

GENDER EQUITY AS THE EVALUATING TOOL  
FOR MIDDLE/JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL  
PHYSICAL EDUCATION  
CURRICULUMS, FACILITIES & EQUIPMENT

By

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I also extend my gratitude to those individuals who took the time to fill out the survey. Without them, this thesis could not have been written.

I dedicate this to all those women and girls who have experienced or will experience an environment of inequality in the physical education setting. Be strong, try hard, and do not let discrimination stand in your way. Be empowered to make change.

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Abstract of Thesis  
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Gender Equity as the Evaluating Tool  
For Middle/Junior High School  
Physical Education  
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Title IX has had an impact in the sports arena but how has it affected the physical education setting? The purpose of this study was to investigate selected middle/junior high schools across the state of Illinois to determine if they are in compliance with Title IX in the areas of curriculums, facilities, and equipment. A survey was developed using research literature and the expertise of an advisor and then sent to a sample of 70 middle/junior high schools from 16 of 912 school districts in the state of Illinois that had populations of 500 or more students. Thirty-six percent of the surveys were returned and analyzed using descriptive statistics for objective questions and a theme analysis for open-ended questions.

The results showed facilities were equal across gender except one school was not in compliance with Title IX because the boys' locker room and the male physical education offices were larger and newly built. Equipment should be provided to allow the success of both genders and the research indicated that the schools have made this accommodation within their curriculum. Gender separation, as described in Title IX, may only occur when a contact sport is being taught and the data revealed most schools were co-ed with the exception of a few instances. A sound curriculum needs to have a wide

variety of activities, but survey results showed this to be untrue because there was a heavy emphasis on games and fitness activities. Literature stated that language like “sportsmanship” or “you guys” is discriminating towards the female gender and the findings showed this language often occurs in the classroom.

The study shows that separation occurs outside the context of what Title IX demands and schools need to address this and make the appropriate changes. Also, language needs to be focused upon in order to eliminate discrimination against women and girls. In addition, facilities need to be compliant with the law in order to be equal for both genders. Future studies should focus on what specifically is included in present day middle/junior high physical education curriculums especially in the wilderness/cooperative adventure component, types of assessments used to grade students, how language is used in the classroom and what types of discipline plans are used and if they are equitable for both genders.

## Chapter I

### Introduction

The view of physical education has changed tremendously over several centuries. As early as 1762, Jean Jacques Rousseau wrote on the subject in his book, *Emile* (“Jean Jacques,” n.d.). He described that a person must be educated in a way that will enable them to be a good citizen (“Abbreviated World,” n.d.) In order to fulfill this criterion, the mind and the body must work together. For example, by working out the body physically with strengthening exercises and keeping the heart healthy, the minds’ ability to think and learn is increased. Rousseau specifically stated in regards to women that they should work the body in order to be attractive and eventually marry (“Abbreviated World,” n.d.)

Catharine Beecher was one of the first women to fight to get physical education in the school setting on a daily basis. As head mistress of Hartford Seminary in 1825, she founded a form of calisthenics that were especially designed for women derived from Swedish gymnastics. Beecher believed that calisthenics would give women strength and beauty (“Early American,” n.d.).

Later that century in 1885, Delphine Hanna broke into history by being the first woman physical education teacher at Oberlin College. She believed in the need to teach scientific aspects of physical education geared specifically for women. In the first year of the course, she had 125 women students enrolled. In addition, she had a class of men who wanted to have formal instruction in baseball and football (Lynn, 1941). Some of those male students eventually did ground breaking things in the 1900’s in the area of physical education (e.g. Thomas Wood, Halsey Gulick, Fred Leonard). Hanna eventually

taught a 4-year physical education program which became accredited in 1901. In 1902, this program became the first to graduate women in physical education in the United States and enabled them to earn their bachelor's degree. Her program consisted of calisthenics; but eventually she added many sports as they became available to women such as basketball, skating, and bicycle lessons (Lynn, 1941).

Much later in 1972, Congress passed the Educational Act and it became part of the 1964 Civil Rights Amendment (Dubois, 1999). The 37 words within the Educational Act changed forever how educational programs receiving federal money could act. These words were:

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance (Carpenter & Acosta, 2001).

Known as Title IX, its goal was to alleviate discrimination against women in an educational environment (Greendorfer, 1998). As a result, schools, among others, were legally obliged to review their program offerings, sports programs, hiring practices, facilities, and equipment to make sure that all aspects of the educational programs were equitable by sex (Lirgg, 1993). Much of this attention has been given to sports but little has been given to the classroom, especially in physical education.



### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate selected middle/junior high schools in the state of Illinois to see whether or not they are in compliance with Title IX in the physical education setting. Specifically, those targeted compliance areas were curriculums, facilities, and equipment.

### Hypotheses

The hypothesis is that physical education programs are in compliance with Educational Act of 1972 known as Title IX in regards to curriculums, facilities, and equipment.

### Assumptions

It was assumed the individuals filling out the survey were knowledgeable in the physical education program and the facility in which they taught. Also, it was assumed that these individuals knew how to fill out the survey and were honest in their answers.

### Delimitations

The subjects were physical education programs in 25 different schools with populations of 500 or more and were located in the state of Illinois in 16 different school districts.

### Limitations

Certain factors arose and some limitations have been noted.

1. The person filling out the survey did not answer truthfully or may have been in a hurry.

2. The sampled schools may not be representative of all middle/junior high schools in Illinois as no surveys were sent to any school in the Chicago Public School system.
3. The survey was limited to the state of Illinois and to middle/junior high schools with student populations of 500 or more.
4. The return rate was too small to make generalized conclusions.

#### Definition of Terms

Cooperative – individuals working or acting together willingly for a common purpose or benefit.

Gender Equity – something that is fair or just for males and females.

Gender Roles – an image of being male or female that a person presents to others.

Title IX – A clause in the 1972 Educational Act stating that no one shall because of sex be denied the benefits of any education program or activity that receives federal aid.

## Chapter II

### Review of Literature

Title IX recently celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. At its inception, no one ever dreamed of the path it has paved bringing so many opportunities for women. While Title IX and its implications for athletics are in abundance, there is little information dealing with gender equity in the physical education setting. This chapter reviews articles pertaining to Title IX in the physical education setting, specifically the impact of Title IX in physical education, the resistance to Title IX, and guidelines for physical education teachers.

### Title IX and Education Amendment

In 1972, Congress passed the Education Act with 37 words commonly known as Title IX. These words were:

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance (Carpenter & Acosta, 2001).

Immediately Title IX had implications for all educational programs from names of occupations e.g. policeman to police officer or stewardess to flight attendant, to athletics and especially physical education curriculum, facilities, and equipment. Before Title IX, it was permissible for physical education classes to be segregated by sex and the curriculums for each gender were different with the preparation of teachers for each. For example, a female physical education curriculum may include gymnastics, dance, or

recreational team games were taught predominately by women. The male physical education curriculum may be that of football, basketball, wrestling, or a male taught activities that would be considered active and competitive. With the onset of Title IX, physical education classes may be, but do not have to be, segregated by sex when the activity is defined as contact in nature e.g., football, boxing, basketball, rugby, ice hockey, wrestling, or any sport whose which involves body contact (Carpenter, Acosta, Nelson, & Portman, 2001). In addition, supporters of Title IX believe that there are many other benefits physical education can provide for both genders including curriculum, facilities, and equipment which allow experiences to develop male and females equally (Wendt & Carley, 1983).

#### Implications for Physical Education

Literature suggests there are many ways to implement Title IX into physical education settings to promote an equitable environment for all (Kelly 1977, Beverage & Scruggs, 2000). First, the teacher must develop a sound curriculum that includes a wide variety of activities. Students should be allowed to have some choices in the activities that are of interest and have value to them. In doing this, the teacher must be willing to be more flexible and become more skilled in teaching a greater number of activities (Kelly, 1977). A second way is to develop lesson plans with both competitive and cooperative opportunities like creating games, dances, etc., which will increase and maintain interest levels in the classroom for both genders (Beveridge & Scruggs, 2000).

Besides changing curriculum, Title IX is also concerned with facilities and equipment. When classes are segregated by gender, typically one gender is given access

to better facilities and equipment (Carpenter & Acosta, 2001). In the past, preference was given to male students. Currently, Title IX states that facilities and equipment must be comparable for both male and female students (Carpenter & Acosta, 2001). This means that if the boys have a locker room with carpet and updated lockers, then the girls' locker room must be done in the same manner and budgeted for on a regular and scheduled basis.

A third way to increase equality is having enough equipment for each student so that all can participate. This can be challenging due to the lack of budget; however, creative responses are needed e.g., station rotation to keep everyone active. Equipment must be of the same quality and appropriate to promote success for either gender (Beveridge & Scruggs, 2000). For example, at the high school level, there should be both 29.5 cm and 28.5 cm basketballs available and alternately used in co-ed games. Also, when choosing the equipment, one must insure that it is developmentally appropriate, e.g., right size, weight, and color to increase students' accuracy and mechanics (Beveridge & Scruggs, 2000).

The fourth area of equity is the grading procedure used in physical education. Many, many years ago, students' grades were dependant on how skilled individuals performed in games such as being a good dribbler or how many times they could catch a football or throw a softball accurately. Any student who was not an "athlete" found that they never did very well, had the tendency to get lower grades and disliked physical education (Portman, 1995). Typically, girls usually fell into this category and shied away from participating. Currently grading is based on what the individual school or program

deems appropriate. Programs may include percentages of participation, dress, attendance, work ethic, citizenship, written examinations, portfolios, or a combination of the items listed (“Expectations,” 2001). By including several categories other than participation, a picture is painted of the whole student, not just how they do physically in the class.

A fifth implication for physical education is behavior. Behavior of boys has been a large worry for many female physical education teachers when classes were first combined due to that the feelings of uncertainty on how to control them (Kelly, 1977). The assumption could be made that the more active the boys were the more unruly they became; but in reality, they were just being active boys. Girls on the other hand seemed to never be an issue on behavior due to their nature to be quiet and follow directions (“Ensuring Gender,” n.d.). Encouraging girls to participate on an equal level with the boys and holding all to the same discipline plan, the gymnasium will be a learning environment for all.

Teacher development is another crucial area to be discussed. After graduating from a college program, many PE teachers have never stepped back into the classroom for retraining or improving teaching skills. They were given the tools to be successful and will most likely teach the same way until retirement. In order to create an equitable environment for all students, a school today must have individuals willing or pushed to learn and teach all sorts of new activities and classroom strategies. Colleges must keep abreast of the current trends and have classes available for teachers to enroll in to better the physical education program (Wendt & Carley, 1983).

Lastly, dealing with implementing Title IX in physical education we must look at the type of language used in the classroom that may knowingly or unknowingly discriminate towards the underrepresented group: the females. Society has taught us that boys are good at sports and girls are not and both genders believe this to be true (Lock, Minarik, Omata, 1999). Therefore, when comments like “You run/throw like a girl.” or “Could you strong boys carry those tumbling mats for me?” are said, they go unnoticed. To the trained ear, however, language is important and it does matter how words are used in the gym. Language should be more gender neutral to avoid inadvertent gender stereotyping.

#### Resistance to Title IX

Years after the passage of Title IX, many teachers remain resistant to change (Wendt & Carley, 1983). The courts have not been very effective in enforcing Title IX in physical education. Indeed, there are no documented cases dealing with violations of Title IX in the physical education setting whereas there have been several cases in the courts dealing with violations in the athletic environment (Wendt & Carley, 1983). Since there is not a big push in the courts to make the physical education classes equitable, it is up to the individual teachers to create an environment providing the same opportunities for both genders.

Without court precedent, teachers have found it very difficult to find support for teaching co-ed classes due in part to a curriculum that prevents them from teaching activities beyond traditional team and individual activities. In some instances, teachers were willing to change only to meet opposition from other teachers in their department

and/or school district (Wendt & Carley, 1983). In addition, many administrators solicited parental and community support to keep the classes segregated making it very difficult for any teacher who wanted to comply with Title IX (Wendt & Carley, 1983). Others who tried innovations found that they were given a rating of “unsatisfactory” on yearly reviews which exerted pressure for them to remain in the present mold or find that they were no longer employed the following school year as their job qualifications had unknowingly changed (Wendt & Carley, 1983).

The final hurdle is individual resistance. As children grow and develop, gender roles, morals, and values become ingrained in an individual (Wendt & Carley, 1983). Attitudes and beliefs are difficult to change. If a teacher chooses boys to demonstrate an activity a majority of the time, the perception given is that girls are never good enough to be demonstrators. This may eventually cause girls to participate less in an activity. Active physical activity used to be the descriptor for boys’ physical education; but in order to weaken that stigma, teachers must learn to rid the traditions and create new ones that include all students.

#### Guidelines for Teachers

In order to get the ball rolling in the right direction, there are some guidelines teachers can follow to create an equitable environment in the gymnasium. All classes must be co-ed and all must be assessed on individual performances or on set standards e.g., presidential fitness test (“Ensuring Gender,” n.d.). A school must offer a wide variety of activities, even those that are unfamiliar or uncomfortable for the teacher. The program must also include appropriate sized equipment to enhance development for both



genders. The teacher must also be sensitive to the language used e.g., “you guys”. Finally in any disciplinary issues that arise, all students must be treated in a similar manner.

### Summary

Title IX is a controversial law and will continue to be so for years to come. During the research phase of this project, there were many articles dealing with Title IX issues primarily in women’s sports. Very little of this information was geared towards gender equity in the classroom, especially in the physical education setting. Physical education teachers have been largely left on their own to decipher the implications of Title IX for their setting. Re-examining curriculum, facilities, equipment, and changing language are some steps in creating a gender-equitable environment in physical education. To better one’s teaching environment and create the process for change, teachers need to research new ideas on the internet, take college courses, read professional journals. Teachers must also become open to the teaching of new activities and retooling their curriculums so that each gender is evenly represented. To create and support new curriculums, teachers must be adept in writing grants to get funds, such as the PEP grants, to use in purchasing equipment and improving facilities. Without court injunctions, changes towards equitable physical education are primarily left up to those who teach it. Further research is needed to ensure that the physical education environment is safe and equitable for both genders, but especially to women and girls.

## Chapter III

### Methods

This study was designed to analyze middle/junior high school physical education programs in the areas of curriculum, facilities, and equipment to see whether or not schools were in compliance with Title IX. The data analyzed would be taken from a survey received from 25 schools in 16 different school districts.

#### Definition of Subject Population

A sample of 70 middle/junior high schools were chosen from 912 school districts thought out the state of Illinois. All schools were listed in and chosen from the DIRPRO Directory of Illinois Schools (2003) to complete the survey. Schools chosen had at least a population of 500 or more students. The Chicago Public School system was not included due to lack of overall funds to fund physical education programs. The survey was sent to the physical education chairperson of the physical education department of the selected schools for completion. The survey forms contained the number assigned to the school (not the school name), and only group results will be discussed in this project.

#### Data Collection Procedure

The survey contained questions relating to curriculum, facilities, and equipment. In advance, Dr. Penny Portman and myself examined the survey in order to check for understanding and clarity of the questions. The survey was sent out in late September to 70 middle/junior high schools. Twenty-five responses were received equaling 36% by early December 2003. Each school chairperson was asked permission to use information for this project and asked to a sign consent form and return it with the survey.

### Statistical Analysis

A quantitative analysis of the data for questions 1 through 18 were tabulated by 1=yes response, 2=no response, 3=did not answer. If a surveyor did not answer a question, then they were eliminated from that particular or part of that question. A percentage was tabulated from the yes and no responses only from those answering the question. Question 19 was tabulated by 1= 1<sup>st</sup>, 2= 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3= 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4= 4<sup>th</sup>, 5= 5<sup>th</sup>, 6= did not respond, and 7= no order given, then a percentage was calculated by the number of responses over total number of schools responding. Data gathered for questions 20 through 25 were tabulated by responses for themes across surveys in a qualitative manner. The themes included were: (1) Is it easier or more difficult to teach middle/junior high students in a co-ed environment, (2) Do teachers feel competent to teach co-ed curriculums at this level if moving from a segregated by gender curriculum, (3) Does the gender of the teacher play a role in student success, (4) What are the components of a good co-ed physical education program, (5) Do facilities play an important role to good PE programs, and (6) Does the segregation of genders benefit optimal learning.

## Chapter IV

### Analysis of Data

The results of the data are represented in seven categories: demographics, facilities, equipment, student selection, gender separation, curriculum, grading, language, discipline, and themes and each will be discussed.

#### Demographics

Schools chosen represented 917 school districts geographically from across the state of Illinois with populations ranging from 570, being the smallest, to 1175. Seventy schools within 16 of those school districts were sent a survey, 25 schools or 36% replied. Findings showed that 64% of the 25 schools responding had grades 6, 7, & 8th while 36% only had 7 & 8<sup>th</sup> grades present in their schools. As shown in Table 1 on page 15, the average number of students for the 25 schools was 809. Within the schools, the female population average was 52% of 16 responding schools. The average number of physical education teachers employed per school was 4.12. Full time physical education teachers averaged at 3.84 and part time average was .28. All 25 of the schools that responded had at least one full time physical education teacher.

Physical education is a mandated course in the state of Illinois on a daily basis from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Based on this state law, 95% of the reporting schools have daily physical education. One school reported it has an exemption from providing everyday physical education due to having a waiver for the 2003-2004 school year and will be in compliance by the fall of 2004. Two of the schools only had 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade physical education on a daily basis, while the 6<sup>th</sup> graders had physical education 5 days in

Table 1

School Population and Female Population According to School Site

School Sites	School Population	% Female Population
32	570	No Response
33	780	50
51	1170	50
52	1100	60
65	689	49
83	800	50
91	800	No Response
92	970	No Response
93	1175	No Response
97	850	52
111	770	49
131	680	45
141	1071	No Response
142	1030	58
153	650	60
181	870	51
182	750	50
211	575	54
231	600	No Response
242	1000	50
243	700	60
251	645	50
273	677	No Response
274	620	64
302	700	No Response
Average	809	52

a 10-day rotation. Another school had physical education every other day and no comment was made if a waiver had been issued from the state. Two of the physical education programs were divided into 5 terms with students with students in health class during one term. Overall, the schools surveyed showed every day physical education within the school environment (See Appendix B).

### Facilities

Facilities help determine the potential of a good physical education program. Ninety-six percent of the 25 schools reporting had access to an outside field area and 100% of the 25 schools reported that it had at least one gymnasium. Thirty-one percent of 16 schools said that a wrestling room was available for use and 35% of 20 schools had a weight room. Thirteen percent out of 16 responding schools said a swimming pool was at their school and 58% of 19 reporting schools stated that a multi-purpose room was accessible, like a cafeteria or a commons area, to use for classes. One school had a climbing wall, two schools had two smaller upper gyms available, and one school had the use of park district gymnasiums for certain parts of the day. In general, the majority of the schools have appropriate facilities to have a sound curriculum but numbers of students per class and total number of classes meeting at one time was not known. This would be beneficial information in determining if the schools have adequate facilities to meet their needs.

A part of the Title IX law states the facilities need to be equal for boys and girls. Only one school reported that the boys' locker room was completely remodeled approximately 4 years ago and the girls' locker room was left untouched with old and

damaged lockers. One other school reported that the boys' locker room is much larger than the female's and the male physical education offices are bigger than the female physical education offices. Although almost all reported equitable facilities, facilities remain an apparent concern.

### Equipment

As well as facilities, equipment was also important to establish equity. Ninety-two percent of the 24 responders said yes to have equipment differences for both genders. Some of the written responses dealing with equipment differences indicated that schools were using different sized basketballs, trainer and regular sized volleyballs, foam and 16" softballs, and foam and regular footballs.

### Student Selection

Physical education instructors may assign the students to classes by teams, pods, tribes, gender, fitness level, skill level, etc. Sixty-seven percent of 18 schools reported that students were assigned to classes by teams, pods or tribes. Ninety-five percent of 21 schools stated that students would be assigned randomly by selecting amongst grade level. Ninety percent of 21 different schools indicated that students have a choice in the time of day their physical education class was offered. Although most of the schools (88% of 16 schools) responded that physical education classes were always co-ed, 82% of the schools stated that classes were usually co-ed. Fourteen percent of 14 responding schools stated that they had classes assigned by gender and one school in particular mentioned that classes were divided by gender one out of five terms in the school year. Seven percent of 14 different responding schools stated that classes are assigned by

physical ability and none of the 25 responding schools separated into classes by fitness level.

### Gender Separation

Once the students have been placed into classes, 74% of nineteen responding said that they allowed the students to choose what group they wanted to be in for any particular activity. Eighty-two percent of the 17 schools responding stated that the teacher chose or selected the groups in advance. Separation within the class by gender and student ability was circled by only 13 responders, but only in certain circumstances. Comments were made that the students were separated by gender in wrestling or contact sports. One school reported that they divide students by randomly numbering off, by shoe color, by age, and birthday.

Students, although often in co-ed classes, were also separated by gender with 14 schools responding that they did it for safety reasons. Seventy-two of the 18 responders stated that when the unit is being taught which involved contact sports, they separated the students by gender. Thirty-six percent of 9 schools stated that physical risk of the activity was the reason as to why they separated. Twenty-eight percent of 7 schools stated that when doing a dance or aerobic unit, they separated by gender. Four responders reported they separated girls and boys for reasons such as conditioning, only in a two-week fitness unit, wrestling, space for instruction, just for variation, ribbon tumbling, and for swimming due to the “emotional” aspect.



## Curriculum

The sample population used a variety of curricular approaches. Twenty-five of the schools that responded indicated an emphasis on games and fitness activities. Twenty-two out of 25 schools specified that the sport education model was incorporated into their program. Seventeen out of 25 indicated an emphasis on cooperative games/adventure education, and 14 out of 25 stated that dance is a part of the curriculum. Gymnastics, swimming, and wilderness education were included sparsely in the schools surveyed. Comments made showed some programs had optional swimming for 8<sup>th</sup> graders, gymnastics was really tumbling, no apparatus was used, and the wilderness unit was limited to a climbing wall. Other curricular options were a circus unit, bowling, ice-skating, roller-skating, horseshoes, golf, and scuba. Overall, most programs have solid fitness and games components with a few variations.

When asked if the curriculum changes by grade level, 58% of 24 schools stated the curriculum did change. A common model was that 6<sup>th</sup> graders were taught the basics, 7<sup>th</sup> graders were taught intermediate skills and some strategies, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders were taught advanced techniques and more strategies. Another approach was developmental by grade level due to different expectations so the curriculum changes as grade level does. The final model was to “ability group” the students in certain activities, regardless of age, to play multi-ability level activities. One school allowed student choice for the activities that interested them each month.

Within a unit or lesson that needed demonstration, there was a tendency to alternate between male and female, athletically inclined male/female individuals or the

teacher would demonstrate when necessary. When demonstrating an activity using a student, 84% of the 19 schools that circled yes, mostly stating that alternating between male and female students occurred most often. One hundred percent (15/15) of the reporting schools stated when a demonstration was needed the instructor used themselves to demonstrate a particular activity. Eighty-five percent of 13 schools used an athletically inclined male or female student who is athletically inclined to demonstrate activities. Approximately 60% of 10 schools stated they would use any male or female student in demonstrating. One responder stated that he or she used all of the options listed because it depended on what needed to be demonstrated.

### Grading

Grading is an important aspect in physical education although how and on what the students were graded differed among schools. All 25 of the responding schools stated that the use of student participation was used as a part of a student's grade. Twenty-four schools stated that dressing for physical education was included in students' overall grade. Attitude and skills tests were reported in 84% of the 21 surveyed schools. Eighty percent of 20 schools stated that knowledge tests were also used as a part of the grade. Fitness scores were included in the grading procedure in 44% of 11 schools. Attendance, writing projects, authentic assessments with individual goals student written, and extra credit for home activities were other things that were included in a student's grade.

Some schools at the high school level allowed student athletes to be excused from physical education classes when that sport is in season; however, none of the

middle/junior high schools in this study reported that student athletes were exempt from physical education class at any point of the school year.

### Language

Language is an important factor in the classroom, and its uses need to be gender appropriate. All 25 responders stated that swear words and put downs were not allowed in their classrooms. The words “fun” and “teamwork” were used by all of the responders as words found in their physical education environment. Also, all of the 25 responders use the word “sportsmanship” in class and were unaware that it was an inappropriate word or found it too difficult to use “sportship.” Twenty-nine percent of 14 responders did not use baseman due to either knowing it was inappropriate or may not having units of softball or baseball. The term “you guys” is commonly used in classrooms as 68% of 18 responders said that it is allowed in their physical education classes. Overall, the assumption appears that words such as those listed have become ingrained into our daily language and teachers in this sample never think twice about the fact that it degrades the female gender. One responder did report that baseman was changed to base person in his or her physical education class.

### Discipline

How students overall were reprimanded for using inappropriate language in the physical education classroom was another focus of this survey. All 25 schools responded to this question. Sixty-eight percent used reprimand as their primary form of discipline. Thirty-six percent stated that they deducted points and 32% felt a timeout was the answer. Lastly, 40% removed the disciplinary problem from class and 32% indicated a

parental phone call was in order. Sixteen percent of the responders gave no specific order to the five types of discipline just stating they used all forms of discipline. Four of the 9 responders who wrote additional comments reported detentions were part of the discipline plan. One other school used push-ups as a form of discipline, the higher the grade level, the more push-ups the individual needed to perform for violations.

### Themes

Several open-ended questions were asked in the qualitative section of the survey and they were analyzed and were identified into themes. These included “perceived ease or difficulty in teaching middle/junior high school in a co-ed environment,” “talent differences between genders,” “teacher competency in teaching in a co-ed environment from a segregated environment,” “gender of the teacher affecting student success,” “components of a good physical education program,” and “how the facilities play into the curriculums.”

The first theme was “perceived ease or difficulty to teach middle school/junior high students in a co-ed environment.” Eleven of the responders found for the most part that it was easier to teach co-ed physical education. Peter (School #142) also felt co-ed was easier to teach and stated that “skills are taught co-ed then games are alternated co-ed and gender separate.” He also said “it also depends on the amount of boys and girls in class” when deciding whether to segregate or not.

Others expressed it was more difficult to teach for various reasons. Doris (School #93) said “junior high is more difficult than high school because middle schoolers are going through more changes.” Reece states (School #52), “I feel all boys/girls classes are

easier to teach. We divide in basketball, wrestling, and aerobics. We get a lot more accomplished in the time frame.” Several mentioned that for particular activities, they do segregate on occasion.

A second theme dealt with “talent differences between the genders.” Laura (School #92) felt that “it is more difficult to teach at this level because many girls will not perform to ability if there are boys in class. There is a lot more socializing going on.” Tim (School #301) felt similarly that it was “harder and that the talent level between the two is big.”

The third theme, explores whether “teachers felt more confident to teach a co-ed environment if forced to move from a segregated curriculum.” Twelve responded that they would be comfortable teaching co-ed classes with a list including activities such as soccer, fitness, floor hockey, skating, etc., from Kate’s (School#251) description. Nina (School #141) stated, “I feel comfortable and competent teaching co-ed or same sex.” On the other hand, there were a few responses that were in favor of separation in certain circumstances. Brittany (School#211) shared that “I could do both but prefer either all girls or all boys.” The other nine did not answer the question.

A fourth theme relates to whether “the gender of the teacher matters and predicts student success in the physical education classroom.” Overall, 15 of the 25 responding schools stated that gender of the teacher does not matter. Kourtney stated (School #32), “I think they (students) would find it strange if it was separate because they have always had co-ed” or in Wilma’s case (School#273), she says, “The students seem to respond to different teachers as we change throughout the year.” Four of the responders felt that

gender made a difference. In Olivia's (School #65) statement, she said, "Yes, when we do the presidential fitness challenge, girls prefer I do the weighing, body fat, and BMI. They are not comfortable with the male teacher doing it." In another district, Brittany says (School #211), "Yes, our male PE teachers have a tough time getting the girls to participate. They whine and complain, make excuses to them and then sit! The girls are getting short changed." On the other hand, Burt (School #181) makes the statement "I do not see the gender as a "difference" maker but I see the experience and the quality of a teacher as the difference."

What makes a "component of a good co-ed physical education program" was the fifth theme. Nine of the responders stated that a good program should have units that students enjoy with a wide variety of activities. Laura (School #92) stated, "a variety of activities for all, all students can be successful and they take what they have learned outside of school." Jenny (School #97) too felt "teachers need to be creative in requirements for total involvement of all team members or all group members. Individual activities have to be included." Kourtney (School #32) mentioned the importance of, "having activities that students enjoy, not just basketball for the boys." Another component to a good program would include cooperative challenges. Peggy (School #51) felt that when you "preface activities with cooperative challenge activities, you set tone and establish an atmosphere of non-competitiveness or at least friendly competition." Leslie (School #33) also felt "students should learn and challenge themselves. Students should feel successful." Suggestions for a good curriculum other than units included statements such as Andy's (School#91) "preparation, communication,

organization, listening skills, consistency, and discipline.” Peter (School #142) also felt “knowledgeable teachers, financial support, community support, and adaptability” plays an important role in PE programs. The final idea in PE curriculums was to even everything out. Sandy (School # 243) felt that “it is important to make sure the teams are divided evenly with skills, talking about the good quality of sports and not focus on the males.” Jake (School #153) summed it up by “fairness, age appropriate, gender neutral, and a non-biased curriculum” should be put into a curriculum.

The final theme was “facilities play an important role in good physical education programs.” If a school doesn’t have numerous areas to hold classes, then the program can become stagnant. Nina (School #141) put it very plainly that “This age and time is difficult. Many building and money constraints dictate programs along with class sizes, state standards, No Child Left Behind, self-esteem, adolescence, increased weights of children, and technologies. All have been an extreme challenge to meet the needs of all the students (30-35 in a class) in 39 minutes and have a top quality program that is consistent.” It will become even more difficult with districts passing fewer referendums to help bring additions facility wise, to help strengthen our programs.

## Chapter V

### Discussion

Seventy schools in 16 school districts in the state of Illinois were sent a survey that used gender equity as an evaluating tool of middle/junior high school physical education curriculums, facilities, and equipment across the state. Despite the small response of 25 schools or 36%, it became evident that these schools are in most part compliant with Title IX and its requirements. This fact could be the reason why these schools chose to respond while others did not.

Carpenter and Acosta (2001) said that all facilities would be in compliance with Title IX where all areas such as girls' and boys' locker rooms should be the same. Overall, the survey supported the literature with the exception of one school that had better facilities for the boys' locker room and the male physical education offices. The female side had old and damaged lockers, and the female physical education offices were small. If the survey is representative of schools then the assumption can be made that there is still a small percentage of schools that have facility violations in the state of Illinois; and most likely, school officials are unaware that the school is in violation.

Equipment as a topic in the survey was in agreement with the literature that stated schools had made equipment changes to suit both genders (Beveridge & Scruggs, 2000). Ninety-two percent of the responders stated that they have equipment differences, which leads one to believe that the instructor is knowledgeable as to why there should be these differences. However, only a few schools specifically listed what types of equipment were available to meet this requirement perhaps due to lack of specific examples.



When it comes to equitable environments in physical education programs, the literature (Carpenter, Acosta, Nelson, & Portman, 2001) was in agreement with the survey because the classes were co-ed most of the time, but a few schools segregate in certain situations. It may be that when this type of segregation occurs, it is done to provide a perceived learning environment that is best suited for the students, based on teachers' decision. Activities like aerobics or swimming are not contact sports as Title IX describes. Also, it may be that the teacher's expertise in a particular activity would lead to segregated classes. It is very likely that the teachers are unaware that they are in violation of Title IX when segregating their classes.

Beveridge and Scruggs (2000) stated that curriculums in physical education should include a wide variety of activities and the interest of the students is to be taken into account. The results of the survey did not support this due to a heavy influence of games and fitness activities and some use of the sport education model. A reason could be that the survey did not ask specifically what was included in a particular curriculum. The assumption may be made that the responder lumped all activities like golf, badminton, or cup stacking into the game category. Thus it is difficult to get a clear picture of a more rounded curriculum. When dealing with student interest in curriculum activities, only one school stated that they allow students to choose an activity once a month. Two things can be assumed, one would be that teachers have created a curriculum that they feel meets student interests or have surveyed the students as to what should be included. Second, schools may already allow students to choose their activities

but did not express that on the survey. In order to get a better picture, a specific question should be asked: Should students be allowed to choose activities?

The grading procedure findings in literature were in agreement with the survey that indicates what elements should be included in a student's grade ("Expectations," 2001). Grades were based on things such as participation, behavior, etc. and not gender specific. Most schools had a combination of things that were included but specific percentages were not listed to show level of importance. With the law of No Child Left Behind looming over teachers' heads, teachers in this survey did not include items like portfolios, written essays, or skills assessment sheets. These kinds of activities are done now in response to ideas that have been shared in graduate classes or at conventions. There may be some resistance to include these ideas based on complex grading procedures or that physical education is all about being active, not writing.

The use of language that discriminates against the female gender in the survey is supported by the literature (Lock, Minarik, Omata, 1999). The survey found that words like "you guys" and "baseman" were allowed and even some responders put question marks next to words as if to indicate a lack of understanding as to why they were there. The assumption can be made that teachers today use words unknowingly that discriminate in the classroom due to a cultural or a regional tradition or practice.

The literature states that the behavior of girls and boys in co-ed physical education classes posed a difficult situation. Boys were unruly and girls quiet and reserved; however, the results of the survey did not support this ("Ensuring Gender," 2001). Only a few schools mentioned that it was difficult to motivate the girls especially

when there was a male teaching the class or that the female teachers were stricter with the students than were the male teachers. Overall, discipline seemed to be gender neutral. However, because of the nature of the question asked, it is not clear if all students are held to the same disciplinary standards or if they were done by gender.

#### Future Directions

Based upon the findings from this study, the following recommendations should be included in revamping the survey to enable more specific data to interpret in order to get a clearer picture of the middle/junior high school programs.

1. To get a better idea on a school's particular discipline plan, a qualitative question should be asked to describe specifically their discipline plan so a comparative focus can be made between the schools and whether there are differences when dealing with boys and girls.
2. Development of sound curriculums is an important factor. In order to get a clearer picture, schools should be asked to list all units taught. In addition, the responder should rate the activities based on the level of expertise or comfortability in the teaching units listed.
3. To see what types of teaching methods and student assessments are used in schools today, it would be helpful to get a clearer picture of the program by listing specifics such as assessments rubrics, writing assignments, portfolios, journals, etc. This would also indicate the teacher's knowledge in this area.

4. Literature suggests that student choice is an important factor in a sound curriculum. A basic yes/no question should be asked to see if students could select activities in middle schools.
5. It would also be helpful to have questions to future responders asking what is specifically included in a student's grade.

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## Appendix A

### Survey

## Equitable Environment in the Physical Education Classroom

### Demographics:

1. How many students attend your school? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many physical education teachers are there in your school? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2.1 How many are full-time? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2.2 How many are part-time? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What kind of facilities do you have?
 

3.1 Fields	Yes	No
3.2 Gym	Yes	No
3.3 Wrestling Room	Yes	No
3.4 Weight Room	Yes	No
3.5 Pool	Yes	No
3.6 Multi-Purpose	Yes	No
3.7 Other	Specify _____	
4. What percentage of your school's student body is made up of females? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What grades are represented in your school?      Circle all that apply:  
6 7 8 9
6. Is physical education required?
 

6.1 Every grade level	Yes	No
6.2 Every day	Yes	No

If no, how often do you see the students? \_\_\_\_\_

---
7. Are you physical education students assigned to classes by (circle all that apply)?
 

7.1 Teams/pods/tribes	Yes	No
7.2 Single-sexed	Yes	No
7.3 Grade level group-random	Yes	No
7.4 Student choice	Yes	No
7.5 Physical ability	Yes	No
7.6 Fitness Level	Yes	No



8. Are your physical education classes?

8.1 Usually Co-ed	Yes	No
8.2 Always Co-ed	Yes	No
8.3 Rarely Co-ed	Yes	No
8.4 Never Co-ed	Yes	No

**Program:**

9. Check all that applies to your program emphasis at your school.

- 9.1 ☐ Games
  - 9.2 ☐ Fitness
  - 9.3 ☐ Cooperative/Adventure
  - 9.4 ☐ Wilderness
  - 9.5 ☐ Sport Education
  - 9.6 ☐ Dance
  - 9.7 ☐ Gymnastics
  - 9.8 ☐ Swimming
  - 9.9 ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

10. Does the program emphasis change by grade/level?      Yes      No

If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_

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11. When you find yourself using a student demonstrating an activity, whom do you tend to use more often?

11.1 A male student-athletically inclined	Yes	No
11.2 A female student-athletically inclined	Yes	No
11.3 Yourself	Yes	No
11.4 Any male student	Yes	No
11.5 Any female student	Yes	No
11.6 Alternate female/male students	Yes	No

12. When grouping students into teams within a class do you...

12.1 Select in advance	Yes	No
12.2 Separation by gender	Yes	No
12.3 Student Choice	Yes	No
12.4 Student Ability	Yes	No

13. If you separate by gender within or across units, check reason(s) as apply:

- 13.1 ☐ Safety
- 13.2 ☐ Emotional
- 13.3 ☐ Physical
- 13.4 ☐ Contact Sports
- 13.5 ☐ Dance/Aerobics
- 13.6 ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

14. When it comes to the grading policy, check all that apply:

- 14.1 ☐ Skills tests
- 14.2 ☐ Dress
- 14.3 ☐ Participation
- 14.4 ☐ Attitude
- 14.5 ☐ Knowledge tests
- 14.6 ☐ Fitness Scores
- 14.7 ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

15. Are student athletes exempt from physical education?    Yes    No

16. Are the locker rooms equivalent for boys and girls?    Yes    No  
If no, please explain.

17. Are there equipment differences with in units (e.g. 27cm, 28.5cm, 29cm basketballs or 14" or 16" softballs)?    Yes    No  
If no, please explain.

18. When speaking of acceptable language, are the following allowed in the physical education class?

- |                    |     |    |
|--------------------|-----|----|
| 18.1 Swearwords    | Yes | No |
| 18.2 Sportsmanship | Yes | No |
| 18.3 Baseman       | Yes | No |
| 18.4 Put downs     | Yes | No |
| 18.5 Fun           | Yes | No |
| 18.6 You guys      | Yes | No |
| 18.7 Teamwork      | Yes | No |

19. How is the misuse of language handled? If more than one, which is 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, etc.

- 19.1 \_\_\_\_\_ Reprimand
- 19.2 \_\_\_\_\_ Time out
- 19.3 \_\_\_\_\_ Removal from class
- 19.4 \_\_\_\_\_ Points deducted
- 19.5 \_\_\_\_\_ Parent called
- 19.6 \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify)

20. If your physical education classes are co-ed, do you perceive it easier or difficult to teach ms/jr. h.s. PE students?

21. If your physical education classes are separated and the district mandates all PE is co-ed, which curriculum(s) would you feel competent teach co-ed ms/jr.h.s. PE? Why?

22. Does the gender of the teacher make a difference in the success of co-ed or separate physical education classes? How?

23. What are the components of a good co-ed PE program at the ms/jr. h.s. level? (Be specific)

24. Do you have anything else that you would like to add that I may have missed, please feel to share at this time! Thank you for your time.

## Appendix B

### Survey Statistics

## Survey Statistics

Question #2	Percent		
Full-Time	4.12		
Part-Time	0.28		
Question #5	Percent		
Grades 6,7,8	64%		
Grades 7 & 8	36%		

Question #9				
9.1	100%	0%	25	
9.2	100%	0%	25	
9.3	100%	0%	17	
9.4	100%	0%	1	
9.5	100%	0%	22	
9.6	100%	0%	14	
9.7	100%	0%	7	
9.8	100%	0%	3	
9.9	100%	0%	2	
Question #10				
	58%	42%	24	
Question #11				
11.1	85%	15%	13	
11.2	85%	15%	13	
11.3	100%	0%	15	
11.4	67%	33%	9	
11.5	60%	40%	10	
11.6	84%	16%	19	
Question #12				
12.1	82%	18%	17	
12.2	77%	23%	13	
12.3	74%	26%	19	
12.4	62%	38%	13	
Question #13				
13.1	100%	0%	14	
13.2	100%	0%	3	
13.3	100%	0%	9	
13.4	100%	0%	18	
13.5	100%	0%	7	
13.6	100%	0%	1	
Question #14				
14.1	100%	0%	21	
14.2	100%	0%	24	
14.3	100%	0%	25	
14.4	100%	0%	21	
14.5	100%	0%	20	
14.6	100%	0%	11	
14.7	100%	0%	5	
Question #15				
	0%	100%	25	
Question #16				
	92%	8%	25	
Question #17				
	92%	8%	24	

## Question #18

18.1	0%	100%	25
18.2	100%	0%	25
18.3	71%	29%	14
18.4	0%	100%	25
18.5	100%	0%	24
18.6	67%	33%	18
18.7	100%	0%	25