



SISC

SELF-INSURED SCHOOLS OF CALIFORNIA

RISK MANAGEMENT SERVICES

October 2009

TO: District Superintendents
SISC II Member Districts

FROM: Timothy L. Beard
Manager, Risk Management Services

SUBJECT: Weight Lifting

The purpose of this memo is to offer a word of caution to district administrators who are contemplating adding, or currently offering, weight lifting as a part of their physical fitness program for 7th and 8th grade students.

Weight training offered at this grade level can be an appropriate activity as long as the objective of the program is focused on fitness and health and not on bodybuilding or strength building. There is mounting evidence indicating that weight training for this age group may be of little value or may even be harmful if the purpose of the weight training is for strength or bodybuilding. The stress of weight lifting may be too much for the physical structure of students of this age group because they are still growing and developing. Weight lifting is not a risk free physical activity and if not planned and supervised can present a danger to students. Therefore, to minimize the risk of this activity, the following items should be addressed:

- Weight-lifting curriculum should be developed strictly for the purpose of fitness and health.
- Barbell type free-weights should not be utilized in the program; lightweight dumbbells may be appropriate.
- Students should be closely supervised. At no time should a student be allowed to use the equipment without supervision. A physical education instructor knowledgeable in weight training should be required to conduct the supervision.
- Parents/Guardians should sign an acknowledgement before a student is allowed to participate in the activity.

If all of the above items are addressed, SISC could support weight lifting as an appropriate activity in a physical fitness program for this age group.

TLB:sh

P. O. Box 1847 ♦ Bakersfield, CA 93303-1847 ♦ <http://www.kern.org/sisc/>
1300 17th Street - CITY CENTRE ♦ Bakersfield, CA ♦ (661) 636-4604 ♦ FAX (661) 636-4418

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