

Encouraging Active Schools

2015 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AT SCHOOL SURVEY



On-site school facilities supporting physical activity and sport

The 2015 Opportunities for Physical Activity at School Survey explores the availability of facilities which support physical activity and sport in the school environment. In addition, the findings presented will also look at the availability of these facilities during school hours and during the after school hour time period. This bulletin will describe the variability of supportive infrastructure in Canadian schools depending on the scale of the facility and by key demographic considerations, such as student population size, location, and type of school.

On-site school facilities

Virtually all schools have some type of equipment for physical activity (97%), as well as gymnasiums (94%). The majority of schools (between 70% and 90% of schools) have playing fields, green spaces and play areas, paved areas, outdoor basketball hoops, and areas with playground equipment. Roughly half of schools have baseball diamonds and other rooms which can be used to support physical activity. A minority of schools (30% or less) have more costly facilities such as fitness centres, running tracks, skating rinks, tennis courts, dance studios, and swimming pools. Table 1 summarizes the availability of these facilities.

TABLE 1

Availability of facilities

Type of activity	% of schools indicating availability, <i>On-site</i>
Equipment for physical activity	97%
Gymnasium	94%
Playing fields	88%
Other green space or play area	88%
Paved area used for active games	80%
Outdoor basketball hoops	78%
Area with playground equipment	71%
Baseball diamond	55%
Other room which is used for PA	54%
Fitness centre, weight room	30%
Running track	23%
Skating rink	14%
Tennis Court	12%
Dance studio	10%
Swimming pool	5%

PA=Physical activity

Opportunities for Physical Activity at School Survey, 2015, CFLRI

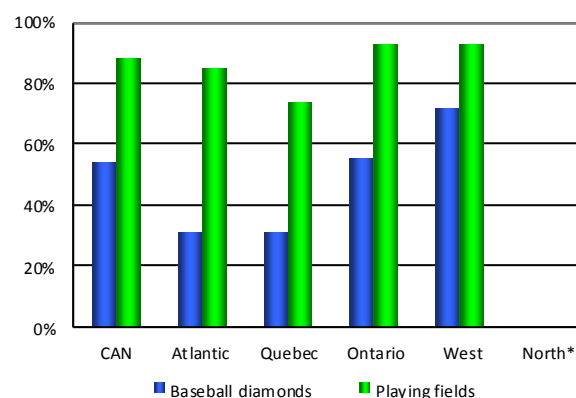
Region

Regional differences are noted with respect to availability of facilities available on school grounds (both during school and after school). Notably, compared to the national average:

- schools in the Atlantic are less likely to report the availability of baseball diamonds.
- a greater proportion of schools in Quebec cite the availability of dance studios and skating rinks, yet relatively fewer schools in Quebec cite the availability of playing fields and other green spaces or play areas, equipment for physical activity, and baseball diamonds.
- relatively fewer schools located in Ontario indicate the availability of skating rinks and areas with playground equipment, whilst a greater proportion of schools in this province cite the availability of playing fields.
- schools in the West are more likely to report having baseball diamonds, playing fields, areas with playground equipment, and bicycle racks available on school grounds.

FIGURE 1

Regional differences in on-site availability of facilities for physical activity



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

Opportunities for Physical Activity at School Survey, 2015, CFLRI



School characteristics

The availability of supportive facilities for physical activity and sport varies by school characteristics. Compared to schools with the smallest student populations, those with the largest population sizes are more likely to report having fitness centres or weight rooms, other rooms for physical activity, playing fields which can be used for physical activity and sport, running tracks, tennis courts, and gymnasiums.

On the contrary, schools with the largest population sizes are least likely (compared to schools with smaller populations) to report the availability of areas with playground equipment. The smallest and largest schools (in terms of student population size) are least likely to indicate that outdoor basketball hoops and paved areas are available. These findings for student population size may be due in part to the influence of school type. Indeed, the availability of facilities varied depending on the type of school (i.e. school grade level); these differences are highlighted in Table 2.

Availability of facilities in support of physical activity and sport generally do not differ by school board type, the exception being public schools are *more* likely than schools from 'other' boards to report the availability of gymnasiums.

Community characteristics

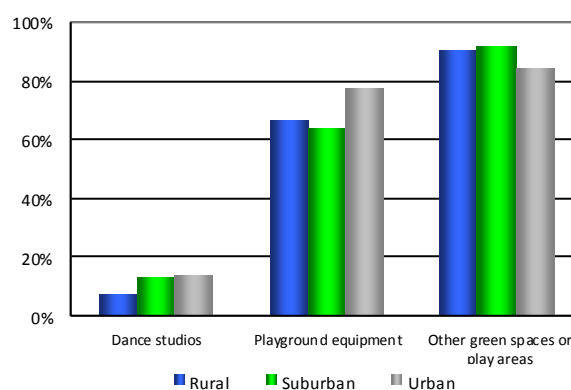
A higher proportion of schools in the smallest communities (<1,000 residents) indicate that areas with playground equipment and baseball diamonds are available on-site; they are, however, *less* likely than those in the largest communities (300,000 residents or more) to report the availability of other rooms which can be used for physical activity.

Schools in the smallest communities are least likely to report the availability of gymnasiums on-site. Schools in the largest communities are less likely than those in smaller communities to report the availability of skating rinks.

A lower proportion of schools in rural environments say that they have dance studios on-site compared to urban schools. Conversely, rural schools are *more* likely than urban and suburban schools to report having areas with playground equipment. Urban schools are less likely to report the availability of playing fields (compared to suburban schools), and other green space or play area (compared to suburban and rural schools).

FIGURE 2

Availability of on-site facilities for physical activity



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TABLE 2

Availability of facilities by school type

Grade level of school	Differences in availability of facilities	
	Less likely than the average	More likely than the average
Elementary exclusively (or in combination with middle grades)	Other rooms used for PA, skating rink, fitness centre/weight room, running track, tennis court	Playing fields, other green space or play area, baseball diamonds, outdoor basketball hoops, area with playground equipment, paved area for active games
Middle schools exclusively		Equipment used for PA, fitness centre/weight room
Secondary exclusively (or in combination with grades)	Other green space or play areas, baseball diamonds, outdoor basketball hoops, areas with playground equipment, paved areas for active games	Other rooms used for physical activity, dance studio, skating rink, fitness centre/weight room, running track
Comprehensive (grades K-12)	Gymnasium, playing fields	Skating rink, fitness centre/weight room, area with playground equipment

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