



Shape Up SF PE Advocates brought Ken Dyar to San Francisco August 4, 2011, to kick off the start of our first ever PE Speaker Series, put on in part by our partner, Sports Basement. During Ken's visit, we were fortunate to schedule an interview with Carol Kocivar, California PTA president, and host of KALW's *Looking at Education*, that airs the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 6pm, before the SFUSD Board of Education meetings. What follows is a transcript of the interview that was aired on 8/9/11.

KOCIVAR: This is Carol Kocivar, *Looking at Education* on KALW, and we're going to talk about one of my favorite subjects, physical education. Joining me is Ken Dyar, who is the Coordinator of Physical Education, Wellness, and Athletic Competition in the Delano Union School District. Ken's been a teacher for about 20 years and a PE teacher for 18 years and really has a perspective on what our kids need and why the need it. Ken, what is it that our kids need now in terms of physical activity?

DYAR: Well we know that there is an obesity epidemic sweeping the nation, and that it's particularly tough in CA where the statistics have shown that as a state that our obesity statistics are getting worse over time. So what kids need are - they need the skills the lifelong skills to be healthier, happier adults. We need to give them the skills that will allow them to lead a healthier life. If you look at CA physical education standards that were adopted in Sacramento, they teach kids that. So PE classes, if we just follow the standards and teach what we already know is out there, we'll give those kids those skills.

KOCIVAR: So what about those people that think that physical education is just being on the football team or the basketball team? What's the mindset change?

DYAR: You hit the nail on the head. That's the toughest thing. The problem with physical education reform is changing adults' perceptions of what physical education is. I always tell people that 21st century physical education is not your father's PE. All adults have had PE when they were in school. They think they know what you're supposed to do but really you don't. So that's the toughest part - changing people's mindset about physical education.

KOCIVAR: And the mindset really is a lot of the time - they think of sports. They think of games. But if I am a teacher in an elementary school, and I'm required to provide PE - a certain number of minutes every week, what are those things that I should be looking at and how would I do it?

DYAR: That's a common misperception. PE and athletics are actually not two sides of the same coin. Athletics have coaches. Coaches have cut lists. If you don't have the skills, I can kick you off the team and I don't have to deal with you anymore.

By law, all teachers have to teach physical education to all children - able, disabled, second language learners, gate students, struggling students - it doesn't matter. They all come to us. So a physical education program has to be developed to meet the needs of all children. So really what I need to do is find fun, highly aerobic games that allow children to move for the majority of class time, and that give them the skills. And then a couple of those games come with giving them skills and this is why you do it. This is how you practice. This is how you can get your heart rate up. This is how you burn more calories. And then throw in nutrition. This is how you eat better. This is why you drink more water and less soda.



Teachers need to build their physical education programs is focus on the needs of the child so that when they grow up, they are able to carry those skills with them into adulthood.

KOCIVAR: Now I know you have a story about your schools because they have a fitness test that kids have to take every year and they reveal something, don't they?

DYAR: They do. The Fitnessgram test is mandated by the state of CA for all 5, 7, 9th graders. There are 6 different tests that the students have to take and fall into a zone called the healthy fitness zone. If you're in the healthy fitness zone, that's a minimum level of health to ward of injury, disease and so forth.

In 1998, that was the first year that we had to submit those scores to the state. And in Delano, when those test scores came back, we found that only 7% of our 5th graders could pass. So if we flipped that, that means 93% failed. So that for me set off some fireworks in my head and I just threw out the old traditional curriculum and I rewrote it to be fitness based and fun and nontraditional so the kids would be excited and say – hey I never played that game before, I want to try this new thing. Over the course – it didn't happen overnight – over the course of about 3 years, 4 years, we went from 7% of our kids passing to 42% and that was miles ahead of the state average, the county average. So it really worked, and we really did it with nothing more than a change of focus. In my town, in Delano, we're really poor, it's low socioeconomic status, we have a high percentage of migrant families that follow the harvest, and we don't have resources. We don't have Walmarks or big corporate sponsors that will help us. We have to do this on our own. So when we made the change, we made the change in focus only and just tried to make things more fun, and just by doing that we were really able to turn things around. So my message is always, if we can do it in Delano with nothing, then what's stopping everybody else? Anybody can do it. It's really about the kids. If you focus on the kids, then the success will come.

KOCIVAR: Let me just remind you, this is Carol Kocivar, *Looking at Education* on KALW, and joining me is Ken Dyar, who is the Coordinator of Physical Education, Wellness, and Athletic Competition in the Delano Union School District. And he's here in SF but he's talking about what schools can do not only in SF and in his district but all over the state because you've seen the effects of poor nutrition and lack of exercise in lots of youngsters. So when you go into a classroom, let's say you're going into an elementary school classroom and the teacher hasn't had the experience that you've had with getting a degree in physical education. What are the steps that should be taken to help a teacher who really may not have that background to have a curriculum and a course that meets the needs of today's children?

DYAR: You've got to go through the professional development. The teacher has to get the professional development and that can be an expense for districts, but you have to take it. Districts will teach teachers how to better teach language arts, how to better teach math, how to better teach science. So even though they went to college and studied those things, over time you always have to update your knowledge. Become more comfortable. And so districts have to put in the time to give teachers the professional development because to get your multi subject credential, you take one class in elementary PE methods – one class. And most teachers, the idea of having 30 or 40 students running and jumping outside is terrifying because they don't know how to handle it. And it's not that they don't want to go



out, it's just that they don't know how to go out for PE. So we've got to invest in that professional development, which is something that we did in Delano for quite a while now, for at least the last 6 years. Giving teachers the professional development in what quality PE looks like and how to deliver those lessons successfully.

KOCIVAR: So if you were giving professional development 101, what are some of the basic ideas that a teacher has to have with a classroom of 30-40 youngsters?

DYAR: It's really surprisingly the same as when they're in the classroom. The difficulty is when you go outside you lose your 4 walls and a ceiling to contain people. But you still have to focus on classroom management. So one of the first things we do is how do you manage kids in a movement setting? And then the other thing is keeping your directions short, to the point – usually a minute or less, because when kids are standing around and all they want to do is play the game and they're listening to the teacher talk, they start to misbehave because they're getting bored. So it's all about classroom management and managing those children in a movement setting so you get them there, get them organized, we give them a couple of cues to get the kids back when you need their attention back when you need them back quickly, and to get them out and get them playing the game.

KOCIVAR: Okay, give me a cue.

DYAR: One thing that we do is we have one called group space. So anytime a teacher yells out *group space*, we know the kids are supposed to and we give them a countdown – we'll say "*Group space* - 10 seconds – 9, 8..." and they know they need to run up to me and either take a knee on the ground or sit on the ground, and that way I've got people not wandering but they're all sitting in front of me. Then I tell them I want them in *self space 2*. *Self space 2* means 2 arms lengths away from anybody else so you can't touch. And then all of a sudden, instead of saying "spread out, spread out!" because kids don't know what that means, *self space 2*, the arms go out and then all of a sudden now they're out. If I need them to stop and they're in the middle of a game, I give them a cue that I learned from a lady named Cathy Summerford which I say *iceberg*. And when they do *iceberg*, they put both hands over the top of their head kinda like they're making a pyramid, and they spread their feet apart so their base is stable and they freeze. Like an iceberg. Those kind of things we tell them this is how you do it quickly so if you're teaching a game and you see there is a rule they didn't get, instead of stopping and calling everybody back in for 10 minutes, "*iceberg*" hands go up, everybody freezes, here's the rule, do it like this, ready? Go!

And then you start to monitor. You walk around the outside, we call it *back to the wall*, so I'm not in the middle of the activity, because if I jump in the middle, there's always going to be kids I can't see. But if I walk around the outside of the perimeter and keep my back to that imaginary wall, then I can see everything all the time, and that allows me to jump in, fix things that need to be fixed, and jump back out and the kids play. The recommendation for PE is that they spend half their class time in moderate to vigorous physical activity, which is also known as MVPA. So in order to do that, I need to be quiet and let the kids play. But I also need to be able to jump in and fix things so that they're actually being educated.



PE is not recess, and it's not physical activity. We're actually educating using the physical. So I have to make sure that that education keeps happening.

KOCIVAR: You really have said something that people need to think about, and that it is *education*. It's not just kids running around and jumping. So what are some of the sort of basic things that the education component would be for those youngsters?

DYAR: The CA standards are broken into 5 overarching areas. Doing motor activities – running, jumping, kicking. Knowing about those motor areas - how do I practice? Why do I need to do it like this? Doing fitness – knowing about fitness, why do I need to drink water, how do I drop weight, how do I gain muscle? And then social development. And social development has always been in PE, and it's one of my favorite things to teach, but a lot of people don't know about that. So if you're looking at a basic PE program, you have what I call the motor know, the motor do, the fitness know, the fitness do, and the social do and know. So the education part is not about developing the next star quarterback for the football team, it is about building better human beings.

KOCIVAR: And better human beings for the rest of their lives.

DYAR: Absolutely.

KOCIVAR: I'd really like to thank Ken Dyar for joining me, talking about physical education, and hope everyone takes a moment to think about the issues that are facing our children in terms of childhood obesity and looking to see really what we can do not only for children but as adults to shape up. This is Carol Kocivar, *Looking at Education*, on KALW.