



**SCHOLARS**  
STRATEGY NETWORK

## California Schools Need a Fitness Revolution

**Da'Shay Templeton**, California Lutheran University

As California schools struggle to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, recent headlines highlight disturbing trends: **sharp increases in youth mental health crises**, **soaring obesity rates** and **widening educational disparities**. Yet, an essential element of student well-being — physical education (PE) — is being alarmingly overlooked.

Across California, districts squeezed by budget pressures and testing demands are reducing or eliminating PE programs. In the San Bruno Park School District, funding cuts wiped out K-3 PE classes, leaving parent clubs to fill the gap, though two schools still went without PE.

Similarly, the **San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD)**, facing a \$113 million budget deficit, restricted Parent Teacher Association (PTA) funds from covering staff, including PE teachers. Parents protested, fearing the loss of PE would push families to private schools.