Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury
OREA | Offices of Research and Education Accountability

PHYSICAL EDUCATION and PHYSICAL ACTIVITY in TENNESSEE

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May 2016

WHAT IS...

...PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?

Recess, walking indoors or outdoors, and kickball, or other forms of physical activity that promote fitness and well-being.

As of July 2016, state law will require the equivalent of 225 minutes of physical activity per week for grades K-1 and 160 minutes for grades 2-6.

...PHYSICAL EDUCATION?

A pre-K through grade 12 standards-based program of physical education-related instruction. Physically educated students demonstrate competency in motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities.

P.E. programs are to be provided annually, but a minimum number of minutes or days per week that students should participate in physical education classes is not required.

Walking between classes does NOT count toward the required amount of physical activity.

Tennessee students must complete a total of 22 credits to graduate from high school, including a 0.5 credit in physical education.

0.5 credits = one semester

Some school districts allow marching band, interscholastic sports, JROTC, and other approved activities to fulfill the 0.5 high school credit.

Physical education programs must be developmentally appropriate, with instruction focusing on activities that promote good health habits and enhance physical fitness, according to State Board of Education rules.

90 minutes per week

State law requires 90 minutes of physical activity per week for students in 7th-12th grade.

Reported Obstacles to Implementation of Physical Activity in Elementary & Secondary Schools (As Reported by School Districts for the 2013-14 School Year):

1. Lack of consequences for non-compliance with the law

2. Lack of time available for implementation

3. Concern about decreased academic time

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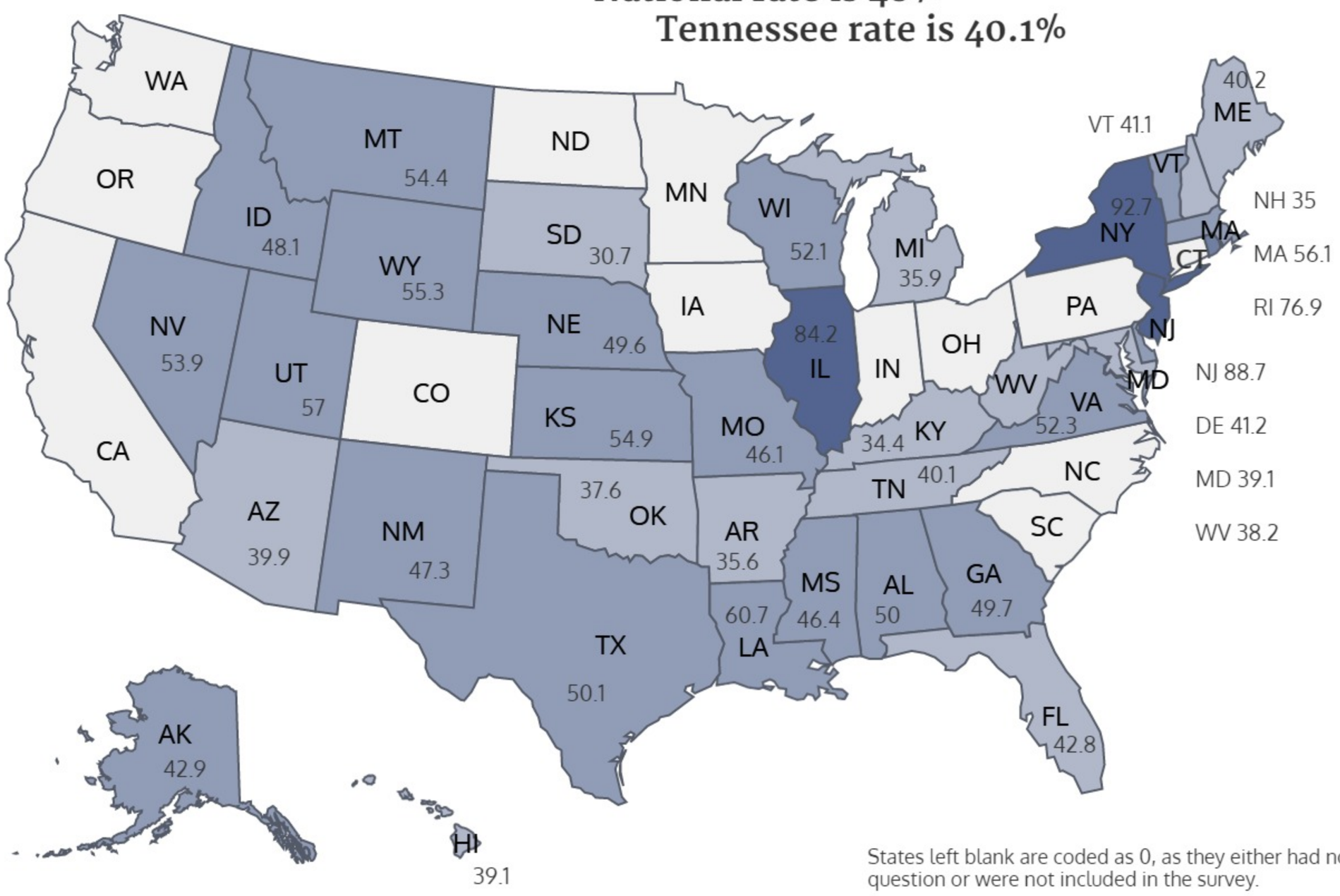
Percentage of high school students attending PE class at least once per week

National rate is 48%
Tennessee rate is 40.1%



States left blank are coded as 0, as they either had no data for the question or were not included in the survey.

Value
0 35 70 100

How is physical education measured?

The federal government administers the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), which is completed by representative samples of 9th - 12th grade students every two years.

Survey Question:

In an average week when you are in school, on how many days do you go to physical education (PE) classes?

The Society of Health and Physical Educators, also known as SHAPE America, has developed five national physical education standards that define what a student should know and be able to accomplish as a result of a quality physical education program.

States and local school districts across the country use the National Standards to develop or revise existing standards, framework, and curricula.

The nationally recommended amount of physical education for high school students is 225 minutes per week.

No states currently meet the recommended amount, though some specify a minimum number of minutes per week.

Tennessee recommends that students take PE in grade 9 and earn a half credit for high school graduation, but does not specify a minimum number of minutes or days per week.

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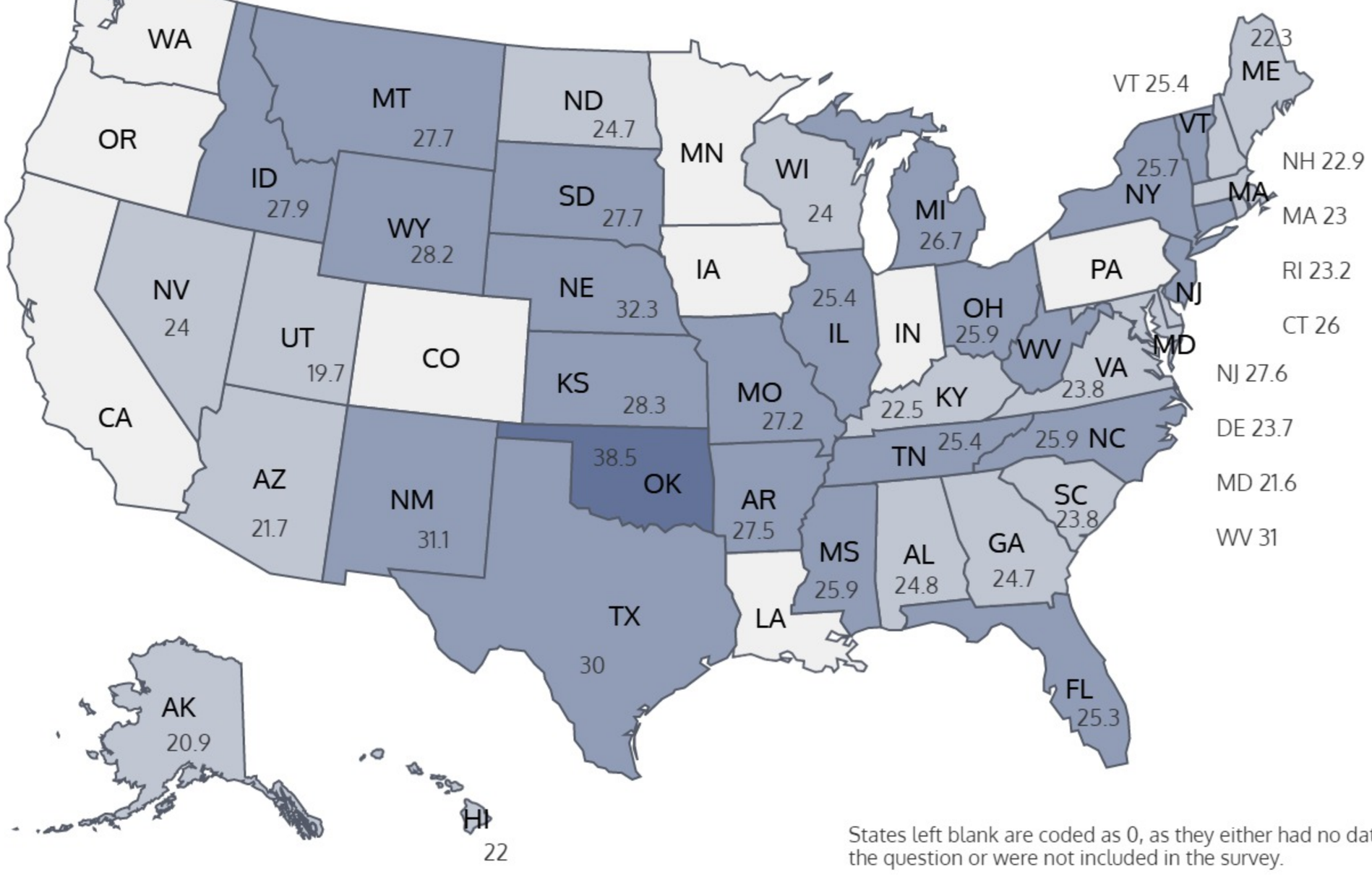
Percentage of high school students physically active 1 hour per day

National rate is 27.1%
Tennessee rate is 25.4%



States left blank are coded as 0, as they either had no data for the question or were not included in the survey.

Value
0 25 50 75 100

Tennessee's physical activity law requires at least 90 minutes per week of physical activity for 7th-12th grade students.

The Centers for Disease Control recommends that children and adolescents ages 6-17 engage in one hour per day of physical activity.

For the 2013-14 school year, 85 percent of Tennessee school districts reported that they provided 90 minutes per week of physical activity, as required by law.

How is physical activity measured?

The federal government administers the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), which is completed by representative samples of 9th - 12th grade students every two years.

Survey Question:

During the past 7 days, on how many days were you physically active for a total of at least 60 minutes per day?