Physical Education Rationale

According to the Center for Disease Control, “about 14% of young people report no recent physical activity, nearly half of American youths aged 12-21 years are not vigorously active on a regular basis, and participation in all types of physical activity declines strikingly as age or grade in school increases,” (CDC, online). It is a known fact that we are seeing more and more health problems with our children including: obesity, diabetes, ulcers, cancer, chronic illness, and heart conditions. Physical Activity is a proven way to decrease the symptoms of the above illnesses. Research has proven that:

1. “At least one-third of all cancers are attributable to poor diet, physical inactivity, and overweight. Thus, if our goal of reducing cancer incidence by 25% in the United States by 2015 is to be reached, cancer prevention efforts must include strong programs for healthy eating and physical activity. Such programs will also help to reduce the incidence of many other chronic diseases.” (CDC, online)

2. “Regular physical activity substantially reduces the risk of dying of coronary heart disease, the nation's leading cause of death, and decreases the risk for colon cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure. It also helps to control weight; contributes to healthy bones, muscles, and joints; reduces falls among the elderly; helps to relieve the pain of arthritis; reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression; and is associated with fewer hospitalizations, physician visits, and medications. Moreover, physical activity need not be strenuous to be beneficial; people of all
ages benefit from moderate physical activity, such as 30 minutes of brisk walking five or more times a week” (CDC, online)

3. “Physical activity should be part of a comprehensive weight loss therapy and weight control program because it: (1) modestly contributes to weight loss in overweight and obese adults, (2) may decrease abdominal fat, (3) increases cardiorespiratory fitness, and (4) may help with maintenance of weight loss” (National Heart, Lung, and Blood, Institute, Online).

4. “The conclusions are striking: regular physical activity can reduce girls' risk of many of the chronic diseases of adulthood; female athletes do better academically and have lower school drop-out rates than their nonathletic counterparts; and, regular physical activity can enhance girls' mental health, reducing symptoms of stress and depression and improving self-esteem” (President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, online).

5. “Poor diet and physical inactivity lead to 300,000 deaths each year—second only to tobacco use. People who are overweight or obese increase their risk for heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis-related disabilities, and some cancers. Not getting an adequate amount of exercise is associated with needing more medication, visiting a physician more often, and being hospitalized more often” (HP 2010 and CDC, online)

As you can see, Physical Education is highly needed in order to stop or decline many diseases. Physical Education is the only discipline that fully meets the physical activity needs of youth, therefore should be held as a mandatory part of the educational system.