

Encouraging Active Schools

2015 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AT SCHOOL SURVEY



Barriers and supports for physical activity within the school

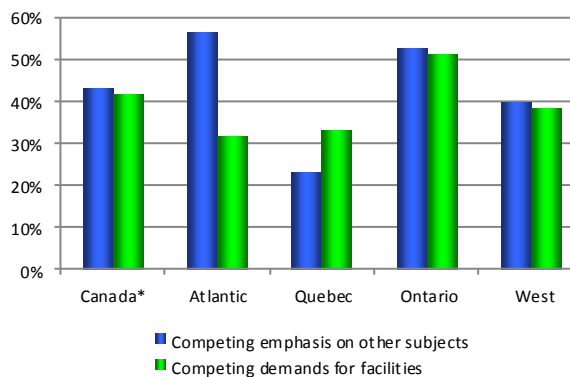
The 2015 Opportunities for Physical Activity at School Survey was conducted by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. The survey asked school administrators to rate certain perceived barriers and supports which can potentially affect physical education and physical activity opportunities in the school. Except when describing the overall statistics which publishes the combined two lowest ratings of a scale (representing not very much or at all) and combined two highest ratings (representing quite a bit or very much), only the highest ratings which signify an important or significant barrier or support are described when looking at the relationships to school and community characteristics.

Barriers to physical education and activity

School administrators were asked to rate several factors that could potentially *negatively* affect physical education or activity opportunities, including those related to emphasis, resources, training, and social support. The most frequently cited barrier to physical education and activity among those asked includes competing emphasis on other subjects (43% of school administrators felt that this was a considerable barrier), whereas few schools cited negative attitudes and a lack of support as key barriers. Ratings are summarized in Table 1.

Compared to the average, schools located in the Atlantic and Ontario are more likely to report competing emphasis on other subjects as a significant factor affecting physical education or activity opportunities, whereas those located in Quebec are less likely to indicate this. Similarly, schools located in Ontario are more likely to say that competing demands for facilities are a significant factor, whereas those in Quebec are less likely to report this when compared to the average.

FIGURE 1
Significant barriers to physical education and activity by region



*sample size limits individual release of data in the North

Opportunities for Physical Activity at School Survey, 2015, CFLRI

TABLE 1

Ratings of barriers to physical education or activity at school

		% of schools rating factors as affecting opportunities	
		Not very much or at all	Quite a bit or very much
Emphasis or resources	Competing emphasis on other subjects	33%	43%
	Competing demands for facilities	38%	42%
	Lack of equipment and facilities	54%	22%
	Lack of qualified coaches or trained staff	54%	22%
Attitudes (negative) and lack of support	From teachers	63%	15%
	From students	65%	13%
	From parents	67%	12%
	Cancelling physical education as a disciplinary measure	76%	9%

Opportunities for Physical Activity at School Survey, 2015, CFLRI



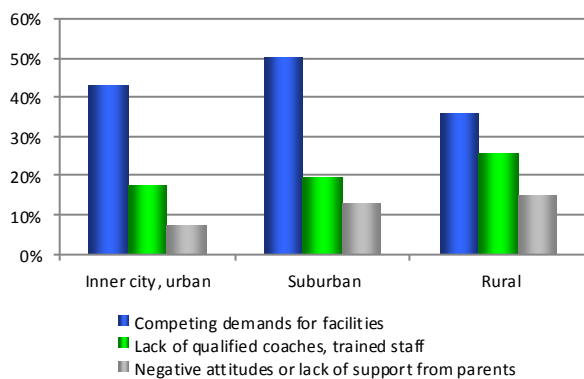
School characteristics

A greater proportion of the largest populated schools say that competing emphasis on other subjects or competing demands for facilities are significant barriers affecting physical education or activity opportunities compared to the smallest populated schools. Compared to the national average, relatively fewer comprehensive schools cite competing demands for facilities as a significant barrier. Secondary schools are more likely than the average to cite negative attitudes and a lack of support from students as a significant barrier.

Community characteristics

Relatively more schools located in larger communities indicate that competing demands for facilities is a significant barrier affecting physical education or activity compared to schools in the smallest communities. Schools located in a suburban environment are more likely than those located in rural settings to cite competing demands for facilities, whereas relatively more schools located in rural settings cite a lack of qualified coaches or trained staff and negative attitudes or a lack of support from parents as key barriers compared to schools situated in an urban or inner city environment.

FIGURE 2
Significant barriers to physical education and activity by school setting



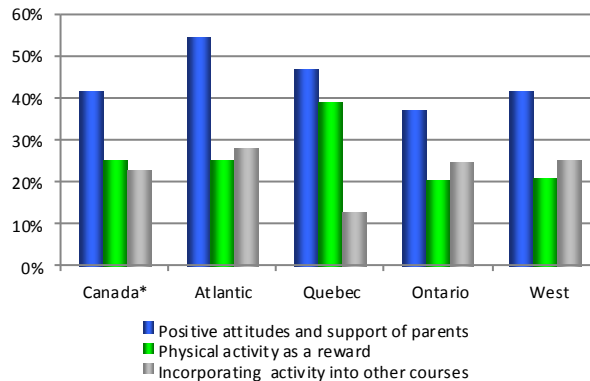
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Supports for physical education and physical activity

School administrators were also asked to rate several factors that could potentially *positively* affect physical education or activity opportunities. The most frequently cited supports to physical education and activity among those asked includes the positive attitudes and support of both teachers (59%) and students (58%), followed by parents (42%). In addition, roughly one-quarter of schools cite the use of physical activity as a reward and incorporating physical activity into other coursework in innovative ways as important supports. These results are summarized in Table 2.

Compared to the average, schools located in the Atlantic are more likely to report that positive attitudes and support from parents are important factors which affect physical education or activity opportunities. Administrators located in Quebec schools are more likely to say that using physical activity as a reward is a significant factor, yet are less likely to say that incorporating physical activity into other coursework is a significant factor affecting physical education and activity in their schools.

FIGURE 3
Significant supports for physical education and activity by region



*sample size limits individual release of data in the North.

Opportunities for Physical Activity at School Survey, 2015, CFLRI

TABLE 2
Ratings of supports for physical education or activity at school

		% of schools rating factors as affecting opportunities	
		Not very much or at all	Quite a bit or very much
Emphasis	Incorporating physical activity into other coursework in innovative ways	48%	23%
Positive attitudes and support	From teachers	17%	59%
	From students	19%	58%
	From parents	32%	42%
	Physical activity as a reward	48%	25%

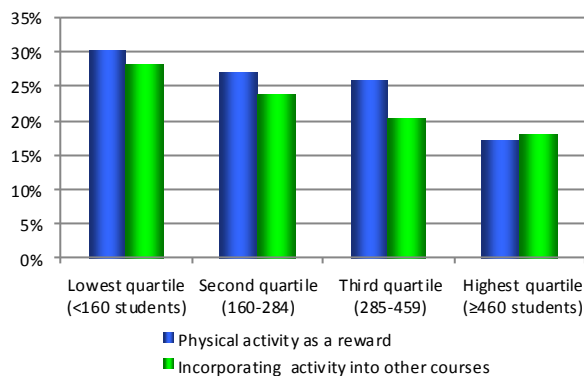
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School characteristics

The largest populated schools are least likely to say that using physical activity as a reward is an important factor affecting physical education or activity opportunities. Similarly, the smallest populated schools are more likely than the most populated schools to report that incorporating physical activity into other coursework in innovative ways is an important factor. Compared to the national average, a greater proportion of elementary schools say that using physical activity as a reward is an important factor affecting physical education and activity opportunities.

FIGURE 4

Significant supports for physical education and activity by student population size



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Community characteristics

There are no significant relationships between high ratings of supports for physical education and activity with community characteristics.

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