



*American Alliance for
Health, Physical Education,
Recreation and Dance*

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<http://www.aahperd.org>

The Law Office of John M. Phillips
4230 Ortega Boulevard
Jacksonville, FL 32210

January 31, 2014

Re: Callen Kelly

To whom it may concern:

It is my opinion on the behalf of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD) that Duval County Public Schools has disregarded national standards, guidelines and recommendations for appropriate instructional practices for high school physical education.

A well designed physical education lesson should have activities that are based on national and/or state physical education standards, should relate directly back to the daily objective and should be age appropriate, building on skills that have been taught previously in class. After review, playing the game “wall-to-wall” in physical education does not meet any of the above criteria for a well-designed lesson and violates standards and guidelines related to safety, appropriate instructional strategies and curriculum.

“Wall-to-wall” is a game that is in violation of safety guidelines set forth for high school physical education. Activities are selected carefully to ensure they match students’ ability level and are safe for all students. Using human-target games and/or drills that allow aggressive behaviors toward other students should not be permitted or played. Regardless of rules or guided instruction that directs students to “aim at the center of the target,” there is too much room for error. The average physical education student isn’t going to have 100% accuracy, therefor, increasing the chances of an accident and putting targeted students at a higher risk of injury than choosing another activity.

Moving targets and other uncontrollable variables should be taken into consideration when planning activities as a part of proper risk management and to ensure a safe learning environment for students of all ability levels. Using a solid, permanent fixture, like a wall, as a base also increases the chance for injury. Having students run full speed toward an immovable object is a huge risk factor, especially, without a buffer zone or space for them to slow down. High school basketball courts are required to have a minimum of three feet around the perimeter of the court but highly recommended is a full ten-foot buffer zone because of the speed at which players are running. In regards to safety, if there is a buffer zone for elite athletes there should be similar caution and logic when planning and choosing activities for students that are more than likely of average-at-best athletic ability.

Aside from safety violations “Wall-to-wall” is not an appropriate large group activity. “Wall-to-wall” does not promote one of the overall physical education goals of 50% of class time spent with majority of students participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA). Only three balls are in play at any given time. If 20-40 students are on defense there’s only the possibility of three students who are for certain



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actively involved; that's only 7-15% of the class physically involved which is far less than the majority. On offense, students who are waiting for their turn to strike the ball (since only three can strike at time) are not moderately involved in physical activity if standing in a line or staging area. Students who get out during an inning must wait an unspecified amount of time until everyone has had an opportunity to strike. Because of the unspecified amount of time, students may not ever have more than one chance to strike the ball which is terrible use of class time for students to improve upon a skill.

Even if safety or MVPA time was not a concern, the implementation of "Wall-to-wall" is not age appropriate. The skills that are of focus- striking, dodging, fleeing, and throwing- are not presented in a way that is suitable for high school level students to apply. Dodging and fleeing are skills that should have been mastered by the end of elementary school according to National Physical Education Standards and Outcomes. If a teacher chooses dodging and fleeing as a skill of focus in high school physical education, the skills should be used in a way that challenges students appropriately and provides a level of rigor for all skill levels. Throwing and striking can be practiced in a multitude of ways that don't use human targets and allows for students to be challenged depending on their ability. Physical educators should be choosing activities and games in class that challenge students physically and mentally.

Our National Physical Education Standards state that "the goal of physical education is to develop physically literate individuals who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity." Playing games like "Wall-to-wall" can make less physically coordinated students feel inadequate and allows them to become easy targets creating negative experiences (potentially decreasing their desire to participate in physical activity) that go directly against the purpose of physical education.

As a former physical education teacher, and presently senior program manager for physical education at AAHPERD, "wall-to-wall" is an extremely inappropriate and unsafe activity that violates appropriate safety guidelines, instructional practices and curricular goals for physical education.

If you would like to discuss this further please feel free to contact me using the information below.

Sincerely,

Michelle Ortiz
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MY COMMISSION EXPIRES MAY 31, 2016

1/31/2014