

2010 and Beyond Panel

Submitted by Physical and Health Education Canada (PHE Canada)

Preamble

In July of 2009, the Honourable Gary Lunn, Minister of State for Sport, announced the creation of the *2010 and Beyond Panel*. The mandate of the Panel is to look at the successful elements of **Own the Podium** and other related high performance initiatives; to explore options for the innovation and continuation of targeted high performance programs for the future, and to make recommendations that will build on the positive momentum that is felt in Canadian sport today.

PHE Canada wishes to address **the following question** (relevant to the work of PHE Canada) to assist the Panel in making timely, concrete recommendations for the future of high-performance sport in Canada.

1. **What strategies need to be implemented to improve the international performances of Canadian athletes, including ensuring the development of a stream of talented and well trained Paralympic athletes at the international level?**

PHE Canada's response to this question:

**Mandatory Physical Education
for every child from Kindergarten to Grade 12
to achieve universal physical literacy.**

Physical and Health Education Canada is a national, charitable, voluntary-sector organization whose primary concern is to influence the healthy development of children and youth by advocating for quality, school-based physical and health education. PHE Canada believes that school communities are one of the most important influences on the lives of children and youth, and therefore comprehensive, quality physical and health education programs are vital to their optimum growth and development. For more than 75 years, PHE Canada has developed resources, tools and delivered programs to support improved school based programs.

Currently PHE Canada is working to promote awareness and implementation of the LTAD in the education system. Our most recent work is in the area of creating an understanding, awareness, and assuring capacity to support physical literacy development through improved quality physical education. The site www.physical-literacy.ca was launched on September 8 (as part of International Literacy Day) to offer information for educators, as well as parents and the general public, to increase understanding and support access to a range of support resources and tools.

***When Canadians have a sound foundation of physical and health education,
they will have the potential for healthy, physically active lives.***

For more information on PHE Canada, visit www.phecanada.ca.

1. What strategies need to be implemented to improve the international performances of Canadian athletes, including ensuring the development of a stream of talented and well trained Paralympic athletes at the international level?

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How will Canada achieve Universal Physical Literacy?

Countless consultations (think post Australia 2000 Cross Canada consultations as just one example), roundtables, meetings, documents, models, and formal and informal conversations have taken place over the last decade or more, and resulted in consistent responses – **the need for mandatory quality physical education for every child from Kindergarten to Grade 12 as one of the top most important solutions to improving international performances of Canadian athletes** (not to mention a healthy, more physically active and vibrant society). **How many more times will we talk about this without taking action to make change?**

Knowing that virtually every child goes to school, regardless of ability, culture, gender or socio-economic status, **quality physical education offered to every child in Canada is the most direct, accessible and most obvious opportunity for children to develop physical literacy.** Put simply – Canadian sport excellence will not happen without quality physical education for every child.

What is the role of a Quality Physical Education Program?

Physical education is a curricular subject within schools designed to help children and youth develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for participating in sport and physical activity, and for establishing the necessary skills to achieve healthy living. Children and youth who participate in quality physical education, supplemented by school (and community) sport programs, have the best opportunity to develop physically literacy.

Quality physical education programs ensure that children learn fundamental movement skills, taught sequentially, that provide the basis for participation in all types of sports and physical activities. **A child who has not had the opportunity to develop these basic motor skills experiences difficulties or barriers when participating in sport experiences or later school-based programs that involve more difficult skills.**

Additional benefits of Quality Physical Education include:

- Enhanced Skill and Fitness Development
- Increased Motivation Towards Activity
- Enhanced Academic Performance

- Enhanced Leisure Time Activity
- Enhanced Vigorous Activity During Class
- Positive Impact on Obesity

Yet, Here is What is Happening in Canadian Schools:

- Only 57% of the Canadian cases identified meet provincial requirements for allotted time devoted to physical education (Hardman & Marshall, 2000)
- Only 20% of Canadian parents indicated that their child received daily physical education. The majority of parents (41%) indicated their child received physical education one to two days per week while 10% of parents indicated that their child received no physical education at all (Craig et al., 2001).
- At the secondary level, 20% of parents surveyed across Canada indicated that their adolescent child received no physical education at all and this percentage increases as students advance through secondary grades (Craig et al., 2001).
- Less than half (46 percent) of schools in Canada report having fully implemented policies to hire physical education specialists to teach physical education, 17% reported partially implementing such policies and 37% report not implementing a policy to hire physical education specialists. Secondary and middle schools are more likely than elementary schools to report exclusive use of PE specialists than elementary schools (Cameron et al., 2007).
- Deacon (2001) reported that teachers cited lack of preparation and expertise as a major barrier for elementary generalists to achieve curriculum outcomes in physical education. Similar results have also been reported in Manitoba (Janzen, Halas, Dixon, DeCorby, Booke, & Wintrup, 2003) and New Brunswick (Tremblay et al., 1996).
- Hardman and Marshall (2000) reported that Canada ranked near the bottom with respect to the adequacy of facilities for physical education programs. In 87% of Canadian cases, the equipment and facilities were rated as being inadequate. Only Latin American (100%), African (93%), Asian (93%) countries reported higher levels of inadequate facilities than Canada.

Clearly, universal access to quality physical education is not in place in schools across Canada. Not only does this deny them from the many health benefits achieved through quality physical education, but of greatest interest to the panel is the fact that children are not developing physical literacy, which is keeping them from a path of sport performance excellence.

What other support for Quality Physical Education exists?

PHE Canada believes that we have to look no further than the Canadian Sport Policy to anchor our Canadian sport system. The policy recognizes the importance of fostering a smooth transition from **entry into sport stage** through to **sport excellence**. Each layer of the sport community builds upon one another, ensuring that Canadian children and youth have the opportunity to develop a solid foundation of fundamental movement skills, knowledge and habit development to nurture physically literacy. This foundation is critical to assist all children and youth to not only pursue healthy, active lifestyles, but to put them on the path to sport excellence.

The Canadian Sport policy speaks to the importance of access to quality physical education, physical activity and school sport providing many benefits for children, including better health and quality of life, psychological well-being, improved behaviour and ability to learn, higher scholastic performance, good health habits, an appreciation of physical activity and sport, as well as their role in reducing the social, structural, and economic barriers typically faced by children and youth, particularly those in low-income families.

The Canadian Sport Centre's (2006) Long Term Athlete Development Plan (LTAD) recognizes physical education as the foundation for developing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed for Canadians to lead healthy active lives. The LTAD model in Canada has been adopted from Balyi's (2001) sport model which was first used by UK Sports (2002) as the foundation for their sporting system.

Canada's Long Term Athlete Development model:

- States the need for daily quality physical education.
- Highlights the need to improve training for teachers in the elementary schools to understand the concept of physical literacy and LTAD and correctly model and teach fundamental movement skills and sports skills.
- Encourages new courses at colleges and universities to ensure that educators and coaches are familiar with physical literacy and LTAD and can apply these when teaching and coaching.
- Encourages the establishment of sport academies and Sport-Étude programs enriching the training environment during the Train to Train phase.

Traditionally, physical education in the schools, recreational sports, and elite sport has been developed separately. This approach is ineffective and expensive. It fails to ensure that all children, including those who may choose to become elite athletes, are given a solid foundation and knowledge base — physical, technical, tactical, and mental — upon which to build their athletic abilities.

Canadian Sport 4 Life

In addition, the following international and national support is abundant:

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (1978) International Charter of Physical Education and Sport: "...**physical education ... is a fundamental right for all**, it is essential for the full development of a child's personality" (p. 31).
- United Nations (2006) advocates that when young people have access to physical education, they can build up their health and self-esteem, use their talents to the fullest, learn the ideals of teamwork and tolerance, and be drawn away from the dangers of drugs and crime.
- World Health Organization's (2000) Global Initiative on Active Living stressed the importance for appropriate use of the physical education programs in schools to enhance physical activity among school-aged children and youth.
- World Summit on Physical Education (International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education, 2005) recognizes that Physical Education plays a unique role in culture, health and development, the education of children and young people and the promotion of peace throughout the world.

- The Australian Sport Commission states that the ideal solution would be to ensure the effective delivery of physical education classes in primary schools during school hours using specialist physical education teachers.

National Support

- Children and youth require quality, daily, physical education classes (kindergarten to grade 12) taught by qualified, trained educators. *Canadian Paediatric Society (2002)*
- Quality physical education programs can reduce the social, structural, and economic barriers typically faced by children and youth, particularly those in low-income families. *Canadian Sport Policy (Sport Canada, 2003)*
- schools provide the most efficient and cost-effective means of improving the health and physical activity levels of Canadian children Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (*Craig et al., 2007*)
- Schools should implement Quality Daily Physical Education (QDPE) programs for all children in grades kindergarten through Grade 12 with a minimum of 30 minutes a day. *Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada (2008)*

A quality Physical Education includes:

- Daily curricular instruction for all students (K-12) for a minimum of 30 minutes.
- Well planned lessons incorporating a wide range of activities.
- A high level of participation by all students in each class.
- An emphasis on fun, enjoyment, success, fair play, self-fulfillment and personal health.
- Appropriate activities for the age and stage of each student.
- Activities which enhance cardiovascular systems, muscular strength, endurance and flexibility.
- Participation based intramural programs.
- Qualified, enthusiastic teachers.
- Access to creative and safe use of facilities and equipment.

What do we need to do to support the development of physical literacy through physical education?

- Advocate for policies for mandatory physical education.
- Support teacher training programs to ensure qualified physical educators are delivery the subject.
- Ensure accountability to schools and school boards in the full delivery of quality physical education.
- Support appropriate resource allocation to ensure adequate facilities, equipment and resources.
- Aid in the formation of school/community facility sharing programs.
- Supplement physical literacy development through quality community based programs.
- Implement testing programs to monitor student's physical literacy/physical fitness levels.
- Increase parent awareness of the importance of physical education in physical literacy development.