



A survey of physical education support services in Montana high schools
by Thomas Lynn Schumacher

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF SCIENCE
in Physical Education

Montana State University

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to survey the support services in physical education in small Montana high schools. Specifically this study attempted to identify: (1) what facilities were being used for physical education, (2) methods for organizing students into physical education classes, (3) budget for physical education programs, (4) supplies and equipment used for physical education programs, (5) support of administration toward physical education.

This study was delimited to high schools in Montana holding membership in the Montana High School Association for the 1976-1977 school year. It was further delimited by the enrollment of one hundred and fifty students or less per school.

Questionnaires were sent to 92 physical education instructors in Montana high schools. The questionnaire was completed and returned by 66 instructors, each representing one high school. Participation of physical education instructors in Montana for this study totaled 71.4 percent.

A questionnaire was designed and developed by the investigator to collect data needed for this study. Results from the questionnaire support the following conclusions: (1) the majority of the physical education instructors were young in age and had only a few years of teaching experience, (2) facilities in most schools supported activities such as track, football, basketball, softball, and baseball, (3) only a small number of schools had facilities for individual and leisure time activities, (4) most common method of organizing students into physical education classes was by the year in school, (5) budgets for the majority of the schools was between zero and two thousand dollars, (6) equipment for gymnastics was found in only a small number of schools, (7) the majority of schools have equipment that support team activities, (8) supplies for individual or recreation type activities such as dance, archery, shuffleboard, horseshoes, wrestling, golf, handball, squash, and swimming were not found in most schools, (9) the majority of the physical education instructors felt that the support of the administration toward physical education was average, above average, or excellent.

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Date August 3, 1977

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IN MONTANA HIGH SCHOOLS

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
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Approved:


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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to survey the support services in physical education in small Montana high schools. Specifically this study attempted to identify: (1) what facilities were being used for physical education, (2) methods for organizing students into physical education classes, (3) budget for physical education programs, (4) supplies and equipment used for physical education programs, (5) support of administration toward physical education.

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Chapter 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Physical education programs have been in existence for many years. They are an intergral part of any school curriculum. These programs have survived throughout the years because of their benefits to those who participate in them. A physically educated person is one who is concerned with his physical self and recognizes that a healthy, vigorous individual is much better able to sustain forces in his environment that life challenges. If a person has learned to move effectively and efficiently, that person should realize that his skills have prepared him for a lifetime of enjoyable movement experiences. He should also appreciate physical activity and express joy and satisfaction in movement experiences such as games, sports, dance and play.

The quality of physical education programs as been challenged for many years and most physical educators are concerned. Today physical education like the other subjects must show that it is worthy of its time and existence in the curriculum. Accountability is the work used by many taxpayers, shool boards and communities. Society is forever changing and if physical education is to help the student fit into that society, so the student can be productive and happy, then physical education must also change.

The traditional physical education curriculum has been oriented toward team sports. Team sports have their value and contribution to educating the student, but three years of softball, basketball, and football within the physical education program appears to be too much. Activities that involve fundamental movements such as running, jumping, throwing and catching are always interesting to students. When activities are taught that include these movements, the interest in physical education is high. Students are thirsty for effective instruction in tennis, bowling, golf, handball, swimming, modern dance, and other activities that include the fundamental movements. The "now" physical education strives to make activities more valuable and enjoyable for all students. Life time sports, freedom of choice, and student centered co-educational activities are all a part of the new physical education image.

Change occurs with everyone, with everything and everywhere. Before change can occur, it is necessary to evaluate the existing conditions and then determine what the conditions are to be in the future. Is there a need to change the quality of physical education programs in small Montana high schools? Before that question can be answered, it is necessary to identify the quality of physical education programs presently being offered to students in small high schools. The purpose of this study was to survey certain areas of support services in order to determine the present status of these

areas in physical education in small Montana high schools.

I. Statement of the Problem

The general problem of this study was to survey the support services in physical education in small Montana high schools.

Specific problems considered were:

1. To determine what facilities were being used for physical education.
2. To identify the methods for organizing students into physical education classes.
3. To discover what the budget was for the physical education programs.
4. To find out what supplies and equipment were being used for the physical education programs.
5. To discover the support of the administration toward physical education.

II. Definitions

Some of the following terms were defined by the investigator for the purpose of this study only and may not reflect the common everyday usage:

Survey: A survey is defined as to look over, to examine as to condition, situation or value, or to view comprehensively.¹

Support Services: Support services refers to areas in physical education which include facilities, student organization, budget, supplies and equipment, and administrative support. These areas give support to the physical education curriculum.

Small Montana High School: A small Montana high school will refer to a school that has a student enrollment of less than one hundred and fifty students.

Physical Education Program: Physical education program will be defined as a program that places emphasis on the learning or rules, strategies and skills in various activities through the medium of physical movement.

III. Delimitations of the Problem

This study was delimited to:

1. the school year 1976-77,
2. the responses solicited by a questionnaire designed and developed by the investigator,
3. the physical education programs for students in the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades, and
4. sixty six high schools which returned the questionnaire (Appendix A).

IV. Limitations of the Problem

The limitations to this study were:

1. the questions asked on the questionnaire,
2. the interpretation of the questions asked, and
3. the percent of schools that returned the questionnaire.

V. Justification

To the researcher's knowledge there has been no attempt to survey the support services of physical education programs in all of the small high schools in the State of Montana. However, other studies in other areas of physical education in this state, in other states and at the count level have been completed.^{2,3,4,5,6} Studies by Oxendine, Yarnell, Thomas, Coker, and Udem have proven to be valuable in helping formulate the guidelines for this survey.

"The world is changing more rapidly today than at any other time in history."⁷ Change is present in all places at all times. Society's values and traditions are being challenged today and education is finding itself in a period of transition and turmoil. The student of today is changing to meet the challenges of tomorrow. "The student during his teenage years must learn to manage the highly sophisticated skills and techniques necessary to function as a contributing member of our society."⁸

Physical education can help the student develop these highly sophisticated skills and techniques by challenging the student through human movement. "Physical education is the part of the

educational process which contributes to the mental, physical, social and emotional growth and development of each child through the medium of physical activity."⁹

Modern educational thought is now questioning the physical educational programs because very few of these programs have appreciable carry-over value into the lives of students after they leave school. Bucher indicated that:

"A study conducted by the Opinion Research Corporation of Princeton for the Presidents Council on Physical Fitness revealed startling findings concerning the extent of exercise by Americans 22 years of age or older. The survey was made in 360 communities throughout the country and presents an accurate picture of what adult participants do to promote their personal fitness. The survey indicated that most of respondents during their school years participated in team sports such as basketball, football, and baseball rather than lifetime sports such as golf, tennis and handball."¹⁰

For physical education to obtain a high status among the other disciplines, it must change to meet the needs of the students and society. It cannot remain stagnant and still be rewarding and beneficial to the students in our schools. "Much of the field of physical education and sports is out of step with the large majority of the younger generation, because the present rate of change is increasing so rapidly."¹¹

Daughtrey and Wood indicated that one of the five most pressing tasks that physical educators must strive for is: "The improvement

of facilities and programs of instruction at all levels to meet the ever changing needs and interests of students and adults."¹²

Before change can take place, the present status or condition must be revealed. It was felt that this study could aid in gaining a better understanding of the support areas which give support to the physical education programs in Montana high schools with small enrollments. By knowing and understanding the condition of the support services in physical education programs, it is possible to determine to a certain extent the types of physical education programs that exist in small Montana high schools. This study should be of interest to physical educators, teachers, administrators, school boards, and communities.

VI. Questions to be Answered

This study will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What are the facilities for the physical education program?
2. What methods are used for the organization of students into physical education classes?
3. What is the budget for the physical education program and how is it determined?
4. What supplies and equipment are available for conducting the physical education program.
5. What is the support of the administration toward physical

education?

VII. Population

The population of this study was the physical education instructors at 92 high schools located in the State of Montana. The schools in this study were selected by the number of students that were enrolled within the school. A school that had an enrollment of less than one hundred and fifty was selected for this study. Enrollment information for the schools was obtained from the Montana State Educational Information Guide. A pilot study which included twelve graduate students in physical education at Montana State University, was conducted to assist in improving the validity of the questionnaire. The responses from the twelve graduate students provided help to the researcher in eliminating any bias in the questionnaire and also in finding the average time for completion of the questionnaire. They also provided help in detecting unclear questions, directions and the omission of unnecessary words.

VIII. Data Collection

The data was obtained by a questionnaire designed and developed by the investigator (Appendix A). The questionnaire was designed to solicit the desired information for the following reasons:

1. it was impossible and impractical for the researcher to

personally interview 92 high school physical education teachers,

2. the questionnaire was the most rapid and efficient method of gathering the data, and
3. the questionnaire was constructed so data could be analyzed easily by the Sigma Seven computer located on the Montana State University campus.

The questionnaire in its final form (Appendix A) was mailed to the head of the physical education departments of the selected Montana high schools. A stamp, self-addressed envelope was enclosed for returning the questionnaire. A return of 64.3 percent was received from the first mailing. A letter of introduction was mailed along with the questionnaire (Appendix B).

After two weeks had elapsed for the return of the questionnaire, a second letter (Appendix C) was mailed to those who did not respond as a reminder to complete and return the questionnaire. The number of questionnaires received from the second mailing brought the total number of questionnaires returned to 68.4 percent.

After another two weeks had elapsed for the return of the questionnaire a third letter (Appendix D) was forwarded to the physical education instructors indicating a need for a return of the questionnaire. This was the final letter sent by the investigator to the participating instructors. The number of questionnaires received from

the third mailing brought the total number of questionnaires returned to 71.4 percent.

IX. Results of the Data

The data collected was tabulated, totaled, and percentages were computed. Coding and tabulation of the collected data was completed by hand by the investigator. The Sigma Seven computer at Montana State University was used for making computations. The data was then presented in tables under ten general background information sections and five major areas of support services for this study.

The data obtained from the questionnaire was then presented and analyzed in Chapter 3 according to ten general information areas, and the five major areas:

1. equipment,
2. methods of organizing students,
3. budget,
4. equipment and supplies, and
5. support of administration.

From the data obtained in the survey and with background information from the review of literature, a summary, conclusions and recommendations were made in the final chapter as how to improve the quality of physical education programs in small high schools in Montana.

Chapter 2

SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE

The discipline call physical education is found in the majority of the schools all over the United States. Physical education has many parts that make up its body of subject matter. Most people associate physical education with physical movement in which games and activities like basketball, softball, wrestling, volleyball, golf and tennis are learned. Physical education includes in most cases all of those activities and many more. The activities in the physical education program must be interesting and beneficial to the students. These activities that are a part of physical education must have organization and must have an initial starting point in the physical education program.

The starting point of an activity comes first from making sure that a facility is available to house the activity. Secondly there must be enough money in the budget to purchase the necessary equipment and supplies for the activity. When you have a facility and all the necessary equipment and supplies for the activity, then the activity must be made available to the students in the school.

Activities in a physical education program must be supported and maintained if they are to remain in the physical education curriculum. Support of the activities comes from the administration,

the students, the budget, the facilities, the equipment, and the supplies. These support services of the physical education program are often hidden in the maze of educational activities of any school. The quality of a physical education program will often depend on one part or all of the support services of a physical education program. If the quality of physical education programs is to improve, then a periodic investigation of the support services of physical education would seem necessary. In most cases the most practical method used for investigative purposes is the survey.

Many studies have been completed concerning the surveying of physical education programs.^{2,3,4,5,6} Studies have been completed at the college level, secondary school level and elementary school level. The majority of the studies were made on the physical education programs at the college level and at the secondary school level.^{2,3,4,5} There was one study completed at the elementary level in Montana.⁶ The majority of the studies completed at the secondary school level were completed in states other than Montana. To the researcher's knowledge this study of the support services area within physical education was the first to be completed at the high school level in the State of Montana.

Oxendine Study

Oxendine² completed a survey that was designed to describe the current status and practices of general instruction programs of physical education in four-year colleges and universities. A four page questionnaire dealing with course offerings, requirements, credits, evaluation practices and trends was prepared. The questionnaire was sent to the chairmen of physical education departments in 1,143 four year colleges and universities. Of the 1,143 questionnaires that were sent out, 788 (69 percent) were completed and returned. The findings of this survey showed that:

1. of the responding institutions, 95 percent offered programs in physical education for the general college student,
2. of the responding institutions, 74 percent require physical education for all students,
3. during the past four years there has been a 10 to 15 percent decrease in the number of institutions requiring physical education,
4. in institutions where the requirement has been eliminated, approximately one fourth of the students elect to take physical education,
5. there is an increasing tendency for physical education courses to receive academic credit and to count in the grade point average,

6. recreation type activities or lifetime sports continue to grow in prevalence while team sports show a decrease, and
7. coeducational courses continue to grow to the extent that the majority of physical education courses are now coeducational.

Yarnell Study

A comprehensive study by Yarnell³ concerning certain facilities located on the campuses of two year colleges within the United States showed the following results:

1. state technical colleges had the smallest percentage with their own gymnasium (58 percent) and had the highest percentage renting gymnasium (42 percent),
2. over 72 percent to 79 percent of the colleges had their own gymnasiums and 64 percent to 69 percent had their own athletic fields on campus,
3. between 25 percent and 42 percent of the colleges had to rent or share a gymnasium and between 25 percent and 38 percent had to rent or share athletic fields, and
4. the branches of the state universities reported the highest percentage of gymnasiums (79 percent) and swimming pools (27 percent) on campus.

Thomas Study

Thomas⁴ completed a survey of physical education programs in junior colleges in the AAHPER Southern District. The purpose of his study was to determine the current status and trends of physical education in the junior colleges. A questionnaire developed by Oxendine² was mailed to the head of the department of physical education. Of 183 junior colleges to which questionnaires were mailed, 116 responded yielding a 63 percent return rate.

The responses were divided according to both affiliation and size of school. Categories used in this study were general information and recent developments. Results from the data for the general information section showed some interesting information. The results showed that:

1. all reporting state institutions and 98 percent of the private institutions reported offering physical education courses,
2. 91 percent of the private institutions and only 69 percent of the state institutions required physical education for graduation, and
3. institutions with required programs reported several types of exemptions from physical education.

State supported schools reported medical reasons as the most prevalent exemption followed by military service, age and varsity sport

participation. The private colleges reported varsity sport participation as the most prevalent cause for exemption.

The second section was related to recent developments of physical education and the study revealed:

1. physical education course requirements in junior colleges appeared to have increased over the last five years,
2. in proportion to enrollment, both state institutions and private institutions of all sizes reported an increase in faculty and facilities,
3. an increase in coeducational courses was reported by 71 percent of the state institutions while 52 percent of the private schools reported an increase, and
4. in addition, the survey indicated that activities classed as recreational activities (lifetime or individual and dual sports) had increased the most in the past five years with physical fitness second.

The activities most frequently mentioned as decreasing were team sports with some mention of rhythmical activities by the state institutions.

Coker Study

In 1970, Coker⁵ completed a study of the physical education programs for boys in selected Louisiana secondary public schools. The

purpose of the study was to survey physical education programs for boys in selected Louisiana secondary public schools. The study was concerned with the professional preparation and background of teacher, teacher load, program content and method of instruction. Data were obtained from 65 public secondary schools in Louisiana during the 1969-70 school year. The data were collected by means of a questionnaire and interviews conducted with 75 teachers of physical education and by observation of classes. Percentages and means were used to analyze the data. The findings in this study revealed that:

1. physical education programs for boys in public secondary schools had been improved over the past fourteen years, but the program still needed immediate and long range planning, and
2. teachers of physical education for boys in public secondary schools had completed programs of professional preparation in physical education in Louisiana colleges and universities, but failed to teach their physical education classes effectively.

Undem Study

Undem⁶ conducted a survey of the elementary physical education programs in Montana. The author used a questionnaire as the tool for gathering data. The questionnaire was sent to the administrators or

physical education specialists in 659 schools. The data from the questionnaire were tabulated in a frequency distribution and the results were analyzed in terms of measures of central tendency and percentages. The categories of investigation were:

1. time allotted for physical education classes,
2. type of activities offered,
3. means of instruction (classroom teacher or physical education specialist),
4. facilities available for instruction,
5. types of special programs, and
6. existence of written philosophy, objectives and curriculum.

Conclusions drawn from the study were:

1. The majority of schools were not providing physical education to meet the minimum standards recommended by the American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation.
2. In many schools recess time was being counted as physical education. Recess time was without any organization or planning by the teacher.
3. The most common facility used for physical education was the gymnasium. Lack of facilities was a factor limiting the improvement advancement of physical education.
4. Nearly 50 percent of schools responding had no philosophy of physical education, written objectives or developed curriculum.
5. About 29 percent of the teachers were full time physical education specialists.

6. Movement education was found in 69 percent of the primary grades and 61 percent of the intermediate grades of those schools who had organized physical education.

Summary

Physical education programs are popular with students at all levels. Many universities have eliminated the requirements of physical education, but this has not stopped students from participating in the programs. The reasons for the interest in physical education programs is because of the following reasons:

1. physical education courses count toward grade point average,
2. recreation and leisure time activities are being offered,
3. most physical education courses are coeducational, and
4. there is an increase in faculty and facilities.

Physical education at the high school and elementary levels also maintains a high interest with students, even though information has shown some negative occurrences. If physical education is to remain within the school curriculum and be an important part of a student's life then periodic examination of the content and supporting areas of the programs must be accomplished if the quality of the physical education programs is to remain attractive to students.

Information provided from previous research has helped me formulate ideas for this study and also provided guidance toward the

completion of this study.

Chapter 3

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data presented in this chapter was collected from sixty six member schools of the Montana High School Association for the 1976-1977 school term. The data was collected, tabulated, totaled, and percentages computed. Questionnaires were sent to ninety two high schools. Sixty six questionnaires were returned, yielding a 71.4 percent.

The data from the questionnaire (Appendix A) was then presented in ten general background information areas of teachers, and five major areas:

1. facilities,
2. methods of organizing students,
3. budget,
4. equipment and supplies, and
5. support of administration.

A list of the schools included in the survey are shown in Appendix E.

Table 1

Age of Physical Education Instructors

Age	N	Percent
20 - 25	14	21.2
26 - 30	28	42.4
31 - 35	16	24.2
36 - 40	5	7.6
41 - 45	2	3.0
46 - 50	1	1.5
51 - 55	0	0
56 - 60	0	0

N = 66

Table 1 indicates the ages of the physical education instructors located in the selected schools in Montana. The table shows that 63.6 percent of the instructors are between the ages of twenty and thirty. The table above also shows that 31.8 percent of the physical education instructors were between the ages of thirty one and forty. The instructors that were between the ages of forty one and fifty made up 10.6 percent of the respondents. There were no physical education instructors older than fifty one.

