



UTAH WELLNESS EDUCATION MASTER PLAN



Our vision is for a society where the health disparity and academic achievement gaps are diminished or eliminated. This will enable all individuals to enjoy a high quality of life through the understanding and advocacy of health related topics and joyful participation in an active, healthy lifestyle. Students from various backgrounds will have access to personalized and age-appropriate wellness programs beginning in elementary school and progressing through high school graduation. There will be increased school support and cooperation from the home and community agencies.

Our mission is to contribute to closing the achievement and health disparity gaps by advancing healthy behaviors and attitudes in all children. The achievement and health disparity gaps are prevalent in the same student populations. Research shows that children who are healthy and fit learn best. A primary goal of the Master Plan is to increase awareness of current research that shows the connection between healthy, fit students and academic success. Teachers will provide successful experiences in the gymnasium and classroom so that children may become literate adults who are motivated to stay healthy and physically active throughout their lives. A meaningful, relevant, well-planned curriculum delivered by a caring and prepared teacher, with ongoing assessment, will enhance the opportunities for student success.

Stakeholders representing a broad spectrum of the educational and health communities have contributed to the creation of the *Wellness Education Master Plan*. Stakeholders include public and higher education teachers, parents, administrators, and health specialists from community agencies. **The plan outlines the mission of the Utah State Office of Education to:**

- Assess student and community needs.
- Develop and maintain relevant core curricula.
- Provide professional development in content, and *best practice* pedagogy for teachers and administrators.
- Develop assessment strategies that include remediation and enrichment opportunities.
- Develop/maintain partnerships with LEAs and community agencies.
- Support compliance with state statutes and rules.
- Review and update credential requirements in health and physical education.



Wellness education is the combination of health and physical education instruction for students in grades K-12. It is based on the premise that the quality and productivity of each person's life can be enhanced through a comprehensive, collaborative and sequential health and physical education program. Wellness education provides students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to create and maintain a healthy lifestyle that promotes physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being.

Benefits of Wellness Education

Physical Benefits

- Reduces the risk of premature death.
- Reduces the risk of obesity related ailments including high blood, pressure, diabetes, joint disorders, heart disease, and cancer.
- Improves all elements of physical fitness.
- Promotes healthy eating and an active lifestyle.



Psycho-Social Benefits

- Enriches self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Reduces anxiety, depression and stress.
- Reduces school absenteeism.
- Prevents harmful behaviors including alcohol and drug abuse.
- Deters anti-social behavior.
- Facilitates social interaction.



Academic/Cognitive Benefits

- Enhances learning readiness through increased blood flow to the brain.
- Increases concentration.
- Improves scores in mathematics, reading and writing especially with girls.
- Reduces disruptive behaviors in the classroom.
- Reduces anxiety and depression allowing increased focus in the classroom.



Sources

1. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. *Physical Education, Physical Activity and Academic Performance* (Research Brief) Fall 2007.
2. National Governor's Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices. *Improving Academic Performance by Meeting Student Health Needs*. October 13, 2000. p.2.
3. Vail, Kathleen. *Mind and Body: New Research Ties Physical Activity and Fitness to Academic Success*. American School Board Journal. March 2006. pp.30-33.
4. California Fitnessgram correlation with SAT scores; assessed on June 26, 2004; <http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr02/documents/yr02rel37att.pdf>.

State Core Curriculum Standards in health and physical education drive instruction and professional development in Utah. They assist teachers in creating goals and learning opportunities for students and provide commonality of instruction statewide. The primary goal of wellness education is to develop knowledge, skills, and behaviors essential to becoming health-literate. A health-literate individual is able to:

- Access valid health information and health-promoting products and services.
- Analyze the influence of culture, media, technology and environment on health.
- Develop understanding and respect for others.
- Practice goal-setting, decision-making, and self-management skills to enhance health.
- Practice health-enhancing and risk-reducing behaviors.
- Use interpersonal skills to improve health and relationships.
- Understand how to establish and maintain healthy fitness levels.
- Advocate for personal, family and community health.

Wellness Education Standards

Utah Health Education Standards

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to use knowledge, skills, and strategies related to mental and emotional health to enhance self-concept and relationships with others.
2. Students will use nutrition and fitness information, skills, and strategies to enhance health.
3. Students will demonstrate health-promoting and risk-reducing behaviors to reduce substance abuse.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to apply prevention and intervention knowledge, skills, and processes to promote safety in the home, school, and community.
5. Students will understand and summarize concepts related to health promotion and the prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases.
6. Students will demonstrate knowledge of human development, social skills, and strategies to encourage healthy relationships and healthy growth and development throughout life.

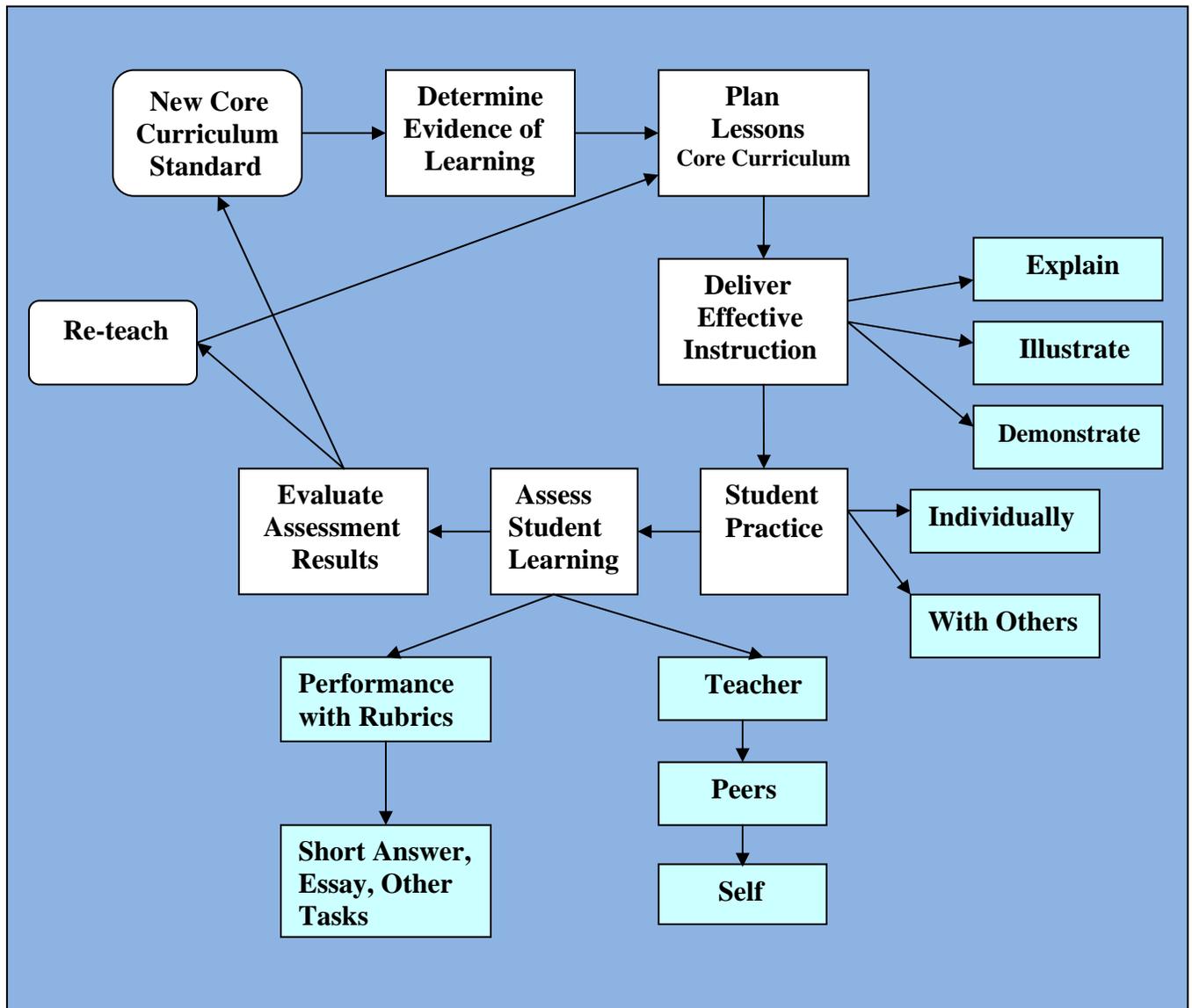
Utah Physical Education Standards

1. Students will demonstrate competency in motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities.
2. Students will demonstrate understanding of movement concepts, principles, strategies and tactics as they apply to the learning and performance of physical activities.
3. Students will participate regularly in physical activity.
4. Students will achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness.
5. Students will exhibit responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others in physical activity settings.
6. Students will value physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and/or social interaction.

Curriculum delivery is an essential part of wellness education and also of the Master Plan. With adequate instruction, practice and assessment, students of all abilities should be able to master the core curricula standards. Adaptations or modifications may be necessary to accommodate students with special needs.

Assessment involving teacher, student and peers is the key to determining what students know before instruction begins, and how they progress through the instructional process. To ensure success for each student, re-teaching strategies must be part of the instructional plan for those who need additional help to master a skill or concept. Enhanced curriculum should also be available to challenge the advanced student who can demonstrate mastery of the basic curriculum requirements. The following diagram illustrates the pathway to success for students in wellness education and will be a primary tool utilized in professional development offerings.

Wellness Standards-Based Instructional Process



Challenges to attaining success in wellness education were identified in a needs assessment survey of teachers in 2006. They were asked to identify strengths that enable quality instruction and weaknesses that prevent it from happening.

The Wellness Master Plan addresses ways to maintain Utah’s strengths while diminishing its weaknesses.

Strengths

1. Relevant core curricula.
2. Sound resources for teachers.
3. Meaningful professional development.
4. Collaboration with community partners.
5. Clearly defined legal parameters.

Weaknesses

1. Lack of state assessment standards.
2. Large class sizes in secondary education.
3. Inadequate professional preparation for elementary school teachers.
4. Lack of state and district level administrative support for wellness education.
5. Lack of content specialists at the LEA level.
6. Inadequate funding.
7. Not enough professional development offered by districts and the state.
8. Narrowing of curriculum at elementary level preventing wellness instruction.



Utah State Office of Education Goals for Wellness Education

Teacher Preparation/Endorsement

- Meet with higher education and Educator Licensing to coordinate and keep relevant endorsement requirements for health and physical education.
- Develop, implement and assess regular professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators that clearly illustrate *best practice*.
- Encourage teacher participation in governing bodies such as the *National Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, and the *Utah Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*.
- Identify master teachers and utilize their leadership in professional development offerings.

Curricula

- Develop, implement, maintain, and revise health and physical education core curricula.
- Provide and update teaching resources to support core curricula.
- Provide methods to assess core curricula standards.
- Provide clearly defined legal parameters that impact teaching practice.
- Provide professional development to support core curricula.

Instruction

- Provide professional development for state curriculum specialist.
- Improve assessment practices in the gym and classroom.
- Develop strategies to assist English Language Learners and students with special needs utilizing remediation and enrichment strategies.
- Establish small learning communities and networks among teachers.
- Provide methods courses that include content, pedagogy and classroom management.
- Explore how technology can enhance instruction.

Assessment

- Provide authentic assessment tools to health and physical education teachers.
- Include participation and improvement as significant elements in assessing student progress.
- Demonstrate the value of reporting of school physical fitness testing results to district-level personnel.
- Illustrate the uses of technology in assessing student progress.

Community Collaboration

- Partner with local agencies such as *Action for Healthy Kids*, *The Utah Department of Health*, and local parks and recreation organizations to enhance wellness education.
- Invite parents to dialog with teachers and share USOE resources.
- Develop relationships with higher education and leaders of local LEAs.
- Identify local health and recreation facilities that enable schools to extend the classroom to the community.

Student Safety

- Provide guidelines to enhance safety in the gym, classroom and community.
- Apply strategies that will eliminate bullying behaviors.