

Capacity Use of School Gymnasiums

By

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As members of the Committee on Physical Education Curriculum for Kansas we have made a study of more and better ways we can use our old and new gymnasiums. Are we getting full benefit of our gymnasium? Is our community deriving benefits in proportion to the money spent on its gymnasium? We have heard citizens express definite opinions on the place of a gymnasium in community life. Is our gymnasium operating on a full time schedule for the enjoyment, growth and improvement of all in its neighborhood?

Why is physical education important? It is a health and character builder. Health is the first objective in education. Physical education builds and maintains it. The findings of a committee of the American Medical Association state that growing boys and girls need four to five hours of out door exercise daily. Adults require activity, too. Physical education has the mediums for influencing character. It affords favorable conduct situations. It may promote social hygiene by affording activities in which boys and girls may take part together. It can be a factor in teaching safety. Physical education should teach each student at least one game that can be played in later life with enjoyment. A trained physical educator should bring the highest type of leadership to our school and community.

We know we need physical education in the schools? What about recreation for the fathers and mothers in our community after school hours. How many adults in your community have you sold physical education to? How many families in our community know how to play together? How many do? Do the adults understand the desire of their children for play? Do these same children ever see father and mother play?

Many parents do not know what physical education is. Physical education is more than basketball. Basketball is a fine thing, but it is an important spoke in a large wheel. Activities for girls include gymnastic drills, marching, rhythm, soccer, or speed ball, soft ball, tumbling, pyramids, basketball, volley ball, skating,

social games, games of low organization, tennis, table tennis, hiking and correctives for those who need special posture work. In addition the boys may have track and field, wrestling, boxing, touch football, and football in the larger schools. Some smaller high schools have dropped competitive football. It meant too big a strain on the few boys participating in it. Many of these activities do not require equipment. Others require only a ball. Tennis courts could be constructed by the boys and their father in available spaces. Much equipment can be made by men and boys with very little expense. Are we easily discouraged when there is no money for new things?

Do we offer co-recreation one day a week as part of our program? The boys and girls wear ordinary street dress for this class, with only a change to tennis shoes. This is our best laboratory for teaching the social graces. How we need them! Participation in suitable, supervised games during adolescence will develop a normal social life. Boys and girls must be taught how to assume responsibilities when they grow up. We must provide opportunities for working and playing together in a matter of fact way. In the opinion of a social hygiene expert, one of the chief reasons for divorce and desertion is that husbands and wives have never learned to play together. A well trained physical director for boys and another for girls can teach these classes.

What do we do with the students who must remain during the noon hour? They naturally gravitate toward the gymnasium. What do we offer them? There should be an organized program, ping pong or other recreational sports; tournaments for home rooms in volley ball or other games; or games of low organization such as dodge ball.

Do we close our gymnasium after school. Or is it used by boys and girls for intramural sports? Are we offering any opportunity for tournaments among school groups in minor sports? Do we encourage school