



The Maryland House of Delegates

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401



Submitted testimony in support of HB 1296

Anya Trudeau

University of Maryland

B.A. English, Government & Politics (IR) '22; Master of Public Policy '23

Intern, 2021 Legislative Session for the Office of Delegate Jay Walker

HB 1296

Public School Students - Daily Physical Activity (Student Health and Fitness Act)

Previously HB0110 in 2019 regular session; referred to Ways and Means Committee, did not make it past review in original chamber.

Previously HB0516 in 2020 regular session; referred to Ways and Means Committee, did not make it past referral to committee.

Requirements of HB 1296

- Bill ensures public elementary school attendees within Prince George's County are provided a weekly minimum of **150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical education**
- Bill ensures a minimum of **90 minutes per week of learning physical education**
- Bill ensures that the physical activity for the student **follows the student's Individual Education Program**
- Bill **prohibits removing students from recess as a disciplinary measure** (except under certain circumstances)

Importance

Problem:

- Approximately 17 percent of U.S. youth have obesity, and **nearly one in three children and adolescents are either overweight or have obesity**¹
 - An overweight adolescent has a **70% chance** of becoming an overweight or obese adult
 - 6- to 8-year-olds with obesity are approximately **10 times more likely to become obese adults** than those with a lower body mass index
 - Since 1980, the **obesity prevalence** among children and adolescents has almost **tripled**
 - Children with obesity are already **demonstrating cardiovascular risk factors** typically not seen until adulthood.
 - Obesity often begins in childhood and is linked to psychological problems, asthma, diabetes and cardiovascular
- We **spend an estimated \$190 billion every year to treat obesity**-related conditions in America²
 - **Children with obesity** have three times more healthcare expenditures than children at healthy weights, **costing an estimated \$14 billion every year**
- Children need at least **an hour of moderately vigorous physical activity daily**, however, **half of all U.S. children get less than thirty minutes of exercise a day**³
 - One study showed that **20% of all children perform less than two hours of vigorous physical activity per week**
 - Children are less active than previous generations
- Physical inactivity increases the risk of many adverse health conditions, including but not limited to:⁴
 - 6% of the burden of disease
 - 7% of type 2 diabetes, 10% of breast cancer, 10% of colon cancer
 - **9% of premature mortality**
- Overweight and obesity in childhood can lead to **mental health issues**⁵
 - Can lead to sleeping disorders, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem
 - Can make it harder for kids to participate in activities, and even chores may become dreadful

¹ Partnership for a Healthier America. “Facts About Childhood Obesity • Partnership For A Healthier America”. <https://www.ahealthieramerica.org/articles/facts-about-childhood-obesity-102>.

² Ibid.

³ Canavan, Erin. “Combating Child Obesity in America.” Text. Harvard Law School Library, 2006. <https://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/8963865/Canavan06.html?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>.

⁴ Lee, I-Min, Eric J Shiroma, Felipe Lobelo, Pekka Puska, Steven N Blair, and Peter T Katzmarzyk. “Impact of Physical Inactivity on the World’s Major Non-Communicable Diseases.” *Lancet* 380, no. 9838 (July 21, 2012): 219–29. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(12\)61031-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(12)61031-9).

⁵ Trevino, Amber. “The Dire Impact of Childhood Obesity on Mental Health.” *Salud America*, November 17, 2017. <https://salud-america.org/the-effects-of-childhood-obesity-on-mental-health/>.

- Kids also become a target for bullying. Many children will experience being teased or bullied, because of their excessive weight
- **Childhood obesity in Maryland is high⁶**
 - **MD ranks 9th out of 51 states for children ages 2-4 at a 15.6% rate** (participating in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children)
 - **MD ranks 10th out of 51 states for children ages 10-17 at 17.6% rate**

Solutions:

- Primary school years are a **critical window** for physical activity⁷
 - Physical activity sets children on a positive trajectory
 - The “Proficiency Barrier”: Children who start out behind and have a **difficult time catching up due to a lack of early basic movement skills** such as running, jumping, throwing, and catching
- **Schools** are in a unique position to **help students attain the nationally recommended 60 minutes** or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily⁸
- **Physical activity** plays an important role in the **prevention of becoming overweight and obese in childhood** and adolescence, and reducing the risk of obesity in adulthood⁹

Evidence the proposal will work:

- **By eliminating physical inactivity, life expectancy of the world’s population is estimated to increase by 0.68 (0.41 to 0.95) years¹⁰**
- Active Children perform **BETTER ACADEMICALLY¹¹**
 - Physical education fitness associated **with 40% increase in test scores**
 - Physical Activity is positively associated with improved educational activity
- Active Children **ARE HAPPIER¹²**
 - This can boost children’s and young people’s self-esteem

⁶ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “State Obesity Data.” *The State of Childhood Obesity* (blog). Accessed March 2, 2021. <https://stateofchildhoodobesity.org/states/>.

⁷ https://www.cedar.iph.cam.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Designed_to_move_report.pdf

⁸ “Active Schools Overview | Physical Activity | Healthy Schools | CDC,” September 11, 2019. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/index.htm>.

⁹ Hills, Andrew P., Lars Bo Andersen, and Nuala M. Byrne. “Physical Activity and Obesity in Children.” *British Journal of Sports Medicine* 45, no. 11 (September 1, 2011): 866–70. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2011-090199>.

¹⁰ Lee, I-Min, Eric J Shiroma, Felipe Lobelo, Pekka Puska, Steven N Blair, and Peter T Katzmarzyk. “Impact of Physical Inactivity on the World’s Major Non-Communicable Diseases.” *Lancet* 380, no. 9838 (July 21, 2012): 219–29. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(12\)61031-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(12)61031-9).

¹¹ Grissom, J.B. “Physical Fitness and Academic Achievement.” *Journal of Exercise Physiology Online* 8 (February 1, 2005): 11–25.

¹² Fredricks, Jennifer A., and Jacquelynne S. Eccles. “Is Extracurricular Participation Associated with Beneficial Outcomes? Concurrent and Longitudinal Relations.” *Developmental Psychology* 42, no. 4 (July 2006): 698–713. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.42.4.698>.

- Active Children **DEVELOP FASTER**¹³
 - We know that academic-related benefits of physical activity include:
 - Enriched cognitive development and improvements in the brain structure and functions
 - Children see an **improved** scholastic achievement, better classroom behavior, greater ability to focus, and less absenteeism
- **Physical Education** is the **ONLY** policy/program that can **reach** and **benefit ALL students**, including those with **disabilities**.¹⁴

¹³ https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/health-academic-achievement.pdf

¹⁴ American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. "Keeping Children Healthy: Recommendations for Promoting Physical Education and Physical Activity in Schools Fact Sheet," February 2, 2016. <https://www.fightcancer.org/policy-resources/keeping-children-healthy-recommendations-promoting-physical-education-and-physical>.