

PARADISE VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

TO: Dr. Kriekard & Governing Board

February 25, 2005

FROM: John Weimer

SUBJECT: High School Graduation Requirement

Recommendation:

The High School Graduation Committee recommends that the graduation requirement for completion of Introductory Physical Education be changed to one semester of a new course entitled "Lifetime Involvement with Fitness and Exercise Concepts" (L.I.F.E. Concepts) and one semester selected from the schools offerings of activity-based physical education courses. Further recommendation for the implementation of this new requirement are:

- 1) school administrators be allowed to waive the physical education requirement (with no credit awarded) for medical (with documentation from a physician) or religious reasons;
- 2) any Dance course taught by a Fine Arts teacher be allowed to replace the Activity semester requirement (although the course would not concurrently satisfy the Fine Arts requirement); and,
- 3) any Physical Education courses taken prior to the institution of this requirement, or prior to entry into PVUSD, be allowed to fulfill the graduation requirement for PVUSD.

Key Points:

- 1) Two semesters of physical education would still be required.
- 2) The required course would encompass lifetime fitness concepts, nutrition, consumer choices, principles of exercise, and health and wellness information as well as fitness activities.
- 3) The activity-based course offerings would vary from one school to another but would include weight training, dance, and innovative games and activities, as well as team and individual sports. All activity courses would be repeatable for elective credit.
- 4) The new required curriculum would be introduced, and Introductory Physical Education discontinued, during the 2006-2007 school year. All students who had not completed I.P.E. at that time, would instead be required to complete the new curriculum.
- 5) The L.I.F.E. Concepts curriculum would be incorporated into Introductory Physical Education during the 2005-2006 school year.
- 6) Students may test out of either semester by demonstrating the required knowledge, skills, and fitness. This provision is in compliance with the State Board of Education Guidelines (R7-2-302-5-c).
- 7) To support the change to the new requirement, the committee also suggests:
 - the district take steps to ensure the new curriculum be instituted in all schools and reviewed periodically as occurs in the other required subjects.
 - time be provided for curriculum development and teacher in-service activities.
 - the physical education curriculum be articulated throughout the K-12 program of studies.
 - L.I.F.E. Concepts be the summer school offering rather than the activity-based courses.
 - facilities be constructed at all high schools to provide for the best possible fitness programs.

Background Information: The High School Graduation Committee was formed this year to address several policies and practices associated with high school graduation. The topics to be addressed include:

1) Total credits for graduation; 2) Introductory Physical Education; 3) Exceptions to the 22 credit requirement; 4) High school courses taken in middle school; 5) Class ranking; 6) Career and Technical Education requirement; 7) Differentiated diplomas. These topics were placed on the committee's agenda because of the Long Range Plan or as a result of concerns expressed at various district meetings during the past school year. It is possible that, after consideration of the impact of current practices, the committee might recommend change to policy or practice. Those recommendations will be brought to the appropriate group after the committee has reached consensus.

The first topic considered by the committee was the Introductory Physical Education requirement. The committee studied this topic over the course of five meetings, beginning in November. They came to believe that the curriculum originally developed for this course had fallen into disuse and the course was being developed independently by the physical educators. The focus and activities of the course varied widely from school to school and teacher to teacher. Much of the long range educational value of the course had been lost. The committee agreed that the required course should provide a sharper focus on lifetime fitness and knowledge of health and exercise concepts.

The Committee then generated several alternatives to the current requirement. After a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of each option, the committee invited the Department Chairs at each high school to join the discussion. After meeting with the committee, the department chairs and other school representatives met to design their preferred curriculum for the physical education requirement. At the February 10 meeting of the committee, they presented the proposal for a required one-semester course (L.I.F.E. Concepts) and a required semester of a choice of activity classes. After discussion, the committee agreed by consensus to support the proposal.

On February 24, the committee met again to finalize the recommendation to the Board and consider alternatives for waiving, testing out, or replacing the required courses. Members were able to reach agreement on the provisions included in the recommendation.

The next topic to be considered by the committee is graduation credit for courses taken in middle school. It is not expected that there will be a recommendation for a change in policy. The current practice, that only courses taught at the high school will receive high school credit, is articulated in the Record Keeping Guidelines. So, any recommendation for change will be sent to the High School Principals for their consideration.

The High School Graduation Committee is comprised 16 people from a cross section of the PVUSD community. The members are:

Dr. John Weimer, Facilitator

Susan Benjamin, Assistant Director of Special Education

Jeff Billings, Director of Information Technology

Jean Scharrer, Director of Alternative Education

Vic Harring, Director of Career and Technical Education

Kurt Jablin, Teacher, Physical Education PAC

Ronnie Milburn, Teacher, North Canyon HS Math

Kayce Sanchez, Teacher, Pinnacle HS Social Studies

Marti Marziani, Counselor, Horizon HS

Bev Lewis, Counselor, Pinnacle HS

Jon Walk, Principal, Paradise Valley HS

Mitch Von Gnechten, Assistant Principal, Shadow Mountain HS

Jim Brewer, Parent

Laura Lamberto-White, Parent

Susie Waldrom, Parent

Julia Zandler, Parent