

The Tom Cronan Bill for Physical Education (SB558/HB372)

On May 21, 2018 Governor Haslam signed into law the bill that states, "...each student in elementary school will participate in a physical education class that meets 2 times per week. The total physical education class time each school week shall be no less than 60 minutes. The class shall be taught by a licensed teacher with an endorsement in physical education or by a specialist in physical education." In summary every child in elementary school in Tennessee will now receive 2 days per week of instructional physical education!
Implementation of the Tom Cronan Bill for Elementary Physical Education begins in July of 2019, the beginning of the 2019-20 school year.

The following were the perceived barriers to the bill:

-What about funding? The local school districts cannot add this financial burden to their budgets.

The BEP funding formula already in place for Tennessee's public schools provides monies for 1 full time physical education teacher per 350 students in all elementary schools. Funding is not an issue!

-Will we need to lengthen the school day to provide this added instruction time?

The required school day for elementary students is 6 ½ hours. Within that timeframe, all recommendations/requirements mandated by the State Board of Education/Department of Education for academics, Tier I and Tier II, plus daily recess, and special area classes of music, art, library/media center, computer, and physical education are met within the 6 ½ hour school day. Time is not an issue!

-Scheduling will be a nightmare. Is help available?

A scheduling committee is in place to assist any and all school districts and/or individual schools with scheduling. Administrators need only to contact Andrea Burton, Executive Director of TAHPERD for assistance. (tahperd.ed@aol.com)
Scheduling is not an issue!

-Does this create a shortage of teachers of elementary physical education?

The statewide survey of elementary physical education teachers revealed only 8 elementary schools in Tennessee did not have staff in place for physical education. Those schools are currently actively pursuing remediation of this issue. Certificated teachers are not an issue!

In summary, there are no barriers to providing 2 days per week of instructional physical education in the elementary schools of Tennessee.

With special thanks to the TAHPERD Advocacy/Legislative Chair, to the many members of TAHPERD who spoke to legislators, to American Heart in Tennessee, to Sen. Bill Ketrone and Rep. Roger Kane, to Micki Yearwood, to Joan Cronan, and to Governor Bill Haslam...because of you the future of Tennessee's children is brighter. Thank you!