

Encouraging Active Schools

2015 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AT SCHOOL SURVEY



Instruction of physical education

The 2015 Opportunities for Physical Activity at School survey asked school administrators who teaches physical education at their school. Administrators were provided with several options and were able to select more than one individual given that the instruction may be varied in the school depending on grade or type of class. Overall, physical education is taught by:

- a physical education specialist in 74% of schools;
- a classroom teacher in 58% of schools;
- a teacher with at least one elective credit in physical education in 44% of schools;
- a principal or vice-principal in 14% of schools; and
- a volunteer in 7% of schools.

Region

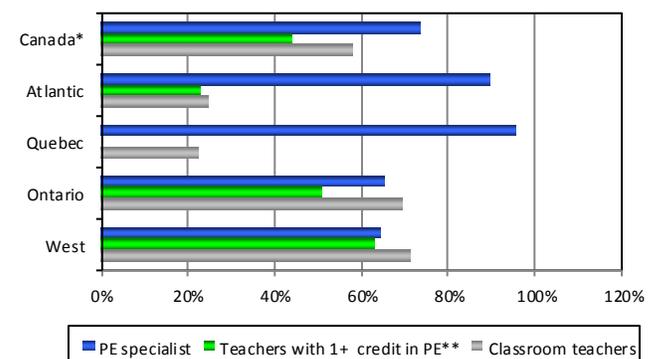
Compared to the national average, schools in the West are more likely to use a principal, vice-principal, or a teacher with at least one elective credit in physical education to teach physical education. Conversely, a lower proportion of schools in the Atlantic use a teacher with at least one elective credit in physical education for instruction. Schools in the Atlantic and Quebec are more likely, whereas those in Ontario and the West are less likely to use a physical education specialist compared to the national average. The opposite relationship is true regarding the use of a classroom teacher; schools in the Atlantic and Quebec are less likely, whereas those in Ontario and the West are more likely to use a classroom teacher to teach physical education.

School characteristics

Middle, secondary, and a combination of middle and secondary schools are more likely than the average to use a physical education specialist, whereas schools with a combination of elementary and middle grades are less likely to do so. Relatively fewer elementary schools and schools with a combination of middle and secondary grades indicate that they use a teacher with at least one elective credit in physical education compared to the national average, whereas relatively more middle schools and schools with a combination

FIGURE 1

Instruction in physical education by region



Opportunities for Physical Activity at School Survey, 2015, CFLRI

*Canadian total includes data from school in the North. Sample size limits individual release of data.

**Sample size limits individual release of data. PE=Physical education

of elementary and middle grades report this. Schools with a combination of elementary and middle grades are more likely than the average to use classroom teachers to teach physical education, whereas schools with a combination of middle and secondary grades are less likely to use classroom teachers.

Schools with the smallest student populations (lowest quartile, less than 160 students) are more likely than large schools (third quartile, 285 to 459 students) to use a principal or vice-principal to teach physical education. Schools with the largest student population (460 students or more) are least likely to use a classroom teacher to teach physical education. The use of physical education specialists in schools generally increases with increasing student population size.

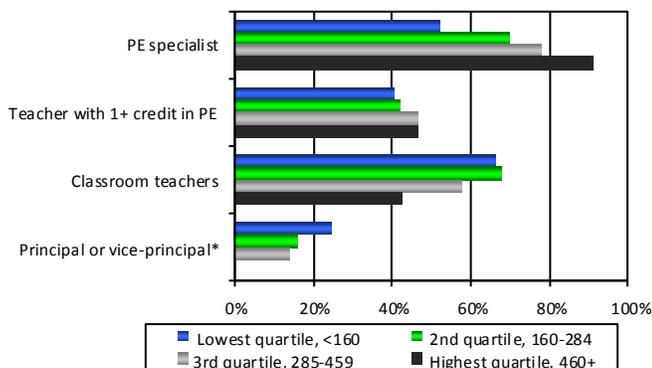
Community characteristics

A greater proportion of schools in the smallest communities (less than 1,000 residents) use a principal or vice-principal to teach physical education compared to schools in slightly larger communities (between 1,000 and 74,999 residents), and are

also more likely than the average to indicate that they use classroom teachers to teach physical education. On the contrary, schools in the smallest communities and rural schools are least likely and are less likely than suburban schools, respectively, to use a physical education specialist. A greater proportion of rural schools compared to suburban, inner city, or urban schools utilize a principal or vice principal to teach physical education.

FIGURE 2

Instruction in physical education by student population size



Opportunities for Physical Activity at School Survey, 2015, CFLRI
*Sample size limits individual release of data. PE=Physical education

Frequency of instruction of physical education

The survey also asked the 74% of schools that use a physical education specialist about the proportion of students who receive instruction, as well as the frequency of instruction from this specialist. Of these schools, 16% of schools say that less than half of students receive physical education directly from a physical education specialist, 19% report that between 50% to 90% of students do, whereas 65% say that the majority (90% or higher) of students receive instruction from a specialist.

In addition, schools were asked how often a typical student receives physical education instruction from a physical education specialist. Of schools that use a specialist,

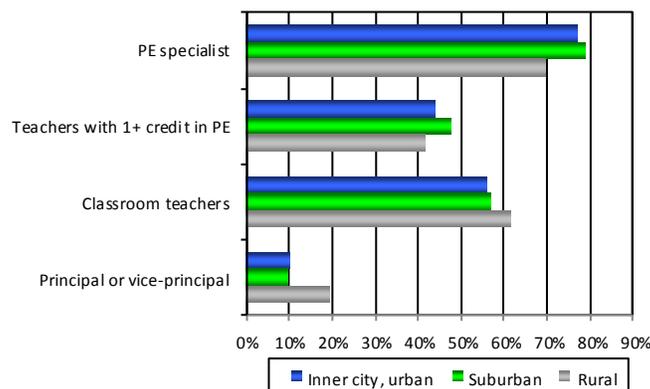
- 6% of schools state that a typical student receives instruction less than once a week;
- 45% of schools provide students with instruction between 1 to 2 times a week;
- 27% of schools provide instruction 3 to 4 times a week;
- 22% of schools provide students with instruction in physical education from a physical education specialist on a daily basis.

Region

Compared to the national average, a higher proportion of schools in the Atlantic or Quebec state that the majority (90% or more) of their students receive physical education from a specialist, whereas a lower proportion of those in Ontario and the West report this.

FIGURE 3

Instruction in physical education by community type



Opportunities for Physical Activity at School Survey, 2015, CFLRI PE= Physical education

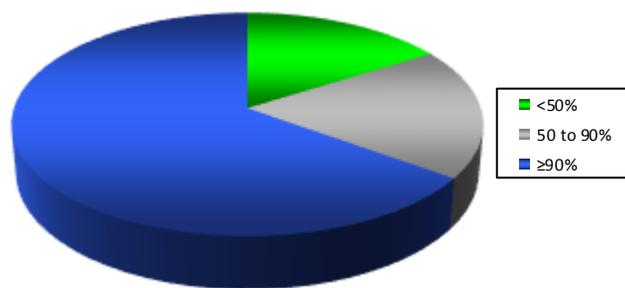
Schools in Quebec are more likely to provide students with physical education with a specialist 1 to 2 times per week, whereas schools in Ontario and the West are less likely to report this. Schools in the Atlantic and the West are more likely to indicate that instruction is received 3 to 4 times a week. Schools in Ontario, however, are more likely to indicate that students take physical education with a specialist on a daily basis.

School Characteristics

The largest schools (highest quartile, 460 or more students) are more likely to provide students with daily instruction in physical education from a specialist compared to some smaller schools (second and third quartile, 160 to 459 students). Although there is a relationship between grade level and the proportion of students receiving physical education from a specialist, the relationship is not clear. In general, secondary schools are most likely to provide physical education instruction by a specialist on a daily basis. Middle schools are more likely to indicate that students receive physical education from a specialist 3 to 4 times a week, whereas elementary schools are more likely to indicate 1 to 2 times a week compared to the average.

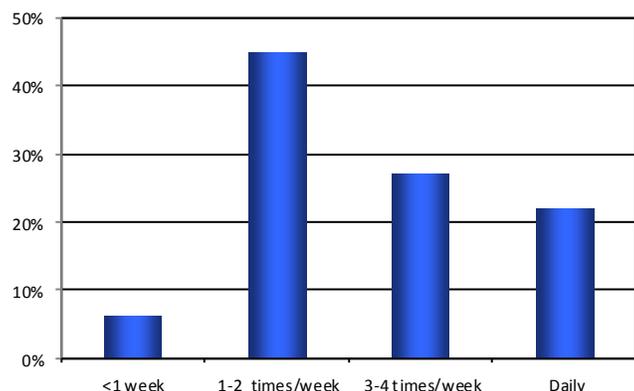
FIGURE 4

Proportion of students receiving physical education from a specialist



Opportunities for Physical Activity at School Survey, 2015, CFLRI

FIGURE 5
Frequency of receiving physical education from a specialist

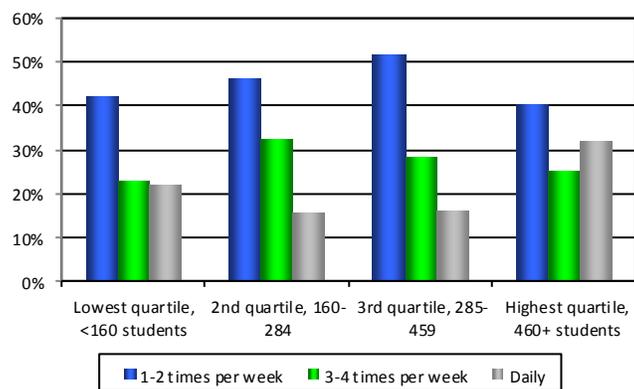


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Community Characteristics

Schools in medium to large communities (5,000 to 299,999 residents) are more likely to provide physical education instruction by a specialist 1 to 2 times a week compared to those in the smallest communities. Urban schools are also more likely to provide instruction 1 to 2 times a week compared to rural schools.

FIGURE 6
Frequency of receiving physical education from a specialist by student population size



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