

Auditors Give High Ranking To Newark Central School District's Pre-K-12 Physical Education Program

The Newark Central School District Pre-K through 12 Physical Education Program received overall high ratings in an audit conducted last year by the New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance (NYSAHPERD).

Authorized by the Board of Education, auditors explored and analyzed the PreK-12 program and made comments and recommendations for improvements if indicated.

A separate audit of the NCSD's Interscholastic Athletic Program is underway and expected to be completed by late spring.

The Physical Education Department Auditors Colleen Corsi, Executive Director of NYSAHPERD, Ron Whitcomb, retired Victor Central School District Director of Athletics and Jason Lehmbek, Director of Athletics for the Clarence Central School District gathered information through interviews with teachers, administrators and students and reviewed the district's Physical Education Plan, Physical Education Assessment Guide and the Physical Education Curriculum Map related to policies and practices. In addition, they completed on-site visits and observations of the curriculum being delivered.

"We are humbled and appreciative to receive such a positive audit report from NYSAHPERD, the voice for physical educators in New York," said Chris Corey, NCSD's Director of Health, Physical Education and Athletics. *"We are proud of our Physical Education program and have been confident internally for some time that our program is of high quality. To be categorically affirmed in this makes us feel great and motivated to do even more. Our teachers are tremendous. They care deeply about our kids, are committed to their own growth and determined to produce physical literate graduates who have the ability, confidence and desire to be physically active for life. We look*

forward to further growing our program in an effort to become a model program in the state."

The NYSAHPERD report was issued in the fall of 2021 after the 4-month long audit that reported on and ranked 10 areas explored. Based on a 4-point rubric with 4 being the highest and 1 the lowest, **8 out of 10 of sections received top rankings of 4 and the other two received the second highest rankings of 3.**

"The findings of this audit support the true purpose behind our physical education curriculum, which is to develop the students' competence and confidence to be successful in various physical activities that play a central part of their lives both now and into the future," said Superintendent Susan Hasenauer.

The Executive Summary from the audit, the ranking received and a few comments or recommendations in each category follow:

- **Section 1:** *The district has a written mission statement that reflects the physical education teachers' goals and objectives and is a key factor in curriculum decisions. #4 Auditors said the mission statement is "highly appropriate and aligned with the best practices of quality physical education."*
- **Section 2:** *The district employs a Director of Physical Education who has teacher certification in physical education and administrative certification. The director provides ongoing impactful leadership to the K-12 physical education staff. #4 Auditors said district and building-level administrators viewed the physical education program "positively" and physical education teachers "feel appreciated, supported and empowered by the director," and the director is concerned about the quality of the curriculum and as a result has made "positive changes." Auditors also said: "The decision of the Newark Central School District Board of Education to utilize this leadership model has had a significant positive impact on the quality of the physical education program."*



• **Section 3:** *The district is in compliance with most of the Commissioner's Regulations relating to required instruction in physical education. #3* Citing Commissioners Regulation 135:4, auditors noted all K-3 pupils are required to participate in physical education on a daily basis and the minimum time devoted to such programs (K-6) must be at least 120 minutes per week. They said: *"Both Lincoln and Perkins schools fall short by 40 minutes each week and by 3 days each week. The Middle School, High School (and Kelley School) are in compliance with the Commissioner's Regulations."* Auditors recommended the district not only come into compliance at the two schools, but *"establish an elementary physical education committee to look at creative ways to move into compliance with CR 135.4."*

"All school districts in the area struggle to provide daily K-3 physical education instruction" Corey said in reference to the auditors findings. *"Our offerings are comparable to other area districts."*

• **Section 4:** *The physical education department chairperson consistently provides support for the PK-12 physical education staff in collaboration with the Director of Physical Education. #4* Auditors recommended the Department *"consider employing a physical education department chair at the PK-6 level and at the 7-12 level. This would allow for more time and specific leadership at the two levels."*

• **Section 5:** *The written curriculum is developmentally appropriate, vertically organized and provides the exemplary guidance for teachers to effectively design and implement quality lessons that are aligned with the district and department's mission. #4* Auditors recommended the Department *"continue to update the curriculum map with current units and other areas of instruction as they change over time."*

• **Section 6:** *The district's physical education teachers use assessment tools that clearly demonstrate that students are meeting the New York State Learning Standards. #4* Auditors recommended teachers: *"Post skill assessment rubrics in the gym and review at the beginning of each unit to assure that students understand the learning targets; review cognitive assessments to build in some higher-order thinking questions (comparing, analyzing, contrasting) versus current samples that indicate recall or true-false questions; and consider scenario-based questions when assessing NEWARK PRIDE."*

• **Section 7:** *The district consistently provides the least restrictive environment for their special needs students. #4* Auditors noted the Director of Physical Education collaborates with the Director of Pupil Personnel services to ensure appropriate services are provided to students with special needs. Continued interaction with the Pupil Services Director was recommended *"in order to provide appropriate services to all students with special needs in the Newark Central School District."*

• **Section 8:** *The Director of Physical Education regularly provides professional development opportunities for staff relevant to the physical education program. #4* Auditors recommended the Director of Physical Education continue to support and encourage professional staff development including in the areas of *"technology for remote learning; student mental health support; COVID learning loss; and educator self care."*

• **Section 9:** *The district's facilities, equipment and supplies meet the current needs of some of the various grade levels in the physical education program. #3* Auditors said the *"one exception to this was Lincoln Elementary School. Their gymnasium lacks adequate space to teach. It is a smaller gymnasium that limits the units that can be taught, therefore creating some inequity compared to the other elementary schools."* However, they noted: *"They have been provided with more than adequate supplies to teach the units outlined in the curriculum."*

"Our Department offsets the challenges the size of the Lincoln School gym presents by offering very creative units and lessons," Corey said of the auditors findings in this category.

• **Section 10:** *The district employs a sufficient number of certified instructional staff to provide for safe and manageable classes. #4* Auditors said the district employs a sufficient number of certified physical education teachers at the PK-12 levels. They recommended: *"At the high school level the director should collaborate with the guidance department and the high school principal to get a more equitable number of students in certain classes."*

See the audit here: <https://www.newarkcsd.org/cms/lib/NY01000239/Centricity/Domain/1/AuditPg1-16.pdf>