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A View from the Field:

Introducing the New 2024 National Physical Education Standards

By Clancy M. Seymour , Langston Clark , Amanda Amtmanis, Dan DeJager, Tamela Ray, and Paulo Ribeiro

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The premier national professional association for K–12 health and physical education (HPE) in the United States is SHAPE America – Society of Health and Physical Educators. As a leading advocate for these disciplines, SHAPE America supports quality HPE programs in many ways, including but not limited to curriculum review, best practice recommendations, policy statements, and professional development. SHAPE America is also considered among the leaders in the country for the sport coaching profession.

Well-designed, school-based HPE, along with sport programs, have been the focus of SHAPE America for decades. As a result, the association has developed educational and professional standards for these disciplines (i.e., health, physical education, and coaching). The National Standards outline the knowledge and skills K–12 students should acquire in quality HPE programs (SHAPE America, n.d.a). The coaching standards mirror the same approach (knowledge and skills), while also highlighting the core responsibilities of a sport coach (Gano-Overway et al., 2020; SHAPE America, n.d.b).

As part of the process, SHAPE America has implemented a review cycle that includes periodic updates to each of the above standards. Most recently, both the SHAPE America National Health Education Standards (SHAPE America, 2024b) and National Physical Education Standards (SHAPE America, 2024a) were revised and unveiled at the March 2024 National Convention & Expo in Cleveland, Ohio. The purpose of this article is to highlight new features and outline changes to the 2024 National Physical Education Standards. This will be presented by three outstanding elementary, middle, and high school practitioners who each served on the National Standards Physical Education Task Force. We have also sought the viewpoint of an expert disciplinary professional who has served in many capacities over her illustrious career in health, physical education, and athletics. Each of the above professionals' perspectives has been included to help provide further clarity.

The Revision Process

The revision of the 2024 National Physical Education Standards began two and a half years ago when SHAPE America convened a National Standards Physical Education Task Force to revise the standards. A culturally responsive lens was a focus of this initiative, acknowledging the importance of inclusive and meaningful movement experiences for all children while at the same time addressing current trends in public education, technology, and society (Seymour & Clark, 2024). The task force assembled by SHAPE America was a diverse (i.e., gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation) and dynamic group of PE professionals, including expert and well-versed practitioners, scholars, researchers, and district- and state-level administrators.

The purpose of this article is to highlight new features and outline changes to the 2024 National Physical Education Standards.



The process included several hours and countless rounds of revision in both virtual and face-to-face settings. Feedback from SHAPE America members, current K–12 students, and the public at large was also welcomed. As a result, the data were robust and enabled a final version of the National Physical Education Standards to be released by SHAPE America at the March 2024 National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio.

The New National Physical Education Standards

The current version of the National Physical Education Standards is derivative of the three previous iterations developed in 1995, 2004, and 2013. The most notable changes include:

- The new standards have been reduced from five to four, including a merger of prior standards 2 and 3. Rather than one standard emphasizing fitness, the new standards have a more encompassing view toward fitness embedded throughout.
- The new layout is organized by psychomotor, cognitive, affective, and the more recently recognized social learning domain (Standard 3).
- The new standards highlight the importance of considering students' perspectives for the success of PE programs.
- The standards' view of physical literacy has also evolved, now framing physical literacy as an ongoing lifelong journey—a continuum without a fixed endpoint.
- The current version of the National Physical Education Standards also includes a shift from grade-level outcomes to grade-span learning indicators with learning progressions. This approach is more inclusive, while emphasizing meaningful movement and learning experiences for all children

More details can be found in the *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance* article, “Marking Our Flags: Introducing the New 2024 National Physical Education Standards” (Seymour & Clark, 2024).

The new standards are listed in Table 1. Included with the standards are rationales to help further guide the practitioner and stress SHAPE America’s holistic approach to PE. While the standards are numbered, it is important to mention that the standards are not in hierarchical order of importance, and that all standards and subsequent content are needed for meaningful and well-rounded movement experiences in PE.

Authentic Movement Experiences

A task force member and current elementary physical educator, Amanda Amtmanis, highlighted the importance of authentic movement experiences and how the 2024 National Standards support this goal:

The new SHAPE America National Physical Education Standards provide a framework to create meaningful and relevant learning opportunities for my students. Utilizing skill progressions helps ensure that all students can progress. Aligning each standard to a learning domain will help teachers design lessons that are more holistic while helping us design appropriate assessments that measure learning in all domains. Likewise, a robust selection of measurable learning indicators in the social and affective domains allows the physical educator to be responsive to students’ needs. Learning indicators from different

standards can be integrated in ways that best address the interests and needs of my students.

Physical Literacy

The revision project has also resulted in a more organic view of physical literacy. Physical literacy is a continuous venture that starts at birth and ends at the grave. Physical literacy has been operationalized as an ongoing lifelong journey that is continuously evolving. “As such, the standards frame physical literacy as a dynamic process recognizing that students are on individual developmental journeys carrying what they learn in K-12 PE throughout their lives” (Seymour & Clark, 2024, p. 9).

Tamela Ray—a director of health, PE, and athletics in a school district in New York State—supports the emphasis of the physical literacy journey for children in K–12 PE:

From an administrator’s perspective, one of the key features of the 2024 National Standards is the emphasis and integration of physical literacy. In addition to being a vital concept, consciously utilizing the term “literacy” aligns our field with existing educational terminology (e.g., mathematical numeracy). An operational definition of physical literacy as a goal of quality PE instruction is also helpful for practitioners. Perhaps the most critical feature is that these standards establish a consistent level of what students nationwide should know and be able to do in PE, thereby providing an organizational framework for states to revise standards and school districts to update or develop curricula.

Table 1. The 2024 SHAPE America National Physical Education Standards

Standard 1	Develops a variety of motor skills.	<i>Rationale:</i> Through learning experiences in physical education, the student develops motor skills across a variety of environments. Motor skills are a foundational part of child development and support the movements of everyday life. The development of motor skills contributes to an individual’s physical literacy journey
Standard 2	Applies knowledge related to movement and fitness concepts.	<i>Rationale:</i> Through learning experiences in physical education, the student uses their knowledge of movement concepts, tactics, and strategies across a variety of environments. This knowledge helps the student become a more versatile and efficient mover. Additionally, the student applies knowledge of health-related and skill-related fitness to enhance their overall well-being. The application of knowledge related to various forms of movement contributes to an individual’s physical literacy journey.
Standard 3	Develops social skills through movement.	<i>Rationale:</i> Through learning experiences in physical education, students develop the social skills necessary to exhibit empathy and respect for others and foster and maintain relationships. In addition, students develop skills for communication, leadership, cultural awareness, and conflict resolution in a variety of physical activity settings.
Standard 4	Develops personal skills, identifies personal benefits of movement, and chooses to engage in physical activity.	<i>Rationale:</i> Through learning experiences in physical education, the student develops an understanding of how movement is personally beneficial and subsequently chooses to participate in physical activities that are personally meaningful (e.g., activities that offer social interaction, cultural connection, exploration, choice, self-expression, appropriate levels of challenge, and added health benefits). The student develops personal skills including goal setting, identifying strengths, and reflection to enhance their physical literacy journey.

Note: Although numbered, the Standards are not in hierarchical order of importance.

Grade-Span Learning Indicators and Learning Progressions

While the prior grade-level outcomes were outstanding, the task force championed a human growth and development perspective (e.g., physical, mental, social, personal, and emotional) that is age-related and *not* age dependent (Goodway et al., 2021). Therefore, instead of grade-level outcomes, grade-span learning indicators with learning progressions have been adopted. This emphasizes inclusive and meaningful movement and learning experiences for all children in PE (Seymour & Clark, 2024), because “development is not dependent on one’s age but on opportunities for practice, instruction, and encouragement. Thus, it would not be expected to have all children in a second-grade class at the same stage of motor skill development” (SHAPE America, 2024a, pp. 4–5).

Subsequently, the goal was to provide both observable and measurable grade-span learning indicators organized by the four new National Standards. The learning progressions that ensue are examples only, and provide direction on how grade-span learning indicators can be unpacked. Once again, physical educators may integrate the learning progressions or further distill and develop their own.

Dr. Paulo Ribeiro—a middle school Physical Education Department chair who also served on the task force—values the shift from grade-level outcomes to grade-span learning indicators:

There are three key features of the new National Physical Education Standards that are prominent. The first is the shift from grade-level outcomes to grade-span learning indicators. It is unrealistic to expect all students will be able to master a specific skill by the end of the school year. With the use of grade-span learning indicators, students are able to improve and reach their full potential at their own pace. Secondly, I appreciate the added emphasis on physical literacy as a journey. It plants the idea that students can continue to apply and learn more about physical activity throughout their lifetime, and it is not something that stops when they graduate from high school. Finally, the updated Standard 4 includes an indicator in which students “reflect on movement experiences.” When students learn to reflect on movement and the importance it has in their lives, they are more likely to apply these principles outside of their physical education classes.

As department chair at the middle school level, my goal is to learn more about the new standards and introduce them to my colleagues. As a team, we will take time to unpack the standards and align them with activities/lessons we already undertake. Also, we can identify indicators and progressions we are missing and collaborate to create new learning experiences, including the time to reflect and make changes to better meet each student at their own level.

A task force member who teaches high school physical education, Dan DeJager, shares similar perspectives regarding the shift to grade-span learning indicators:



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One of the exciting features of these new standards is the learning progressions rather than grade-level outcomes. This enables the PE teacher to differentiate their instruction and meet the needs of all students in their classes. It also allows students to move at a pace that is right for them. Another key feature in these standards is that each standard aligns to a learning domain: psychomotor, cognitive, social, and affective. These standards will guide my curriculum, assessment, and instruction, but they also provide other physical educators the latitude to develop their own meaningful curriculum that resonates with their students.

Overall, the commentary provided by our contributing practitioners demonstrates the holistic and inclusive approach to this new version of the National Standards. Other professionals are encouraged to take similar steps with the application of these standards to allow for meaningful and relevant PE programming in their local context. The next sections provide some practical suggestions for doing so.

Using the Standards

The National Physical Education Standards outline what K–12 students will be able to know and demonstrate successfully as a result of quality school PE programs (SHAPE America, n.d.a). With movement at the core of all endeavors in PE, the new standards are vast and provide a holistic approach to encouraging all students to embrace learning experiences. The standards themselves are not curricula, but they serve as a compass or guiding light that provides the physical educator direction and illumination for the path ahead. “Physical educators must consider the standards in their practice, but have the autonomy to interpret and apply them distinctly in their own settings” (Seymour & Clark, 2024, p. 12).

Figure 1 offers an outline of a lesson that infuses all four standards. While it is not the expectation that all lessons will connect to all standards, the example illustrates how the

<p>Pickleball Grades 6-8 Equipment needed: pickleball paddles and balls, nets, hula-hoops Considerations: Before any learning task, the teacher must review correct form and technique, including visual aids.</p>
<p>Task 1 In pairs, one student tosses the ball to their partner who takes a short step to the outside and strikes the ball back to the tosser using a forehand stroke. After 5 tosses, students switch roles (Standard 1, Indicator 1.8.12).</p>
<p>Task 2 After working on the forehand stroke, students transition to a backhand stroke with each student hitting the ball 5 times and then switching roles (Standard 1, Indicator 1.8.12). While passing the ball back to the partner, the teacher can explain the importance of a strategy in game situations for the hitter to return to the midcourt position (Standard 2, Indicator 2.8.4).</p>
<p>Task 3 Next, student pairs can practice their volley skills. The student tossing the ball stands behind one hula hoop placed on the ground. One student tosses the ball in the air to their partner's waistline who strikes the ball back by aiming for the hula hoop. After 5 turns, students switch roles (Standard 1, Indicator 1.8.13).</p>
<p>Task 4 Later, students practice serving skills. In pairs, students stand across the net. Students take turns underhand serving to one another (Standard 1, Indicator 1.8.11). While students are practicing skills, the teacher can instruct students on how to provide constructive feedback to one another (Standard 3, Indicator 3.8.4). Finally, students can be challenged to follow the game rules, solve potential game conflicts, and self-officiate when playing small games (Standard 3, Indicators 3.8.6, 3.8.8 and 3.8.9).</p>
<p>Task 5 At the end of the lesson, students are asked to reflect about the lesson and share how they can apply what they have learned in class outside of the school setting (Standard 4, Indicator 4.8.9).</p>

Figure 1. Middle school lesson outline using all four National Physical Education Standards.

Standards allow for meaningful movement experiences for all children.

Two of the task force members provided additional examples of how to apply the new standards. Amanda Amtmanis, quoted earlier, described how Standards 3 and 4 can be infused in an elementary PE learning setting:

My students were having frequent conflicts. I wanted to provide an opportunity to practice scaling and empowering students to be independent problem solvers. I created task cards that had examples of problems that ranged from trivial to life-threatening situations for students to sort and reflect on what qualities distinguish a small problem from a larger issue. I also wanted to integrate Standards 3 and 4 into an active game that would help students develop their skills in Standards 1 and 2. Soccer is of high interest to many of my students (our community has both a rich cultural history of Italian immigrants and new immigrants from Central and South America). Thus, designing a dribbling and passing relay for students to collect and sort cards allowed students of widely varying abilities to practice their soccer skills. Since the primary focus was on classifying problems, the differences in skill level were deemphasized. Students had practice repetitions without skill being the main priority or focus. This made a welcome difference for less skilled students.

The priority indicators for this lesson were:

- 3.5.1 Describes the perspective of others during a variety of activities.
- 3.5.5 Solves problems independently, with partners, and in small groups.
- 4.5.9 Recognizes personally effective techniques that assist with managing one's emotions and behaviors in a physical activity setting.

While working on these indicators, students were also given verbal feedback during the learning tasks that align with Standards 1 and 2:

- 1.5.19 Demonstrates dribbling with feet in a variety of practice tasks.
- 1.5.17 Demonstrates sending and receiving an object in a variety of practice tasks.
- 2.5.4 Demonstrates knowledge of appropriate movement concepts for efficient performance of manipulative skills.

High school PE teacher, Dan DeJager, also quoted earlier, suggested how to incorporate the new standards and grade-span learning indicators in a flying-disc lesson:

For example, at the high school level we could be teaching flying-disc activities. Assuming students have had time to learn and practice flying-disc throwing and catching skills, students can select among several tasks, including: playing a game of Ultimate in teams, playing a game of Kan Jam with a partner against another pair, throwing and catching a disc with a partner, or putting to a disc-golf basket individually. The lesson can be repeated to allow students the opportunity to try all activities. During the lesson(s), students practice flying-disc throwing skills and strategies to be successful at their chosen activity, while the teacher

provides feedback. At the end of the lesson(s), students complete a written self-reflection answering the following questions:

- What social, physical, cognitive, or emotional benefits did you experience by participating in the flying-disc activities of your choice? What was your favorite option?
- What did you not like about your choices or would not like regarding the other options?
- If given another opportunity, would you make a different choice and, if so, what and why? If not, why not?
- How do you think you will most likely play with a flying disc as an adult? Why?

This lesson example supports student learning for a variety of indicators for high school physical education, including these National Standards and grade-span learning indicators:

- 1.12.1 Demonstrates activity specific movement skills in a variety of lifetime sports and activities.
- 2.12.1 Demonstrates knowledge of tactics and strategies within lifetime sports and activities.
- 3.12.2 Exhibits proper etiquette, respect for others, and teamwork while engaging in physical activity.
- 4.12.3 Identifies and participates in physical activity that positively affects health.
- 4.12.4 Chooses and participates in physical activity based on personal interests.

Recognizing that standards are not curricula, but crucial to developing quality PE programs, physical educators are encouraged to use the new Standards to develop and employ developmentally appropriate curricula that will meet their students' specific and holistic needs.

Table 2. Crosswalk of National Standard 3 and NYS Physical Education Standard 4.

National Standard 3: Develop social skills through movement. Grades 3–5	NYS Standard 4: Exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others
3.5.1 Describes the perspective of others during a variety of activities.	<i>NY.S4.2.3</i> Demonstrates cooperative and inclusive behaviors with others in physical activity settings. <i>NY.S4.2.5</i> Uses communication skills and strategies that promote positive relationships in physical activity settings.
3.5.2 Uses communication skills to negotiate roles and responsibilities in a physical activity setting.	<i>NY.S4.3.3</i> Demonstrates strategies to reinforce positive decisions in physical activity settings. <i>NY.S4.2.5</i> Uses communication skills and strategies that promote positive relationships in physical activity settings.
3.5.3 Demonstrates respectful behaviors that contribute to positive social interaction in group activities.	<i>NY.S4.1.4</i> Demonstrates responsible personal behavior in physical activity settings. <i>NY.S4.2.4</i> Demonstrates responsible behavior with minimal teacher prompts in physical activity settings. <i>NY.S4.3.5</i> Responds appropriately to personal and social behaviors in physical activity settings.
3.5.4 Demonstrates safe behaviors independently with limited reminders.	<i>NY.S4.1.5</i> Demonstrates respect for facilities and exhibits safe behaviors in physical activity settings. <i>NY.S4.3.4</i> Compares and contrasts possible outcomes to decisions in physical activity settings.
3.5.5 Solves problems independently, with partners, and in small groups.	<i>NY.S4.3.6</i> Identifies problem-solving skills and conflict resolution tactics in physical activity settings. <i>NY.S4.3.7</i> Applies problem-solving skills and conflict resolution tactics in physical activity settings.
3.5.6 Makes choices that are fair according to activity etiquette.	<i>NY.S4.1.4</i> Demonstrates responsible personal behavior in physical activity settings.
3.5.7 Describes physical activities that represent a variety of cultures around the world.	<i>NY.S4.2.3</i> Demonstrates cooperative and inclusive behaviors with others in physical activity settings.

Finally, Dr. Tamela Ray mentioned the usefulness of connecting state and National Standards:

Teachers frequently question whether state or national standards should take priority in planning and curriculum development. While this is a local school district decision, a crosswalk between state and national standards is a valuable exercise to demonstrate overlaps and gaps. Table 2 provides a crosswalk of National Standard 3 and New York State (NYS) Standard 4, grades 3–5.

The Role of Professional Development

Dr. Ray also highlighted the importance of professional development in curating a curriculum aligned with the new standards:

As an administrator, applying new National Standards means providing professional development for K–12 teachers. Opportunities to unpack and become familiar with the shift from five to four standards now aligned with learning domains, reviewing the key features noted earlier, and examining the shift from grade-level outcomes to the grade-span learning indicators are all potential professional development opportunities.

SHAPE America has made a variety of resources available to provide professional development in the use of the new standards, including the *2024 National Physical Education Standards Educator Kit* (SHAPE America, 2024c), the *Diving Into the New SHAPE America National Physical Education Standards* webinar series (SHAPE America, 2024d), and other documents and workshops (for a current list, visit www.shapeamerica.org/standards/pe/professional-development).

Conclusion

This article leveraged the expertise and viewpoint of several practitioners (including task force members), to provide insight into the new standards. Recognizing that standards are not curricula, but crucial to developing quality PE programs, physical educators are encouraged to use the new standards to develop and employ developmentally appropriate curricula that will meet their students’ specific and holistic needs.

Disclosure Statement

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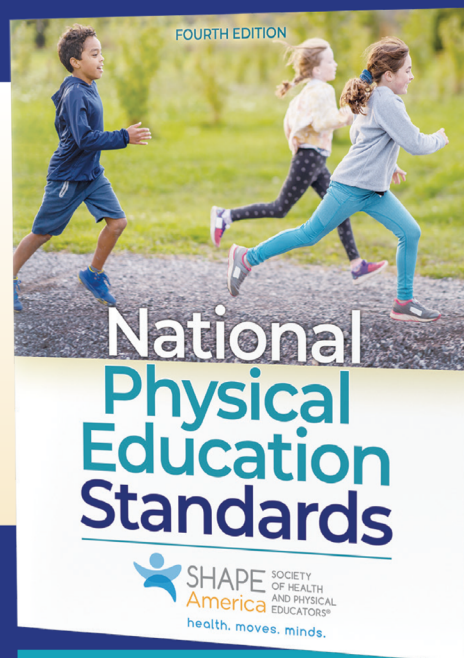
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