

Grading physical education

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

I'm running the track. I pant and slow down to catch my breath.

“ Everyone had better be done with their five laps by the time that clock says 9: 00 a. m.!” Sound familiar? Physical Education: some call it gym class, some call it torture, but whatever you call it there is one problem with it. Physical Education is designed to keep students active so they can learn to live healthy lives, which is great. However, it is also a class, and therefore has a grade.

So, how do teachers grade this class? You probably would say they give you an A as long as you try and you participate. On the contrary, many P. E. classes now give grades based upon performance. In a world filled with bullying and peer pressure, students are finding it harder and harder to fit in. Who has the best grades and who is the most popular? These are questions students are faced with everyday.

Generally speaking, P. E. should be a class where students can unwind and have fun. But times are changing. Today's age has fitness and skill tests.

If you want an A you have to run a mile in under ten minutes or bench a minimum of 100 pounds. For the average athlete these tasks would prove a good work out, but for others they can be very challenging. In my P. E. class, like many other P.

E. classes, we have skill tests every quarter. Third quarter we had our weightlifting skill test. In order to get an A on our skill test we had to bench press a minimum of 100 pounds. Most guys can achieve this task without much trouble, but not every girl can lift 100 pounds. In fact, some high

school girls only weigh 100 pounds! One girl even came close to dropping a weight on her face because both her and her spotter could not lift the weight.

Because most girls could not lift the proper amount of weights we were all given poor grades on our skill test, therefore lowering our grades for the quarter as well as subjecting us to lower self-esteem. When it comes down to the final point, issuing grades in P. E. based upon skill and performance is improper. It is all too common that students are held back a grade level for failing P. E.

, even if they have decent grades in their other classes. Not all students are physically capable of meeting the requirements needed to pass P. E. Some students have asthma or injuries or are just not physically built to meet certain demands. Placing a grade on performance is wrong and degrading.

Students should not have to face ridicule and disappointment- and even danger in the case of students trying to lift heavier weights than they should- because they are physically incapable of performing a particular task. P. E. should allow students to be active while having fun. It is therefore my strong opinion that students in P. E.

classes should not be graded upon their skill and performance.