

FACILITIES/INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES/EQUIPMENT

The availability of space and adequate equipment for effective instruction are two of the factors affecting timetabling. Creating more teaching stations or spaces increases the number of students and classes that can be assigned time slots and increases the likelihood of meeting mandatory PE/HE class time allotments. Appropriate supervision and student/teacher ratios must be maintained to meet safety and liability concerns.

This section explores facilities, instructional spaces, and equipment, both in schools and away from schools.

Challenges

Physical education is best presented in large indoor and outdoor spaces. Since Manitoba's climate puts pressure on indoor spaces, having limited gymnasium space can make timetabling PE/HE class time challenging.

- Timetabling multiple classes in a large gymnasium space is a consideration but may limit physical activity choices depending on the type of space and equipment available. Safety is a fundamental concern that may limit the number of classes and students that can be scheduled in an instructional space.
- Timetabling activity outside the school, either on school fields or at community facilities, involves addressing safety concerns for each venue.
- The quality of equipment and its safe use must be taken into account as timetables in PE/HE are developed.
- Access and the cost of transportation and facility use can be impediments to using alternate spaces. Community/school joint-use agreements can support such use as long as they are well conceived. A well-constructed agreement can ensure that alternate spaces or equipment are assessed for safety, liability, and student emergency plans.
- With increased time, increased use of equipment results in greater wear and tear and greater need for repair or replacement. These factors need to be taken into consideration when planning.
- When instruction is given outdoors, weather conditions will be a factor that may affect the safety of students and teachers. Alternate plans should be required as part of the planning and preparation.

Strategies

1. Gymnasium Use

Most schools have a gymnasium or larger space designated for physical education. If needed, there are other ways to increase the number of teaching spaces.

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|| Often the gym is used as a one- or two-station teaching space and not to its full potential. Dividing curtains or units can be installed to split the space into additional teaching stations.
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|| Stage and/or storage areas can be used as stations for selected activities (e.g., resistance training).
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|| In a gymnasium with one, two, or more teaching stations, using floor plugs (for volleyball/badminton standards) in a variety of ways can modify courts to accommodate more participants. Wall space can be used to hold additional basketball hoops, so basketball can be taught in one of the small sections.
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|| Available space can be increased by turning unused classrooms/multipurpose areas into fitness rooms, dance studios, health labs, wrestling and martial arts/self defense areas, or staging areas for outdoor activity (such as putting cross-country skis in a room near the gym to allow quick outside access without disrupting gymnasium classes).
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|| Two schools close to each other could meet their physical education class time needs by sharing a gymnasium and timetabling classes at different times of the day, possibly under the direction of an itinerant teacher.

2. Classroom Use

The regular classroom can be used as an activity centre by moving desks and using equipment that promotes safe activity. Large empty spaces such as courtyards can supplement classroom space. These options are possible when classroom teachers have responsibility for teaching some of the physical education and where there is not enough gymnasium space to accommodate all the classes.

3. Outdoor Teaching Spaces on the School Grounds

Encourage use of the outdoors, weather permitting as an alternate space.

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|| Outside activity areas can be used as teaching stations. Look at such all-season opportunities on the school grounds as
 - playground structures, hard-top areas
 - walls for handball and racquet activities
 - outdoor rinks in the off-season or tennis courts for ball hockey
 - portable basketball hoops that can be used indoors and outdoors
 - cross-country ski trails on the field or running track
 - sheltered areas or domes

4. Planning for Additional Teaching Spaces

In some communities, schools and neighbouring organizations can collaborate on an all-party planning-and-joint-use agreement to create additional instructional spaces.

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|| Tennis courts, rain shelters, and soccer domes could be built nearby or on school grounds, and running track/fitness centres could be built in spaces in the school.
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|| Fitness areas, dance/performing arts centres, or any number of activity centres could be added to a school as a school/community initiative.
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|| New schools could be built near existing community centres.
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|| Portable climbing walls are a temporary add-on that could be used to create additional instructional areas in more than one school.

5. Away-from-School Facilities/Instructional Spaces

Numerous opportunities for teaching spaces can be found away from the school and school grounds, often in facilities with instructors, which increases the activity options for more students. Teacher supervision and student safety need to be the primary concern when leaving school grounds. The *YouthSafe Manitoba: School Field Trip Resource* offers excellent support.

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|| Following is a list of some alternate spaces:
 - community swimming pool
 - community or private racquet sports facilities
 - community recreation centres and fields
 - curling rinks
 - ice skating, hockey, ringette, bandy, and in-line skating rinks
 - tennis courts
 - full-size or miniature golf courses, driving ranges
 - bowling alleys
 - climbing centres
 - in-line skating and skateboard parks
 - cycling areas
 - walking, hiking areas
 - auditoriums and gyms in the community
 - fitness, dance, court-sport studios
 - parks
 - ski slopes, snowboard parks, cross-country ski, or snowshoe areas
 - day- or long-stay camp, outdoor education centres

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¶ Formalized agreements between school divisions and communities for the shared use of facilities can allow schools to use off-site space and provide additional PE activities they may otherwise be unable to offer.
 - Joint-use agreements between communities and school divisions outline the terms for the use of each other’s facilities. They typically identify the facilities to be shared, plans for booking and scheduling, staffing, supervision, usage fees and charges, maintenance, use of equipment, insurance and liability, and dispute-resolution mechanisms.
 - Joint-planning and consultation agreements between the school division and the community relate to the planning of school and community facilities. Consultation agreements might include policies and procedures for building or renovating school or community facilities and allow for school and community input into construction or renovation plans to enhance the school’s ability to meet the PE/HE needs of its students.

Planning for transportation will be necessary depending on what other facilities are being used. For example:

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¶ One way to ease the cost of transportation is to use facilities close to school so students can walk.
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¶ If using alternate facilities is a possibility, then a budget for transport would be an asset to planning.
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¶ When volunteer drivers are needed to transport students to other facilities, drivers must complete a form such as the volunteer driver authorization application in the *YouthSafe Manitoba: School Field Trip Resource* before the excursion.

6. Equipment Use

The quality of programming is closely linked to access to appropriate equipment. Supplying new and replacing used equipment is very important. There are ways that schools can better maintain their equipment or seek help from other partner groups.

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¶ In some schools, equipment is not fully used. Up-to-date equipment inventories can help administrators track equipment and identify equipment that can be brought into use or diverted to other programs.
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¶ Some school divisions purchase sets of equipment for several schools to share, such as cross-country skis, snowshoes, heart monitors, fitness equipment, portable climbing walls, jam-pail curling rocks, and health resource kits and videos. This efficient use of equipment can enhance programming and time in PE/HE.
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¶ Community/school joint-use agreements must take into account the use of equipment. While such an agreement will make more equipment available for programming, increased use of equipment will cause it to wear out more quickly. The agreement must outline procedures to repair or replace any equipment that is damaged or broken.
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¶ Volunteer groups may choose to support PE/HE equipment projects that promote physical activity (e.g., playground structures, classroom activity bins, fitness trails on school grounds).
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¶ Facilities such as private clubs often have equipment available that can be rented or used by paying an entrance fee. Renting equipment or paying to use it may make a day of skiing or a session of swimming or kayaking possible.
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¶ Equipment may be supplied as a result of work projects involving teachers, community volunteers, and students. Administrators must be conscious of local policy and safety issues when exploring this alternative. Some insurance policies will not cover accidents when the equipment has been purchased second-hand.