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Prevention Research Center

on Nutrition and Physical Activity

# **Hey, How Do You Feel About Physical Education?**



Youth Task Force

Harvard Prevention Research Center

# Who We Are

- We are a diverse group of eleven young adults from various areas of Boston.
- We were recruited from the Health Careers Academy, South Boston Boys & Girls Club, Blue Hill Boys & Girls Club and the Colonel Daniel Marr Boys & Girls Club.
- We meet once a month from October until May.



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# How Our Project Came About

- Due to the growing concern over obesity in youth we felt like more information had to be gathered on physical activity and physical education in schools.
- We wanted to know:
  - How important is health to high school students?
  - What are the policies surrounding physical education in schools?
  - Do students have opportunities offered through their schools to be physically active?
  - How students evaluated the quality of physical education in their schools?
- So we chose to:
  - Survey high school students about their experiences with physical education in their high schools.



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# Our Survey

- Agreed upon a total of 14 questions

Here are a few samples:

- How satisfied are you with your PE class?
- Rate your concern with maintaining a healthy lifestyle  
(5 being very concerned and 1 being not an issue)
- Our next step was to create a practice survey which we then gave to one student per YTF member to test if the questions were understandable.
- Revised the survey based on our test.



# Methods

- Conducted the survey from February-March, 2005.
- We approached students from different grades in our high schools to get a broader range of results and asked them if they would take the survey.
- Each Youth Task Force Member agreed to survey at least 20 students.



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# Our Sample (N=199)

**High school students from public and private high schools throughout Boston including:**

- BC High
- Boston Latin High School
- Charlestown High
- City on a Hill
- Dorchester High
- Health Careers Academy
- Hyde Park High
- Madison High
- Mount St. Joseph Academy
- New Mission High
- Savio Prep
- Snowden High
- South Boston High
- Trinity Catholic
- Wayland High



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# Results

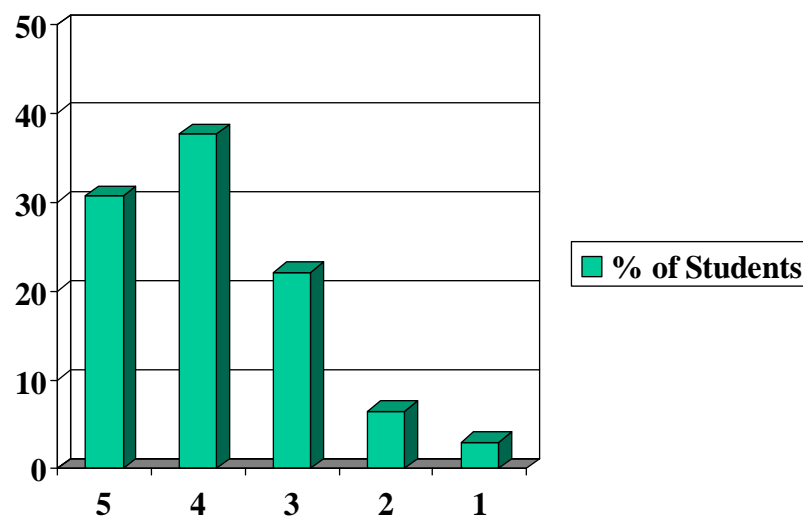


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# Question #1

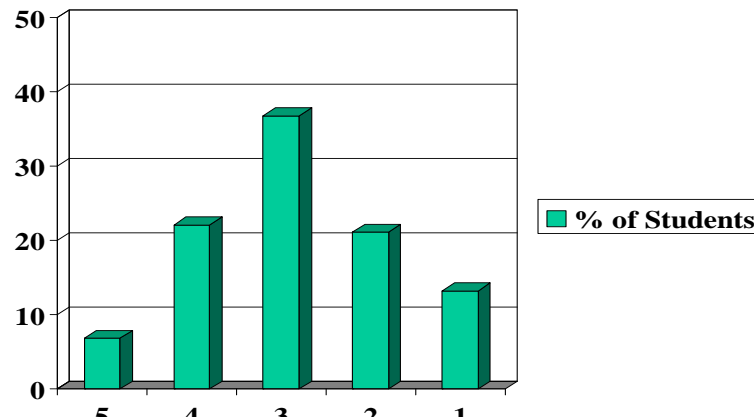
- Rate your concern with maintaining a healthy lifestyle (5 being very concerned and 1 being not an issue)
  - 90.5% answered 3 or higher, with 68.4% answering 4 or 5.





# Question #2

- Rate your school's concern with supporting a healthy lifestyle for students (5 being extremely satisfactory and 1 being unsatisfactory)
- Less than 1/3 (28.9%) answered 4 or 5



# Questions #6 and #10

- **Question #6:** Do you know if your school has a PE policy?
  - More than half (57.9%) don't know if their school has a PE policy.
  
- **Question #10:** How satisfied are you with your PE class? (i.e. the extent of topics covered, the quality of the class, etc.)
  - 55.7% do not take PE or their school doesn't offer it
  - Of the % that do have PE
    - 25.8% are very satisfied
    - 46.1% are somewhat satisfied
    - 22.5% are somewhat dissatisfied
    - 5.6% are extremely dissatisfied



# Question #11

- Does your PE class provide you the necessary knowledge and skills to establish and maintain physical fitness, participate in physical activity, and maintain personal health?
  - Of the 44.2% of students who actually have PE the answers were:
    - Yes: 24.1%
    - Mostly: 28.7%
    - Somewhat: 32.2%
    - Not at all: 14.9%



# Question #13

- Does your school grade PE by:
  - a. Letter grade (i.e. a b c d f)
  - b. Pass or fail

If you answered letter grade, then does it count towards your GPA? Yes or No?

- 58.5% of students receive a letter grade, but only 9% of these students have the grade count towards their GPA.
- 41.5% of students receive a Pass/Fail Grade

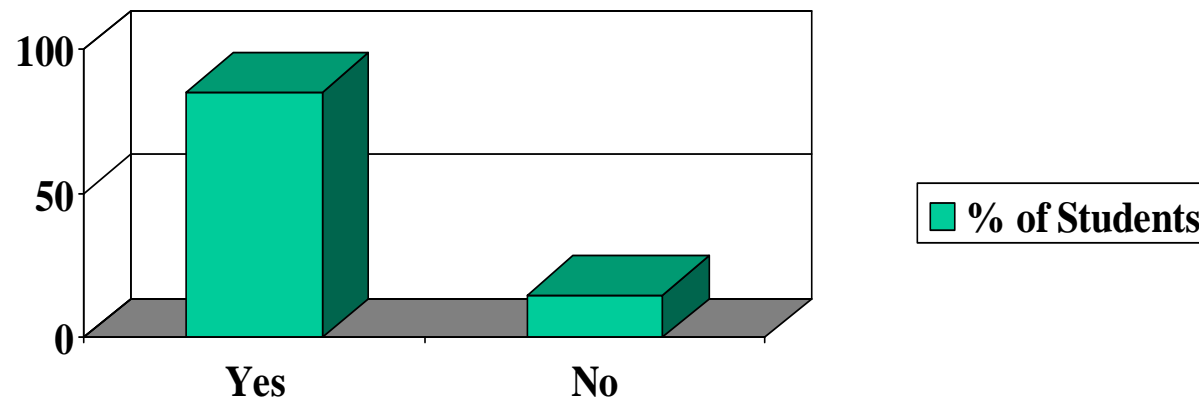


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# Question #14

- If you do not have PE at your school, would you participate in PE if it was offered?
  - Yes: 85.2%
  - No: 14.8%



# Limitations

- We had a convenient sample of students (ex: friends, classmates).
- Some schools had more respondents than others.
- The survey had to kept brief because of time concerns.



# What Have We Learned So Far?

- Students rate their concern for maintaining a healthy lifestyle at a very high level, yet students are not satisfied with their school's concern with supporting a healthy lifestyle.
- More than half of high school students do not participate in physical education either because it is not offered or it is not required. Most students who do not have PE offered would take it if it was offered.
- Students who do take Physical Education seem to enjoy it and think it is worthwhile.



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# Our thoughts...

- Awareness about the lack of physical activity in schools must be raised.
- More physical education classes should be offered.
- Schools need to help students be healthy!