

## Physical Education in Swedish schools

The Swedish Society of PE teachers SGS has during the 1990s strongly protested against the reductions of the school subject Physical Education. The reduction started with the new Board of Education Lpo 94 and is still less than earlier. This could lead to serious consequences for many pupils' development of motor skill, physics and social ability.

It is a paradox that the subject PE has got more and more substance during the last decades and at the same time less time in the curriculum. Researchers, parents and teachers worry about many children moving their bodies less than they used to. Children today are rich in visual and audio impressions, but poor in moving experiences.

During the 1930s and the 1940s all pupils in Swedish schools had PE four times per week and 12 outdoor days every year. During the 1990s PE time has been reduced from about 756 hours to 500 hours in the nine years school time. Sweden is now one of the countries in Europe where pupils have the least PE in school, only Ireland has less.

In SGS we are well aware of the possibility to let pupils have more PE as a personal choice, but we know through experience that those who need physical activity the most will not choose it. There are also examples of pupils choosing PE and not being able to get it because of the organisation of the school.

A national survey about PE in Sweden 2000-2001 was sent to all Swedish schools. Headmasters of 3590 schools, about 70% of all schools, sent back answers. The results show the following means for PE time in different school years:

School year 1 77 min	School year 4 100 min	School year 7 107 min
School year 2 81 min	School year 5 102 min	School year 8 105 min
School year 3 88 min	School year 6 104 min	School year 9 106 min

Before Lpo94 the corresponding time was 80 minutes in school year 1-3 and 120 minutes in school year 4-9 + 4-8 outdoor days.

It is not acceptable that the Physical education now is dependent on different decisions of different headmasters. All pupils should have PE at least three hours per week no matter what school they attend. In the Bunkeflo Project all pupils have physical activity on the schedule every day for nine years. According to research and experience this must be considered as a reasonable amount in a school for health for everybody. One must ask oneself: What is more important than health?

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