			
Urban	52	33	15
Suburban	53	34	13
Rural	49	35	16
SCHOOL TYPE			
Public	52	35	13
Other	49	33	18
ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME			
More lower income	49	35	16
Even mix	50	35	15
More higher income	53	35	12
LANGUAGE			
English	55	36	9
French	31	26	42
Both	52	39	9

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.

Policy for funding of equipment

2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools

	Policy to ensure ongoing funding of equipment:		
	Written	Understood	None
OVERALL	27%	40%	33%
Elementary	27	40	33
Secondary	26	42	32
REGION			
East	23	35	42
Newfoundland	24	34	41
Prince Edward Island	–	–	–
Nova Scotia	19	32	50
New Brunswick	28	38	33
Quebec	26	32	41
Ontario	28	40	32
West	28	46	26
Manitoba	31	46	23
Saskatchewan	37	52	–
Alberta	23	43	34
British Columbia	25	46	28
North	–	–	–
STUDENT POPULATION SIZE			
0–199	24	42	33
200–499	27	40	33
500–999	29	38	32
1,000	27	41	32
SCHOOL SETTING			
Urban	30	36	34
Suburban	29	44	27
Rural	24	41	36
SCHOOL TYPE			
Public	26	39	34
Other	29	45	26
ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME			
More lower income	24	38	37
Even mix	30	41	30
More higher income	30	43	27
LANGUAGE			
English	27	43	30
French	28	29	44
Both	26	44	30

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.

Policies that support active commuting

2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools

	Availability of policies supporting active commuting:		
	Written	Understood	None
OVERALL	12%	15%	73%
Elementary	12	16	72
Secondary	12	11	77
REGION			
East	9	9	82
Newfoundland	–	–	88
Prince Edward Island	–	–	72
Nova Scotia	–	–	81
New Brunswick	–	–	79
Quebec	–	–	87
Ontario	18	18	65
West	11	17	73
Manitoba	7	13	80
Saskatchewan	–	21	64
Alberta	13	12	75
British Columbia	9	20	71
North	–	–	80
STUDENT POPULATION SIZE			
0–199	11	13	76
200–499	11	16	73
500–999	14	15	71
1,000	17	12	72
SCHOOL SETTING			
Urban	14	15	70
Suburban	12	17	71
Rural	10	12	78
SCHOOL TYPE			
Public	11	15	74
Other	16	15	68
ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME			
More lower income	12	14	74
Even mix	12	15	72
More higher income	13	15	72
LANGUAGE			
English	14	16	71
French	9	7	84
Both	8	19	72

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.