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## Implementation of Physical Education in Underfunded Schools

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Implementation of Physical Education Programs in Underfunded Schools

Cannon Bernarding

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### **Abstract**

Physical education (P.E.) is a key aspect of inclusive learning; due to a number of factors, many elementary schools have not been able to sufficiently provide P.E. programs. For this Capstone Project, the researcher examined how underfunded schools can integrate online-based P.E. programs into the curriculum. Through a literature review and interviews with school staff, the researcher found a significant need for P.E. in low-socioeconomic elementary schools. Despite the existence of online-based physical education programs that require little to no funding, many staff from underfunded schools do not know about these types of readily available resources. The literature review and interviews informed an action project to address this issue. By compiling multiple resources related to online P.E. and making this information readily available to school staff, the researcher aimed to help create opportunities for a more active lifestyle for students from under resourced schools.

### **Implementation of Physical Education Programs in Underfunded Schools**

Ever since a young age, sports have been one of my vital interests when thinking about choosing a career pathway. When excelling to the next level in baseball became a lost dream rather than a reality, I had to find an alternative way to stay involved with sports and physical activity. This resulted in my pursuance of a Liberal Arts Bachelor's Degree with an emphasis in physical education. The importance of physical education is a topic that I feel strongly about because I have had a connection to this specific aspect of education since being introduced. Being physically active taught me a lot more than just a love for physical education, it taught me life lessons that I have kept with me to this day.

In elementary school, physical education was an escape for me from the grueling academics of education. I never fully gave one hundred percent in the classroom until I came to the realization that if I can go outside and absolutely give my all during physical activity then there is no reason why I cannot do the same with academics in the classroom. From that day on, I recognized the vast opportunities physical education has to offer for students like myself. My academics steadily rose as did my health after being introduced to physical education. I found myself wanting to exercise outside of the small time allotted for organized physical activity. It really taught me that all you can give is your best, and if I can do that for every aspect of life, I'm bound to be happy. I was also able to make life-long relationships and connections through organized sports and physical education, which something I will always cherish.

Also during my elementary years, electronics and technology was nothing to the degree it is these days, which created much more outside play and community connections through physical activity back then. These days, children have the ability to stay busy without staying

active, which has shown to be rather harmful, hence, the childhood obesity rates. After being involved with service learning and other community services I can see firsthand the shift between generations in relation to their all-around physical activity. I didn't mind coming back to class all sweaty and dirty in elementary school because I knew I wasn't going to be the only one panting and perspiring. These days I find it rare to see a large group of students, coming back into the classroom from break time, panting from the game that was just being played with his or her classmates on the field. Not only does physical education teach students a healthy lifestyle, but it gives them a release from the desk heavy academics, all while teaching them lifelong lessons. However, an issue of discarding physical education programs is becoming more prevalent in our state and nation to this day.

According to a report done by the National Education Association and Campaign for America's Future, physical education and art programs have been diminishing from the public education curriculum throughout the U.S., and especially in California, due to budget cuts. This particular problem concerns me because I know just how much can be taught through physical education, and disregarding it from the curriculum should not be an option. Children should be introduced to physical activities and healthy living at a young age to fight things like chronic diseases.

This problem needs to be addressed to ensure our nation's childhood obesity rate doesn't sky rocket especially with the various distractions of today's technological advancements. When physical education is lost in our youth's educational system, it shows the system's blindness to a great way to promote healthy living while fighting childhood obesity. I strongly believe the nation-wide implementation of Physical Education is the first real step towards fighting the co-problem of childhood obesity. Another important reason to address this problem is to really show

students that become athletes that through academic potential comes athletic potential. Just as I pointed out in my story, it is important to give one hundred percent in all aspects of life rather than picking and choosing.

This issue of non-implementation of physical education is locally situated mainly because majority of the elementary schools in the Salinas, Marina, and Seaside area are underfunded and cannot provide the viable resources needed in to fully provide Physical Education. These schools may also not be aware of the programs that have recently popped up to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles and for that reason it seamlessly makes this issue locally situated. This problem is urgent because budget cuts have been affecting these schools for some time now and if Physical Education doesn't get the attention deserved sooner rather than later, the problem is only going to get worse.

One potential course of action that could be taken is to implement physical educational programs that require a liaison or other school faculty member to conduct activities provided by an online program. Last semester I visited Crumpton Elementary in Marina where their liaison, John Doe, conducted these activities from a program titled "Just Run". Just Run gives their registered schools a program that attempts to instill fun in physical activities rather than a monotonous theme of running in circles that I have seen destroy the fun in physical activity. This program is what gave me the idea to take this course of action for schools that do not have knowledge on programs like this that can be implemented with minimal to no funding. Creating a pamphlet to keep parents alert and involved in facilitating a healthy and active lifestyle for their child is another course of action that is to be considered. These are just a few courses that I am considering embarking in throughout my Capstone experience. I hope to find a way to

implement a lasting physical education programs in schools that have been forced to discard this vital subject.

### **Literature Review**

I have come to realize that physical education has the potential to teach our nation's youth how to live a healthy lifestyle and achieve academic success through structured physical activity. When I grew up, physical education was a huge part of my educational achievement due to the life-long lessons and regular physical activity it instilled in me. When participating in physical activity during my elementary school years, my interest in physical activity out of school immensely grew. Before I could partake in physical activity outside of school, I was required to finish the homework that needed to be done for that day. I learned that physical education has countless amounts of benefits and I continue to reap those benefits to this day. Unfortunately, physical education programs across the nation are being eliminated from underfunded elementary schools creating a huge need for physical fitness and education.

### **Community Settings**

When physical education programs are cut from underfunded schools, the majority of the physical activity opportunities for students then come from community settings. "Educators across the country understand that low-income students need extra support and resources to succeed, but in far too many places policies for assigning teachers and allocating resources are perpetuating the problem rather than solving it" (NASPE, 2010, P. 10). Students who grow up in low socioeconomic areas are disadvantaged from the onset because of their minimal access to community facilities and programs that promote physical activity (Beaulieu, Butterfield, Mason

& Loovis, 2012). When facilities inside and outside of school don't promote physical activity, children are unable to reach their full potential as students.

These disadvantages have shown to include minimal amounts of resources in the community settings that promote physical activity compared to schools that are located in areas with low poverty levels (Powell, Slater, & Chaloupka, & Harper, 2004). One study found that access to facilities and locations in the community are related children's physical activity, however children that grow up in low socioeconomic areas are at the highest risk of inactivity due to the marginal settings that promote physical activity (Brownson, Baker, Housemann, Brennan & Bacak, 2001). These marginal community settings demonstrate the need for physical activity in low socioeconomic elementary schools. Without the promotion of physical activity in education, students will not have any inspiration to stay active and live healthy lifestyles outside of school. According to a study conducted by Powell, Slater, Chaloupka and Harper (2004), they discuss these disadvantages by stating,

“The lack of community-level settings (such as parks, sidewalks, bikepaths) conducive to physical activity can represent a significant barrier to an active lifestyle for residents. Barriers to physical activity, in part, may underpin some of the documented differences in physical activity levels and obesity rates found to exist by race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status.” (p. 137)

This goes to show the importance of instilling an active lifestyle in the students. Having the ability to ignite a passion for physical activity in students is a very powerful tool. Creating lifelong habits and instilling a strong work ethic are some of the many benefits that physical education can provide for schools that are located in low



socioeconomic areas. The failure to provide community level settings and facilities in low socioeconomic communities is a huge reason why underfunded schools are in need of a structured physical education program.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) speaks about children's ability to learn by observing and modeling behaviors. Without sufficient resources in the community settings children aren't able to fully observe and model behavior related to physical activity. If a structured physical education program is implemented in underfunded schools, students will have the ability to observe and learn how to sustain a healthy lifestyle when staying active.

### **Underfunded Schools**

Due to a nationwide recession, districts from all over our nation are scrutinizing all expenses when attempting to balance budgets and minimize spending (NASPE, 2009b). One curricular area that is usually the first to be cut from many underfunded elementary schools is physical education (NASPE, 2010). A lack of understanding and purpose could possibly be a reason why physical education is commonly the first educational program to be reduced in the face of balancing a budget. For that reason, educators, parents, community members, and government officials must become aware of the detrimental effects that result from eliminating physical activity in education.

According to a survey conducted by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) (2009a), the physical education budget for elementary schools across the nation averages out to four-hundred and sixty dollars per school year. This is an alarming statistic because the elementary schools that still have a physical education

program are still stuck with minimal budgets. The physical education budget has noticeably diminished compared to the past; yet, educators and government officials seem accepting because it gives more time for academic instruction in the curriculum (Veil, 2006). However, a study of more than 2.4 million Texas students found that students who were physically fit were more likely to have better school attendance records, fewer disciplinary referrals, and score higher on the state's standardized tests than students who were not physically fit (Texas Education Agency, 2009). Similar findings of the relation between academic achievement and physical activity were found through a study conducted by the California Department of Education (2005). Student's grades showed significant improvement following the implementation of a physical education program (California Department of Education, 2005). This goes to show how reducing or eliminating physical education programs throughout the nation are not only counter-productive to the student's health, but also their learning as well (National Association for Sport and Physical Education, 2009b).

I had the pleasure of speaking with an educator at a Title 1 school in Seaside, California and after conducting an interview with him, it was clear that budget cuts have increasingly impacted the ability to provide adequate physical education for that specific underfunded school (personal communication, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015). If there is any extra time throughout the solely academic day, only then will the students receive physical education. This specific teacher stressed the importance of funding when it comes to physical education because without an organized program students receive varying qualities of physical education within the same school.

### **Childhood Obesity**

One of the main reasons why the minimization of physical education programs in underfunded schools is so detrimental is because of the childhood obesity crisis that our nation is currently facing. According to Mckenzie and Kahan (2008),

Physical inactivity is a serious public health problem that is associated with numerous preventable diseases. Public health concerns, particularly those related to the increased prevalence of overweight, obesity, and diabetes, call for schools to become proactive in the promotion of healthy, physically active lifestyles. (p. 171)

Without lasting implementation of physical education, these public health concerns for students will continue to grow.

Children who grow up in low socioeconomic environments are much more vulnerable to childhood obesity due to their lack of resources and opportunities for adequate physical activity and exercise (Wing, Adams, Boscarino, & Laraque, 2008; Powell, Slater, & Chaloupka, 2004). “Social and economic factors seem to play a leading role in the epidemic. Obesity rates for children in low-income families are nearly three times higher than those for children in middleclass families”.(Muth, 2013, P. 68) The inconsistent obesity rates between classes is an indicator as to why children from underfunded schools are in need of physical education.

Childhood obesity can be seen as a locally situated issue because Monterey County has fifty-one thousand residents living in poverty and seventy-three percent of them are Hispanic (Monterey County Health Department, 2011). This predominant Hispanic population found in the Monterey County is therefore in need of some kind of physical activity and education to combat their vulnerability to the childhood obesity epidemic.

Students who are unhealthy, inactive, and lack good nutrition are often unenthusiastic to learn in the classroom, and that presents an obstacle to a complete education (National Association for Sport and Physical Education, 2009b).

### **Online Based Physical Education Programs**

In response to the reduction of physical education programs in underfunded schools, online based physical education programs have been established to aid students in providing physical activity during the school day. These online based physical education programs require little to no funding and seek to provide sufficient physical activity for the students throughout the school day. Programs such as SPARK (SPARK, 2009), Just Run (Just Run, 2014), Just a Minute (JAM)(Health-E-tips, 2007), and Fundamental Integrative Training (FIT) (Bukowsky & Faigenbaum, 2014) are just a few online based physical education programs that are geared towards offering physical activity programs in schools that cannot afford to implement physical education in the curriculum.

Initiated in 1989, SPARK is a researched based program that is fixed on creating, implementing, and evaluating programs that promote healthy lifestyles and physical activity (SPARK, 2009). In response to an evident need in combating low levels of physical activity and fitness in children, the SPARK program was created (Sallis et al, 1997). This research-based program provides what to teach, how to teach, and tools needed to teach an adequate physical education. This program is used to aid underfunded schools because with a one-time fee, not only do the students benefit from the program, but the teachers also gain an understanding on how to facilitate physical education (SPARK, 2009).

The Just A Minute (JAM) program doesn't necessarily implement structured physical education into the curriculum, however, it brings physical activity and health education into the classroom. By offering a weekly one minute exercise routine, an athlete-delivered message about healthy living and eating, and a monthly newsletter, the JAM program attempts to instill daily physical activity habits in students through various activities and newsletters (Health-E-tips, 2007). I find this to be an effective solution to implementing physical activity in underfunded schools. Providing informational tools as well as organized exercises is a big step towards implementing physical education in underfunded schools.

Another physical education program, that is also locally situated, goes by the name of Just Run. Created by the organizers of the Big Sur International Marathon, the Just Run program is a great solution to schools that have lost physical education funding. Just Run allows classes to collectively accumulate mileage through virtual runs that are tracked on the website (Just Run, 2014). This program has seen immediate success since being implemented at J.C. Crumpton Elementary in Marina, California and has not only created healthier lifestyles but also unified the community within the school (personal communication, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015). According to a physical education facilitator, "Just Run makes running, something that students usually don't enjoy, fun" (personal communication, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015). This particular program at J.C. Crumpton Elementary is facilitated by the bilingual liaison, which sheds light on how schools can use every resource available without immediate funding.

These are all realistic options for schools that are not fortunate enough to have a funded physical education program in the curriculum. By simply registering an elementary school to one of these online programs is the first step towards implementing proper physical education and

creating a complete educational experience for the students. According to a study conducted by Halvorson (2011),

“Educators in Canyon Country, California, have implemented a technology based physical education program to help their schoolchildren avoid becoming part of the overweight statistics. Since the program's inception in 2003, physical activity scores have significantly improved and they have seen a steep drop in disciplinable behavior and absenteeism” (P.13)

Minimally funded physical education programs have shown success in implementing online-based physical education and hopefully this trend continues to grow.

### **Educator Experience in Physical Education**

Although low socioeconomic elementary schools may not have the funds to implement a structured physical education program, they do have the ability to properly train or hire trained educators who can teach suitable physical education and academics subjects. “At the elementary level, some states allow the classroom teachers to provide physical education instruction to their students, and many of these teachers lack a physical education knowledge base”(Hart, 2005). A study conducted by Hart (2005), takes a look at whether or not teachers would benefit from a methods course in physical education. “The results of this study suggest completion of a physical education methods course increases elementary education majors' knowledge of fundamental movement skills. Both of the experimental groups exhibited an increase in the ratios of correctly identified fundamental movement skills” (Hart, 2005).

With this evidence it is apparent that a physical education methods course benefits the educators' ability to facilitate activities, which in return benefits the health of the students. When classroom teachers are also the facilitators of physical education, like they are in many underfunded schools, it is extremely important that students get an ample quality of exercise and physical activity. Without some kind of experience in physical education through a methods course, educators cannot provide physical education on an even plane for all students. For that reason, educator experience is a sufficient solution to implementing physical education in underfunded schools.

## **Method**

### **Procedure**

**Context.** The site locations for my research were located in Marina, California at J.C. Crumpton Elementary and Seaside, California at Martin Luther King Elementary. Beginning with J.C. Crumpton, this Elementary school has a population of about 370 students and as a city, Marina has a population of 20,370 (United States Census Bureau, 2010). According to the United States Census Bureau (2010), the median annual income for Marina residents is around \$50,000 and the median income per capita is around \$23,000. Just about 20 percent of the population falls under the poverty line and Marina has a diverse population with about 20 percent of the population being foreign born (United States Census Bureau, 2010).

Martin Luther King Elementary, which is located in Seaside, has a population of 454 students, and Seaside has a population of 33,878 (United States Census Bureau, 2010). According to the United States Census Bureau (2010), close to one third of the population is foreign born and nearly 40 percent of the population is Hispanic or Latino. The median household income is around \$57,000 and the median capita income is around \$21,000 (United

States Census Bureau, 2010). One fourth of the population 25 years and older in Seaside unfortunately has less than a 12th grade education (United States Census Bureau, 2010).

**Participants.** This action project is personally meaningful to me because I was able to promote physical education as an important aspect of elementary education. Attempting to strengthen the students, staff, and community connections through physical activity is something that strongly appeals to me. I am very passionate about physical activity and physical education and that is the reason why my Liberal Studies major has an emphasis in physical education. I am also a very personable and easy to talk to which should help when carrying out this project. I have facilitated physical education activities before so it gives me experience as well as commonalities with the participant(s). However, some differences that I had with my participants included a lack of work experience, willingness to take action, and resource availability. These differences had the potential to impact the research negatively by creating barriers and a sense of disconnect with the participants, nevertheless I connected with them through commonalities such as wanting to create the best possible education for the students.

I invited the bilingual liaison from Crumpton Elementary who conducts the physical education program called “Just Run” for the elementary school, and a teacher and principal from Martin Luther King Elementary in Seaside. The facilitator of the Just Run program at J.C Crumpton has firsthand experience in facilitating physical education and knows just how beneficial required physical activity can be for elementary students. I gathered information on how effective the “Just Run” program is for J.C. Crumpton Elementary and with that feedback, I wanted to see the ways in which a minimally funded program like this can be implemented at a minimally funded school like Martin Luther King Elementary.



I made initial contact with John Doe, the bilingual liaison at J.C. Crumpton Elementary, through email, and followed up with a visit to the elementary. I also made initial contact with a service learning teacher from Martin Luther King elementary in Seaside and planned on coordinating an interview with him as well as the Principal.

There were less than minimal risks participating in my Capstone study because I was looking for ways to help the students and staff in creating a healthier community through physical education. One possible risk was that the participants may think that through my study I was highlighting what was missing from their particular school rather than understanding that I am attempting to help.

The teacher and staff member had a choice of whether or not to participate in my study and can choose to not answer any of the questions I ask if participating in the interview. The participants will also have the choice to be anonymous if need be.

### **Instruments and Equipment**

I used interviews as my instrument for research and the questions focused on the implementation of physical education and how that can make a positive impact on the surrounding communities without significant funding. (See Appendices A and B for Interview protocols).

### **Interview Procedure**

The teacher and physical educator were interviewed with consent (See Appendix C) and were interviewed individually throughout this project. The interviews were done face-to-face, were audio recorded with consent, and lasted about a half hour. The interviews were conducted at two locations and those locations were J.C. Crumpton Elementary in Marina, CA and Martin

Luther King Elementary in Seaside, CA. All interviews were conducted at the convenience of the interviewees and a semi-structured interview was used for data analysis purposes.

### **Data Analysis**

All interviews were transcribed from audio recordings. From there I reviewed the transcripts, compared the research questions against the collected data, and identified any missing data that needed to be obtained. Data was then filtered through where the uses, benefits, and goals of online-based physical education programs were identified. The data was then analyzed through taxonomies such as elementary schools that have implemented the online-based physical education program and the elementary schools that haven't. The ultimate goal was to highlight what makes these online-based physical education programs work and understand how to implement programs like these into schools that may benefit from them.

### **Results**

Following completion of interviews and collecting data to analyze, prior premonitions came to life through the information I received. Going into the interviews, I was expecting the interviewees to express a need for physical education and describe the countless amounts of benefits reaped from organized physical activity. In part, that is what I received through my collection of data. The physical education facilitator and the elementary educator both expressed a significant need for organized physical activity especially in underfunded schools. However, due to a lack of resources, low-socioeconomic elementary schools have trouble funding and maintaining a structured physical education program.

Emergent themes	Lack of resources Physical activity and academic achievement Lack of awareness online-based physical education programs
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**Lack of Resources.** One emergent theme from the data collected was a lack of resources resulting in insufficient physical activity. Both the physical education facilitator and the fourth grade educator expressed a concern for a lack of physical activity in underfunded schools due to an absence of resources including funds, staff, and materials. According to the educator from Martin Luther King Elementary, “The relationship (between budget cuts and physical education) is directly related because that’s a level of priority for teachers and administrators in the scheme of what is important and what isn’t” (personal communication, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015). As far as budgets go, this is a cause for concern because children from low-socioeconomic areas are disadvantaged from the onset due to the minimal access to community facilities and programs (Beaulieu, Butterfield, Mason & Loovis, 2012). Physical education should be the first curricular area kept in the curriculum, especially in underfunded schools, because resources, outside of school, that promote physical activity are scarce. The physical education facilitator at J.C. Crumpton Elementary, who is also the bilingual liaison, also expressed concern with resources saying, “There are less and less programs like the P.E. programs we used to have. It’s all related to money. If there isn’t any money, then there aren’t any funds and with no funds they get rid of what is not necessary” (personal communication, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015). So results show that resources are a major contributor in cutting physical education programs in underfunded schools.

**Physical activity and Academic Achievement.** Another emergent theme throughout the data includes physical activity and the effects on academic achievement. Results were consistent with studies conducted because students who are physically fit are more likely to have better school attendance records, fewer disciplinary referrals, and score higher on the state's standardized tests than students who are not physically fit (Texas Education Agency, 2009). The educator I interviewed also expressed similar thoughts saying, "Yeah I think you can make a connection (between physical education and academic success). Because it is on the teachers to do it, to do the physical education and they're not trained enough to do a proper job at facilitating physical education. Some kids get better physical education than others but none get a full program like you would with a P.E. teacher" (personal communication, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015). What I think he was trying to say was that without sufficient physical activity in underfunded schools, students are unable to reach their full potential as a student and individual. Or in the case of teachers having to conduct physical education, some students are better off than others. Similar reactions came from the physical education facilitator at J.C. Crumpton Elementary when he said, "I believe that physical education is important to our school or any school because there is correlation between kids participating in organized activity, and performing better in the classrooms. I've seen it firsthand, you can actually observe the kids that are overweight and obese and see how they aren't motivated to participate in physical education or that classroom because low energy levels and you can just see that everything correlates" (personal communication, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015). According to these results, igniting high levels of energy and promoting inclusive learning are just a few of the many benefits that physical education has to offer.

**Lack of Awareness to Online-Based P.E. Programs.** The lack of awareness of online-based physical education programs is the last, yet most emergent theme from the gathered results. The educator from Martin Luther King Elementary, an elementary which doesn't have a structured physical education program, expressed concern with educators having to provide physical education without any experience. This ultimately results in varying levels of physical activity within the school. However, when asked if he has ever heard of online-based physical education programs the answer was a swift no (personal communication, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015). The physical education facilitator was also unaware of surrounding elementary schools implementing programs similar to Just Run. However, with the implementation of online-based physical education programs, schools are able to bypass the funding obstacle and create a physically active and healthy lifestyle for students that are not as fortunate as those from higher socioeconomic areas. The benefits from online-based physical education programs were expressed by the physical education facilitator stating, "I've introduced soccer goals in the morning, and flag football in the afternoon. I've introduced a twelve week flag football season, a twelve week soccer season, and I've provided incentives like trophies, medals, and pizza parties. I've provided schedules online so parents can be involved. We had a championship game and we learned every aspect that sports bring to a school by doing physical activity by being good teammates, sharing the ball, knowing how to win and lose, all of that stuff" (personal communication, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015). As you can see online-based programs like the Just Run program, implemented at J.C. Crumpton, provide physical activity opportunities for the students that otherwise wouldn't be available. I believe that creating awareness in relation to online-based physical education programs is the first step in providing adequate physical activity in underfunded schools.

These results have displayed the need for physical education throughout low socioeconomic communities. Whether it is the lack of resources or lack of awareness, something has to be done to incorporate organized physical activity in underfunded elementary schools or our younger generation will grow up disregarding physical activity due to its' disappearance from the curriculum.

## **Action Project**

### **Identification & Evaluation of Action Options**

**Focus issue or problem.** The main issue of this capstone project is focused on physical education programs being eliminated from underfunded schools. Research has shown a significant need for physical activity in low socioeconomic communities through inadequate community settings and facilities that promote physical activity (Beaulieu, Butterfield, Mason & Loovis, 2012). When physical education is cut from these disadvantaged schools, it only fuels larger issues like obesity. The ultimate purpose of this action project is to increase and sustain physical activity for students from underfunded elementary schools. Providing professional development for educators, creating awareness towards online-based physical education programs, or devising lesson plans for educators with little to no experience facilitating physical education, these can all be viable options towards implementing adequate physical education in underfunded schools.

**Action options.** My first action option is to promote and create a professional development program for educators from underfunded schools. Utilizing the physical education standards, this action option seeks to teach educators how to properly facilitate physical education. The intended targets for this option are the educators, which in return will benefit the students. By creating a professional development program for educators, students from

underfunded schools will no longer experience varying levels of physical education due to a lack of experience in the educators. Educators would be able to communicate professionally and effectively because they would each have a basic understanding of how to productively facilitate physical education.

Another viable action option is to establish awareness towards online-based physical education programs by compiling the numerous programs and information into one pamphlet, which can then be distributed to numerous underfunded schools. Many schools aren't aware of online-based physical education programs that require little to no funding, so I believe it is important for educators and administrators to see a realistic way to provide adequate physical activity throughout the school day. Administrators have the ability to make these envisioned changes and with the help of educators, these disadvantaged students can receive proper instruction on how to live a healthy lifestyle. Online-based physical education programs have the potential to inspire, inform, and involve students and the community by simply keeping the students physically active in today's academic heavy curriculum.

One final action option for this physical education related project is to create a group of lesson plans that will aid educators in facilitating physical education. Many educators in underfunded schools have minimal free time throughout the day, so providing lesson plans will prevent them from having to create their own. Educators can also use the lesson plans as references to construct their own unique activities that would fit their students best. These lesson plans would also provide a basic understanding of the physical education standards issued by the California Department of Education.

**Evaluation of action options.** The criterion that I plan to use for evaluating these action options includes cost, reach, and time. Cost is determined by the amount of funds it takes to

sustain and implement these options. Reach is determined by the amount of students and education professionals reached by these options. Lastly, time is decided by how much time is required to implement these specific actions.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Reach</b>	<b>Time</b>
Professional development	High	Low	High
Online-based physical education program awareness	Low	High	Low
Lesson plan folder	Low	High	Low

**Evaluation of evidence.** The first option of creating a professional development program will be the first to be evaluated. Although studies have shown professional development programs for physical education to work (Hart, 2005), this option would ultimately have a high cost. To be able to provide a program specifically for profession development in physical education, it would take a significant amount of funds. As far as reach goes, I believe it would reach the educators where the elementary schools could afford such programs. In this case, underfunded schools have minimal funds to incorporate such programs so in the end the reach would be low. Similar to the cost, the time required to complete such programs would also be rather high. Attending such programs would have to come after the school day or on weekends realistically. According to an interviewee, his underfunded school is not only understaffed but time constrained as well (personal communication, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015).

The second option to be evaluated is creating awareness towards online-based physical education programs. The cost of creating this awareness is absolutely nothing and it impacts countless amounts of students. Not only is the cost invisible, the physical education programs



this pamphlet promotes require minimal funds to maintain. These programs are able to reach all low socioeconomic communities with underfunded schools. Ultimately, this option reaches a wide variety of educators and students and inspires them to live a physically active lifestyle. This option requires a minimal amount of time, which would include the making of the pamphlet. Other than that, this option seeks to inform surrounding communities about the need for physical activity and ways to provide that for the students.

The last option to be evaluated involves creating a folder of lesson plans that can be used by educators to aid in facilitating physical education. This option is rather cost efficient because no funds are needed in order to distribute the lesson plans. This option also has the ability to reach a large amount of educators in underfunded schools by making these useful lesson plans available to all. The time it takes to compile such lesson plans would be minimal, which is another benefit from this option.

### **Decision Making**

**Recommendation.** After evaluating all options I believe the most effective action would be to compile numerous resources related to online-based physical education programs into one place. By compiling these resources into a pamphlet type flyer, educators and administrators will have options as to which online-based physical education program would work best for them. After constructing the pamphlets I plan to distribute them to the surrounding underfunded schools in the Seaside and Marina areas.

**Influence of context and assumptions.** This option seems to be the most beneficial option because it implements physical activity throughout the school day with unique and fun activities for the students. Some schools may not have staff on hand to facilitate specific physical education programs but there are other resources to help educators in providing physical activity

in the classroom. With compiling these resources, I am assuming these locally underfunded schools are willing to lead the charge in creating a well-rounded curriculum that involves daily physical activity for the students.

**Concessions.** Although they weren't chosen, the other action options definitely had strengths that would have helped educators and administrators in constructing a complete curriculum which includes organized physical activity. Providing professional development for educators in the area of physical education has shown to increase educator's abilities in facilitating physical education

**Limitations.** One main limitation that I can think of would be available time for these physical education programs. From my experiences, the minority rate in low socioeconomic areas is very high and many students are in need of extra help with English because it is their second language. For this reason, any free time during the day is geared towards academics rather than physical activity. This is unfortunate because studies have produced positive results when examining the relationship between academic achievement and organized physical activity.

**Potential negative outcomes.** One negative outcome from my action would include my compiling of resources being of no use and having schools disregard its call to action. Not only would it be a negative outcome, but it would just go to show when we keep disregarding issues in front of our face, they are only going to get worse, hence the childhood obesity rates.

### **Action Project Description, Documentation, Reflection**

Going into this action project, my goal was to promote the implementation of physical education in underfunded schools because there is a significant need for physical activity opportunities in those communities. By considering the options, the most realistic action was to create a pamphlet that can be copied and distributed to the schools in the surrounding areas

including Marina, Seaside, and Salinas. Online-based physical education resources were discovered during research and compiled into a handheld pamphlet that could be easily distributed. This handheld pamphlet provides the names, small descriptions, ways to implement, and local schools that have successfully implemented these programs. I brought the pamphlets to a total of four schools so far and the schools have been excited to see the amount of available resources relating to physical education. When distributing these pamphlets to underfunded schools in the surrounding communities, I experienced welcoming staffs in all of the schools I came across. I think the school staffs were open to the idea of implementing online-based physical education programs because educators ultimately want to provide a complete education for their students.

Based on my experiences with this project, I believe I need to keep promoting the implementation of physical education because research has shown a significant need for physical activity in today's predominantly academic curriculum. Without physical education, our nation's educational system is disregarding the fact that childhood obesity has been rising for years in past. I think I should continue promoting the implementation of physical education in underfunded, however I need to keep in mind the obstacles that many underfunded schools have when attempting to integrate a lasting physical education program.

After completing this project I have learned much more than I would've ever imagined. Whether it is the disadvantages that children from low socioeconomic communities grow up with, or the declination of physical education programs due to budget cuts, this Capstone project has taught me more than I ever thought I would know relating to childhood physical education. With more time I would have liked to do some research on specific underfunded elementary schools and help them implement the most viable online-based physical education program for

their specific school. For that reason, this would be something that I would be interested in continuing my efforts in promoting physical activity in the curriculum. Going into this project, I already had a passion for working with children, and that passion has done nothing but grow. Remembering how useful and impactful physical education was for me at a young age just motivates me to try and provide that for the next generation.

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## Appendix A

### Semi Structured Interview #1

The following questions will be asked to the bilingual liaison and physical education facilitator at J.C. Crumpton Elementary where a physical education program named Just Run has been implemented for the students.

#### Interview A1

What makes physical education important? Why?

Being the facilitator of the physical education program, how does physical education impact the surrounding community?

What is the Just Run Program and how does it work?

Did you notice a need for physical education prior to the implementation of the Just Run Program? If so, what did you notice?

How long have you been the facilitator for the Just Run program?

How was the Just Run Program implemented at J.C. Crumpton Elementary?

How much time is devoted to physical activity during the week?

- How much time was devoted to physical activity without the program?

What effects has the Just Run program had on the students?

- Have you seen a difference due to increased physical activity?

How many other schools in the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District have implemented this Just Run Program?

- Why isn't the Just Run program already implemented in other Elementary schools in the area?

## Appendix B

### Semi Structured Interview #2

The following set of questions will be asked to a 4th grade teacher at Martin Luther King Elementary.

#### Interview B1

What is your personal take on physical education and its importance in the childhood curriculum?

When was physical education a fully structured program at Martin Luther King Elementary?

- How many other schools in the area don't have physical education programs?

Does the lack of structured physical education reflect a lack of funding? Why or why not?

- What is being done?

From what you can remember, has there been a negative effect on academics since being without a structured physical education program?

Approximately how much time is spent participating in physical activity during the week?

- How much of that time comes solely from break and lunch time?
- Do you think that is enough time spent being physically active in school? Why?

Have any internet-based physical education programs been introduced to the school?

- Could it be a possibility?
- If not, is it due to a lack of resources? Why or why not?

## Appendix C

### CSUMB Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects

#### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

**Title of Project:** Implementation of Online-Based Physical Education Programs Project Proposal

We would like you to participate in a research study conducted by Cannon Bernarding, a student in the Liberal Studies Department, to be used for a capstone project at California State University, Monterey Bay.

The purpose of this research is to see what educators from low socioeconomic status schools think about the implementation of online-based physical education programs. Do educational professionals believe online-based physical education programs can be effective towards implementing physical education in schools that have had them cut?

You were selected as a participant in this study because as an educator your insights into physical education implementation would be very beneficial.

The benefits of participating in this project include an opportunity for teachers and the principal to express their ideas on implementing physical education in underfunded schools. Another benefit is the opportunity to learn about and introduce an online-based physical education program that one of the participating elementary schools has yet to implement.

If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to participate in a short interview. The interview will be scheduled at your convenience and should take 15-20 minutes to complete.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your written or witnessed verbal permission or as required by law. Furthermore, the data collected will only be used by the researcher, who will change all names and identifying information in his capstone paper and presentation. At the completion of this project, any audio-recorded interviews will be erased and photographs destroyed.

Participating in this project is entirely up to you. You can choose whether or not to be in the study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

If you want to know more about this research project or have questions or concerns, please call me at (408) 410-7222 or email me at [cbernarding@csumb.edu](mailto:cbernarding@csumb.edu) or call or email Dr. Deanne Pérez-Granados, of the Liberal Studies Department (Phone: 831-582-4322, Email: [dperez-granados@csumb.edu](mailto:dperez-granados@csumb.edu)).

The project has been reviewed and accepted by California State University, Monterey Bay. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

If you have questions about CSUMB's rules for research, please call the Committee for Human Subjects Chair, Chip Lenno, CSUMB Technology Support Services, 100 Campus Center, Building. 43, Seaside CA 93955, 831.582.4799.

You will get a copy of this consent form. Thank you for considering participation.

Sincerely, Cannon Bernarding

### **Consent Statement**

I understand the procedures described. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I freely agree to participate in this study. I know what I will have to do and that I can stop at any time.

I have been given a copy of this Consent Form.

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Signature

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Date

**Signature of Researcher**

In my judgment, the participant is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study.

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Signature of Researcher

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Date