

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT EXPERTS AS A FACTOR FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF HIGH EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS IN BULGARIA

(Preliminary communication)

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Abstract

The presented research aims at revealing some of the main reasons for the inadequate and unsatisfactory physical education and sports results at school. Some major changes have been made in connection with the Bulgarian system of physical education and sports during the past decades. To better determine the framework of the problem, discussed herein, more specific documents and regulations concerning the physical education theory and practice have been analyzed further on together with the results of a survey conducted with teachers, school managers and members of school boards. 54 specialists including 36 physical education teachers had to answer the following questions: What is the present state of physical education at school?; To what extent the physical education experts and specialists are involved in the problem?; What further measurements should be taken in order to improve the physical education and sports training at school? More questions have been discussed and summarized during the interviews. The present status of physical education does not meet the Strategy of the Bulgarian State for a high quality education.

Keywords: *school syllabi, normative acts and documents, teachers, physical education process, physical activity, Interview, Questionnaire*

INTRODUCTION

In order to make physical education and sports theory and practice an effective teaching method teachers need information about the latest changes and development of the educational standards and normative documents. Some major changes have been made in connection with the Bulgarian system of physical education and sports during the past decades. The introduction of new sports as additional core subjects in the Bulgarian physical education standards (Rusev (Русев), 2001); Ivanov, Rusev & Kostov (Иванов, Русев & Костов, 2002), created an opportunity for the schools in different regions of the country to meet the state requirements despite their different financial and material resources. The latest State Educational Standards have marked a significant differences and changes in the physical education syllabi and have created new challenges for teachers especially in training and assessment. The fact that many new specialists have been employed does not help much the results which are still far from the expectations. According to data published in the book

of Marekova and Ivanov (Марекова, & Иванов), 2001), the physical education teachers in Bulgaria under the age of 30 are less than 9.5%. There is a tangible lack of physical education and sports experts in many Bulgarian towns such as Blagoevgrad, Gabrovo, Dobrich, Kardjali, Russe, Smolyan, Sliven etc. This tendency causes a lack of control in the field of physical education management and implementation connected with technical, methodological, and other difficulties in the organization of the educational work and school games. It also brings forward many unanswered questions about the assessment of the physical activity results, and it is considered one of the main reasons for inadequate information and misunderstanding about the physical education standards and normative documents.

Main goals: The presented research aims at revealing some of the main reasons for the inadequate and unsatisfactory physical education and sports results at school and the role of experts in the management of physical education process.

METHODS

The research methods used for the article involve both theoretical and practical aspects of the problem. At the preliminary level it was important to carry out a detailed theoretical analysis of standards, documents, sport and scientific theories. To better determine the frame of the problem, discussed herein, more specific documents and regulations concerning the physical education theory and practice have been analyzed further on together with the results of a survey conducted with teachers, school managers and members of school boards.

Fifty four specialists including thirty six physical education teachers had to answer the following questions:

1. What is the present state of physical education at school?
2. To what extent the physical education experts and specialists are involved in the problem?
3. What further measurements should be taken in order to improve the physical education and sports training at school?

More questions have been discussed and summarized during the interviews.

RESULTS

The analysis of the normative documents shows a contradiction between the goals mentioned in the national educational strategies and the national programs for physical education and sports development in Bulgaria on one hand and the real situation and school practice on the other hand. The national program, for example, claims to *provide an adequate physical education and sports training process at all educational levels and stages by highly qualified teachers and experts. It also regulates the statute of the compulsory physical education classes by banning their use and transformation for other educational purposes and school subjects.* The school managers who took part in the survey pointed out another big contradiction concerning the legislation. According to their opinion it is not clear which parts of the physical education and sports policy concern the school practice and the only rules they feel obliged to follow are the ones strictly given in the Education Act. From their answers it became clear that they do not understand their responsibility and the specifics of the physical education regulations introduced by the state authorities. In support of the problem the Minister of Education issued an order about the organization and implementation of module teaching. According to it, the Teachers' Council of each school is responsible for the module teaching. The teachers have the right to organize this process using all available school and local resources considering teachers' qualifications and school traditions. It became a well-known practice among teachers and students to choose module "Tourism". Students are taken to school trips by bus while the physical activity is absolutely neglected. Two thirds of the schools participated in the survey offer such a module and it is organized and

taught by teachers qualified in other subjects rather than physical education specialists. Some school managers admit that they haven't talk to any physical education experts for years. It is evident that there is a lack of control in the implementation of the national physical education standards.

The quality of physical education and sports training classes does not meet the modern requirements. It is even worse in the primary schools where the physical education classes are given by non-qualified teachers. The classes are ineffective. The methodological structure of the subject is random which is not based on the modern theories and achievements in the field. The students are given a ball to play and this is the entire concept of teaching. Some of the interviewed teachers have complained about the available sports facilities which often are broken and inadequate. The financial support is also delayed and insufficient. The lack of qualified physical education specialists in many of the cities is one of the main reasons for bad organization and control of the physical education process. In some places the experts responsible for the physical education are into other subjects and their reaction is limited only in case somebody complains about the physical education teacher attitude. To really improve the physical education and sports training teachers' qualification an attestation and evaluation procedure should be introduced every 3-5 years.

Only 45 % of the Primary school teachers are familiar with the physical education and sports training requirements and standards. Only a small number of teachers receives the information from the school administration-15.2%, and the local Inspectorate 9.6%, the rest 74.2% find there own way to gather the information. Eighty seven percent of the teachers would like to improve their teaching methods in physical education if there is an opportunity offered by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sciences.

CONCLUSIONS

- The present status of physical education does not meet the Strategy of the Bulgarian State for a high quality of education.
- The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sciences does not have the potential to effectively control and manage the physical education process at school. In many local inspectorates of education there are no physical education and sports experts at all.
- It will make a difference if within all regional education inspectorates will be appointed experts in physical education and sport to control the learning process in physical education and sport..
- The local administration and authorities should support to a greater extent the local schools including new projects for the construction of modern sports facilities.

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