

# Encouraging Active Schools

2015 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AT SCHOOL SURVEY



## School policies supporting physical activity and sport

The 2015 Opportunities for Physical Activity at School survey asks school administrators about the availability of specific policies which support physical activity and sport programs in the school environment. Generally speaking, the majority of schools (59% and higher) implement these types of supportive policies to some extent (either fully or partially implement), with two exceptions citing lower proportions. Roughly one-quarter of schools have a policy ensuring National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) training for coaches involved in physical activity at school, and a policy related to active transportation to and from school, such as a “Walking school bus” program. See Table 1 for a summary of the availability of policies in Canadian schools. This bulletin summarizes the findings for each of these policies.

### Code of conduct

Eight in ten schools have a policy regarding the implementation of a code of conduct for those involved in school-related physical activity and sport. Of these, 59% of schools have a fully implemented policy, 21% have a partially implemented policy, and the remaining 20% of schools have no policy in this regard.

### Region

Compared to the average, relatively fewer schools in Quebec have a policy (in particular a fully implemented policy) which incorporates a code of conduct to those involved in physical activity and sport at the school, and as such, schools in this province are more likely to have no policy in this regard. On the contrary, schools located in Ontario are more likely to have a fully implemented policy on this topic.

TABLE 1

Proportion of schools implementing policies supporting school physical activity and sport

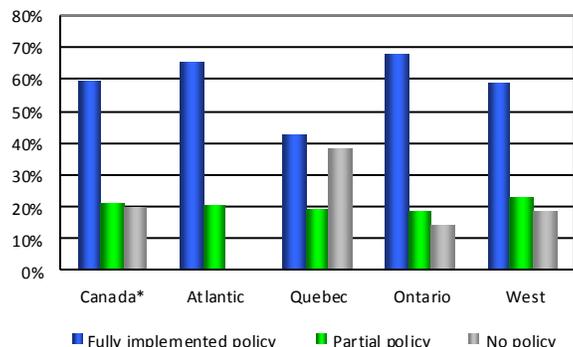
Policy description	School has policy in general	Fully implemented	Partially implemented	No Policy
Ensure codes of conduct in school-related PA or sport	80%	59%	21%	20%
Ensure age- and stage-appropriate development PA and sport	77%	54%	23%	23%
Provide range of PA	73%	54%	19%	27%
Provide daily PE to all students	69%	48%	21%	31%
Provide mandated daily PA to all students	69%	46%	23%	31%
Hire teachers with qualifications teaching PE and PA	62%	42%	20%	38%
Provide funding for adequate equipment	59%	35%	24%	41%
Ensure NCCP for coaches	28%	11%	17%	72%
Active transportation to and from school	25%	10%	15%	75%

PA = Physical activity; PE = Physical education; NCCP = National Coaching Certification Program

Opportunities for Physical Activity at School Survey, 2015

FIGURE 1

Policies regarding code of conduct in school-related physical activity and sport by region



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

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**School characteristics**

Schools with the largest student populations are more likely than schools on average to have general policy implementing a code of conduct for those involved in physical activity and sport at the school, and therefore, are less likely to have no policy for this. Relatively fewer elementary schools have a policy in general compared to the average, whereas a greater proportion of secondary schools have a policy in this regard.

Age- and stage-appropriate developmental physical activity and sport programs

The majority of schools (77%, of which 54% have a fully implemented policy and 23% have a partially implemented policy) indicate that they have some sort of policy in place which ensures age- and stage-appropriate, developmental physical activity and sport programs.

**Region**

There are no significant regional differences with respect to the provision of appropriate developmental programs based on age and stage of the participant.

**School characteristics**

Schools consisting of mainly elementary grades are more likely than the average to have a fully implemented policy pertaining to the provision of age- and stage-appropriate developmental programming related to physical activity and sport.

Supporting opportunities

The majority of schools (73%) have a general policy in place regarding the provision of a range of physical activities (for example, competitive and non-competitive, skill development for lifelong participation), whereas the remaining 27% do not have a policy. Among schools that do, 54% have a fully implemented policy and 19% have a partially implemented policy.

Slightly fewer (59%) schools have a policy of some sort ensuring ongoing funding for adequate equipment to meet students’ needs (35% have a fully implemented policy and 24% have a partially implemented policy), where 41% do not have a policy.

**Region**

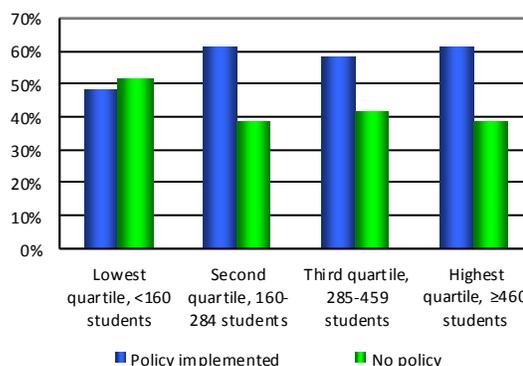
Relatively fewer schools in Quebec have a policy regarding the provision of a range of physical activities (in particular a fully implemented policy), and as a consequence are more likely to have no policy compared to the average Canadian school.

**School characteristics**

Schools with the smallest population sizes are less likely to have a policy in general ensuring ongoing funding for adequate equipment to meet students’ needs compared to the largest schools and the average, and consequently are more likely to have no policy. Rural schools are less likely than suburban schools to have a fully implemented policy regarding ongoing funding for adequate equipment.

FIGURE 2

Policy for ensuring ongoing funding by student population, 2015



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### Community characteristics

A greater proportion of schools in the largest communities have a policy in general for ensuring adequate funding of equipment to meet the needs of students compared to schools in the smallest communities.

#### Provision of daily physical education

Roughly three in ten schools (31%) *do not* have a policy related to the provision of daily physical activity to students, whereas 69% of schools have a policy in general. Among this 69%, 48% of schools have a fully implemented policy and 21% have a partially implemented policy.

### Region

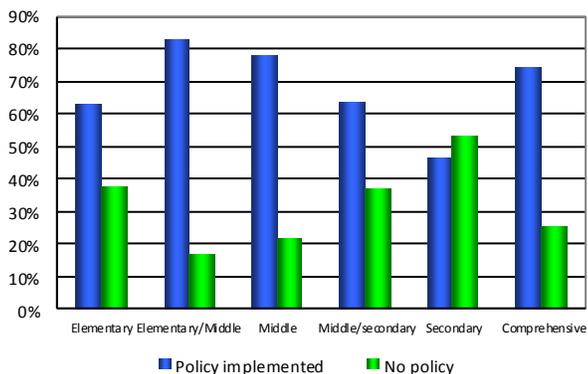
Compared to the national average, relatively fewer schools in the Atlantic have a fully implemented policy which provides daily physical education, however, relatively more schools in this region have partially implemented policy. Relatively fewer schools in Quebec have policies in this regard, whereas schools in the West are more likely to have a policy (in particular, a fully implemented policy).

### School characteristics

Schools with the largest student population sizes are less likely to have fully implemented policies related to the provision of daily physical education compared to the national average. Fewer secondary schools have a policy in general regarding the provision of daily physical education, and in particular, a fully implemented policy. On the contrary, schools consisting of a combination of elementary and middle grades are generally more likely to have a policy, and in particular a fully implemented policy.

FIGURE 3

Policy for daily physical education by school type, 2015



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### Community characteristics

Compared to the average school, schools in the smallest communities are more likely to have a fully implemented policy related to the provision of daily physical education.

#### Provide mandated daily physical activity

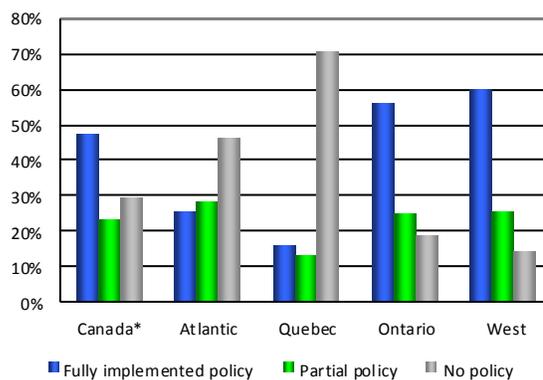
The majority of schools (69%) have a policy regarding the provision of mandated daily physical activity, however, 31% of schools do not have a policy. Of those who have a policy, 46% have a fully implemented policy and 23% have a partially implemented policy.

### Region

Compared to the national average, relatively fewer schools located in the Atlantic and Quebec have a policy in general regarding the provision of mandated daily physical activity, and in particular, a fully implemented policy. Schools in Quebec are less likely to have a partially implemented policy, whereas those in the Atlantic and Quebec are more likely to have no policy. Schools in Ontario and the West are more likely to have a policy (fully implemented policy), yet are less likely to have no policy.

FIGURE 4

Policy for mandated physical activity by region, 2015



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

Opportunities for Physical Activity at School Survey, 2015

### School characteristics

Relatively fewer secondary schools or schools incorporating both middle and secondary grades have a fully implemented policy regarding the provision of mandated daily physical activity, and in fact, are more likely to have no policy compared to the average. On the contrary, schools with a combination of elementary and middle grades are more likely to have a fully implemented policy with respect to mandated daily physical activity.

### Community characteristics

Compared to the average, a lower proportion of schools in the small communities (with 1,000 to 4,999 residents) have a fully implemented policy related to the provision of mandated daily physical activity, whereas schools in slightly larger communities (with between 5,000 and 9,999 residents) are more likely to have no policy in this regard.

#### Ensuring qualified personnel

The majority of schools have a general policy ensuring the hiring of teachers who have university qualifications for teaching physical education or physical activity (62% of schools have a policy, of which 42% have a fully implemented policy and 20% have a partially implemented policy), but only 28% of schools have a policy ensuring that coaches have National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) qualifications (11% have a fully implemented policy and 17% have a partially implemented policy).

### Region

Compared to the average Canadian school, relatively more schools located in Atlantic and Quebec have policy in general related to the hiring of qualified teachers for teaching physical education or activity, and in particular, a fully implemented policy. Relatively fewer schools in Ontario and the West have a policy (fully implemented policy in particular) in this regard. Schools in the Atlantic and Quebec are more likely to have a policy (especially a fully implemented policy) for ensuring NCCP qualifications for coaches, whereas schools in Ontario are less likely to have a policy in general.

### School characteristics

Schools with the largest student population sizes are more likely to have a policy in general related to the hiring of qualified teachers for teaching physical education or activity. In *combination* with schools incorporating middle grades, or else schools consisting of primarily secondary grades are more likely to have a policy in general regarding the hiring of qualified teachers.

Fewer schools with a combination of elementary and middle grades have a general policy ensuring NCCP qualifications for coaches compared to schools on average, and as expected, are more likely to have no policy. On the contrary, the schools with a combination of middle and secondary grades are more likely to have policy in general regarding coaches' qualifications, and are less likely to have no policy. Comprehensive schools spanning all grades are more likely to have a policy in general regarding coaches' qualifications.

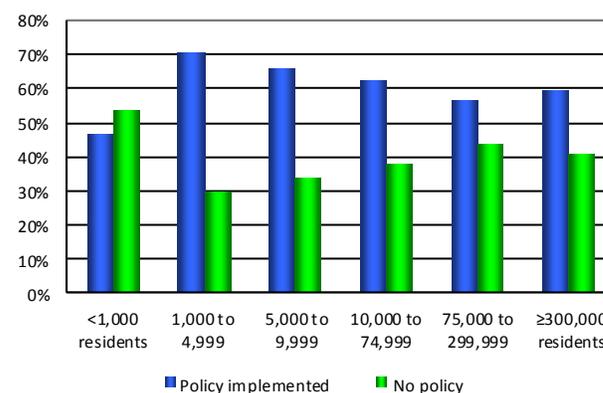
### Community characteristics

Compared to the average, schools located in the smallest communities are less likely to have policy in general regarding the hiring of qualified teachers (a fully implemented policy in particular) and are more likely to have no policy in this regard.

On the other hand, a greater proportion of schools in smaller communities (between 1,000 to 4,999 residents) have a policy in general to hire qualified teachers and to ensure NCCP qualifications for coaches compared to the average, whereas fewer schools in this size of community do not have policies in these regards.

FIGURE 5

Policy to hire qualified personnel by community size, 2015



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### Active transportation

The majority of schools (75%) do not have a policy in place regarding the provision of opportunities for active transportation of students to and from school (such as the "walking school bus"), whereas only 25% have a policy in general. Of this 25%, 10% have a fully implemented policy and the remaining 15% have a partially implemented policy.

### Region

There are no significant regional differences with respect to the availability of policies related to the active transportation of students to and from school, compared to the national average.

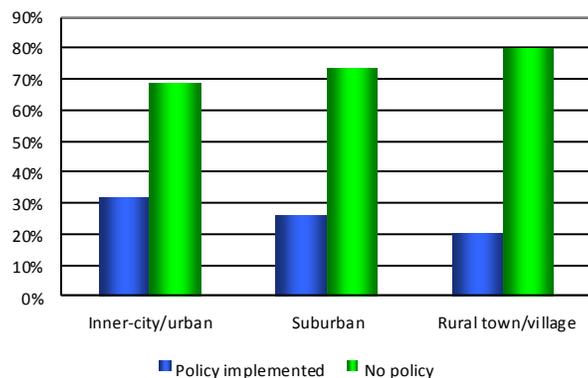
### School characteristics

There are no significant differences in school characteristics between schools providing policies related to active transportation of students and those who do not.

**Community characteristics**

A greater proportion of schools in the largest communities (300,000 or more residents) report a general policy for active transportation compared to those located in the smallest communities (<1,000 residents). Relatively more schools located in the inner city or urban schools have a policy in general, and in particular a fully implemented policy pertaining to active transportation of students compared to those located in rural environments.

**FIGURE 6**  
Policy for active transportation by type of community, 2015



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