

Action Research Proposal

Chapter One – The Introduction

For many of the 154,620 people who live in Oregon's second largest city, running is a way of life. So much so, the city has been nicknamed "Track Town USA." One needs only to go for a run down one of the many bike/running paths throughout the city to see why it has also been nicknamed "The Emerald City." Evergreen trees, community gardens, parks, and flower gardens are scattered throughout the city. The Willamette River snakes through the city and many buttes frame the skyline for a breathtaking view.

Of the city's two school districts, the largest, with 18,476 students is 72% Caucasian. Hispanic students make up the second largest population at a mere 6%. Asian/Pacific Islanders and American Indian students both represent 5% of the student population, leaving African-American students representing only 3% of the population. The remaining nine percent represent "other" or mixed demographics. These students are served by 24 elementary schools, 12 middle schools, and four high schools.

Of the 1,001 certified teachers serving these students, only 40 teach physical education (PE). There are 19 PE teachers serving the 24 elementary schools. Due to lower enrollments at some schools, four PE teachers each teach at two schools, while one school does not have a PE teacher.

The research site houses two elementary schools. One school is a neighborhood school with an enrollment of 222 students grades kindergarten through five. The other school is a Spanish Immersion school with an enrollment of 247 students grades 1 through 5. The schools share a gym, cafeteria, front office, library, computer lab,