

20 Indicators of Effective Physical Education Instruction

SHAPE America encourages school administrators to establish a baseline for observing physical education classes. The indicators detailed in the checklist that follows reflect the practices and policies recommended in SHAPE America’s guidance documents [The Essential Components of Physical Education](#) and [Physical Education Program Checklist](#). When conducting a walk-through evaluation or an evaluative observation of a physical education class, school administrators should expect to see the following practices.

Indicators	Observed	Not Observed	Not Applicable	Documentation of Progress
Curriculum				
The teacher displays the student learning objectives established in the written physical education curriculum that are linked to state or national standards.	☐	☐	☐	
The teacher addresses student learning objectives in the lesson through the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains.	☐	☐	☐	
Appropriate Instruction				
The teacher establishes a physically and emotionally safe learning environment through established rules and routines.	☐	☐	☐	
The teacher maintains student engagement throughout the class through voice and movement.	☐	☐	☐	
The teacher can be heard from all locations in the space.	☐	☐	☐	
The teacher demonstrates effective time management by establishing an organized instructional climate and using protocols that include a clear “Stop” signal for students and limited transition time between activities.	☐	☐	☐	
The teacher maximizes students’ activity — and limits their inactivity — during class by using space and equipment efficiently.	☐	☐	☐	
The teacher engages students in moderate to vigorous physical activity for at least 50 percent of class time.*	☐	☐	☐	
The teacher ensures that the majority of students are engaged actively in all learning tasks.	☐	☐	☐	
The teacher employs multiple instructional strategies that address and support students with varying abilities.	☐	☐	☐	
The teacher provides students with maximal practice opportunities.	☐	☐	☐	
The teacher provides opportunities for students to engage in small-group work, while also limiting competition.	☐	☐	☐	
Student Assessment				
The teacher conducts formative assessments throughout the lesson. If appropriate, the teacher also conducts preassessments to determine students’ prior knowledge, or summative assessments for closing an instructional sequence. The assessments correlate directly to the learning objectives and instruction provided to students.	☐	☐	☐	
The teacher uses assessments to provide constructive feedback and direct individual student performance.	☐	☐	☐	
The teacher makes modifications and demonstrates clear differentiation of instruction to aid in student success, based on assessment results.	☐	☐	☐	
Beginning-of-Class Procedures				
Students engage in an instant activity upon entering class.	☐	☐	☐	
Students engage in a warm-up activity to prepare for participation in moderate to vigorous physical activity.	☐	☐	☐	
Students are introduced to lesson objectives for the day.	☐	☐	☐	
End-of-Class Procedures				
Students engage in a cool-down activity to recover from moderate to vigorous physical activity.	☐	☐	☐	
Students are asked — through formative and summative assessments — to review lesson objectives for closure.	☐	☐	☐	
Policy & Environment				
The teacher should follow policy and environment guidelines established by the school district or school. The school district or school is strongly encouraged to follow recommendations within the Policy and Environment section of SHAPE America’s <i>The Essential Components of Physical Education</i> .				

* A quick tip for determining moderate to vigorous physical activity time: use a stopwatch to time the difference between movement time and talking/stationary time.