

Joint-Use Agreements:

A State-Level Strategy to Improve Public Health



PREVENTION RESEARCH CENTER
at TULANE UNIVERSITY

Background on Joint-Use Agreements:

Joint-use agreements allow local governing entities and/or school districts to share use of properties. These formal contracts can include arrangements like opening school playgrounds for public use after school hours or allowing schools to use recreation district property for sports or PE.

Louisiana Act 351 (2011) limits the liability of schools and government agencies. For example, a school cannot be held responsible for an injury that occurs on its playground after school hours. The law also states that parties entering into joint-use agreements with schools must present adequate accident and liability insurance. Louisiana SCR 14 (2011) promotes joint-use agreements.



One study in New Orleans found an 84% increase in the number of children being physically active outdoors when a schoolyard opened after school.¹

Why Louisiana Needs Joint-Use Agreements:

- Louisiana was the most obese state in 2013 with 35% of adults reporting a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 or above.² 40% of Louisiana youth (ages 10-17) are overweight or obese.³
- 19% of Louisiana high school students do not participate in 60 minutes of physical activity on any day.⁴
- 37% of Louisiana adults do not have adequate access to places for physical activity.⁵
- Despite Louisiana's legislative efforts to support joint-use agreements, many schools and governing entities have not formed these contracts.

Louisiana's Overall Health Rank, based on America's Health Rankings: **48th**

Other Physical Activity Indicators²:

Health Indicator	Louisiana's Rank	Prevalence
Obesity	50th	35% of adults
Physical Inactivity	47th	30% of adults
Cardiovascular Deaths	46th	319 deaths per 100,000 pop.

Example of a State-Level Law:

North Carolina General Statute 115C-524 limits the liability of school boards when participating in joint-use agreements. In 2011, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and Division of Public Health developed a comprehensive guide for schools on joint-use agreements.

Projected Costs:

- Joint-use agreements have little to no cost and promote cost-sharing of facilities, saving time and money.
- School boards and governing entities may choose to charge for the use of their property.



Next Steps for Louisiana:

Louisiana can identify and address barriers that deter schools and governing entities from using joint-use agreements, particularly in communities with limited access to places for physical activity.

- The Impact -

Strengths

- Joint-use agreements increase opportunities for physical activity.^{1, 6, 7}
- Access to recreational resources is associated with healthier weight status.⁸
- Research suggests that community members are more likely to utilize joint-use agreements at schools that offer physical activity programs compared to those without structured programs.⁶
- Surveying schools and governing agencies on joint-use agreements will identify ways to increase joint-use agreements.



Barriers

- Schools and governing agencies may not be aware of organizations that are interested in forming joint-use agreements.
- Initial groundwork for establishing joint-use agreements may be difficult for schools and governing agencies with limited time and resources.



Additional research briefs on Louisiana Public Health Strategies can be found at prc.tulane.edu/publications

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