

RESEARCH REPORT

“Standing desks” better for elementary-grade students?

Standing desks may be a trendy choice for technology workers and hipster workplaces in San Francisco and New York City. But can they work in your early grades school, too?

A new study found that standing desks can benefit young children’s health. Elementary students who used standing desks for two years ended up with lower body mass indexes (BMIs) than students with traditional desks and chairs, according to the study, published in October in the *American Journal of Public Health*.

“We force kids to sit down, sit still and be quiet, and this is unnatural for young children,” one of the lead researchers, Mark Benden of the Texas A&M University School of Public Health in College Station, told the Reuters Health news service. “If we want kids to sit less and move more, we should encourage activity in the learning process.”

Researchers studied 380 third and fourth graders in three Texas schools. The students had different types of desks in 24 classrooms—some

standing, some not, and other desks were tall but had optional stools.

After adjusting for gender and other factors, researchers found that children who used the standing desks for two years saw a significant BMI

decrease of more than 5 percent. The study argues for “the need to redesign traditional classrooms,” which could be useful to principals and teachers in just asking students to stand and move around more often.



MYTWOCENTS

What is one new tool or strategy you plan to implement this year?



Douglas Elmendorf (@delmendorf): I want to improve my leadership by giving our students a more prominent seat at the table for decision-making at our school.

Cris Blackstone: Improving the ways I share information with faculty members in the least disruptive way would mean a lot to me. Learning the simplest things, such as the time of day that’s most convenient for faculty members to read important material, will mean everyone is more receptive to the information I’m sharing.

Teachers involved in the study reported anecdotally that they had to create more lessons because they could cover more material in an active classroom, Benden told CNN. He added that teachers also reported improved student behavior, and that earlier research has shown that students with standing desks burn more calories than their peers.

“If you look at the national trends, we’re more sedentary than ever before, and naturally that affects weight gain,” Benden said in the Reuters interview.

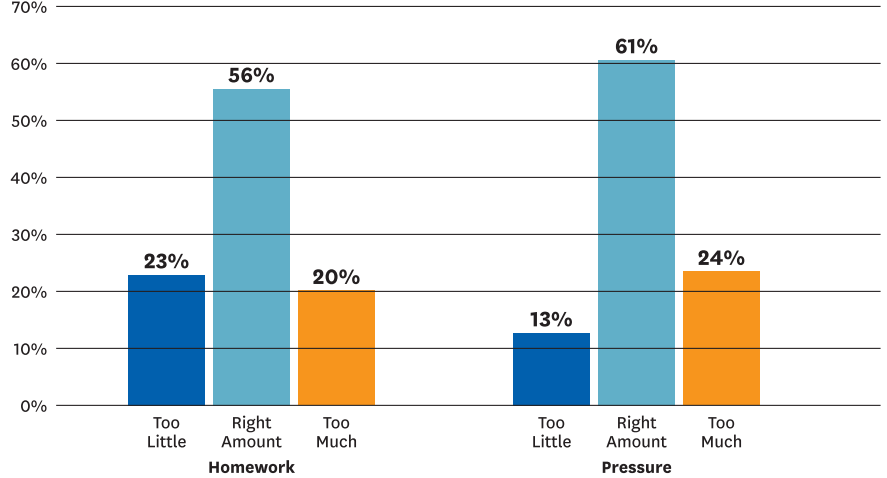
The newest study seems to confirm what medical experts—and office workers—already know: Standing can be good for you. A separate study found that sedentary behavior can increase your chances of cardiovascular issues, cancer and chronic conditions such as diabetes.

One factor for schools interested in giving standing desks a try: the costs for new furniture. Researchers suggest replacing furniture as possible, when it’s time to retire old furnishings. And it doesn’t always require new desks to get students moving more often.

The study suggests that however you do it, getting students to spend less time sitting can decrease the inactivity linked to obesity and diabetes. Previous research also has linked sedentary time to low academic achievement and self-esteem in children, the researchers noted.

Amount of Homework and Pressure to Do Well

Public School Parents, 2016



Americans Giving Public Schools Higher Marks, Poll Finds

Americans may be feeling better about their children’s public schools.

The latest national Phi Delta Kappa Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools asked participants: “What grade would you give public schools nationally?”

Twenty-four percent of Americans gave schools a grade of A or B—the highest percentage giving those marks in many years. Only 17 percent said schools deserved those grades in 2014 and 2011.

Still, most respondents continued to give schools a grade of C: 41 percent nationally. But that’s the lowest percentage since 1986, and in recent

years the percentage of those giving an A or B has steadily risen.

In other findings, a majority of public school parents oppose the closing of “failing” schools and allowing some students to opt out of standardized tests. They’re almost equally split on whether they like the new academic standards in many states. The majority of parents say children have “about the right amount” of both homework and pressure to do well in school, and a majority do review their child’s homework. There’s much more from the poll, which surveyed more than 1,200 Americans in all 50 states: pdkpoll2015.pdkintl.org.

Brian Bond: I plan on being a better instructional leader by providing consistent feedback concerning classroom walkthroughs and observations.

Jenny Klipp: My goal is to reach out and support my teachers in more fun, random ways to show them I notice the great job they are doing and am cheering them on. Favorite snacks, positive notes, and small classroom items are on my to-do list for them!

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