

## **PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

### **Projects:**

- **Media campaign with All Children Exercising Simultaneously (ACES) Day**
- **Survey: “The Status of Physical Education in Pennsylvania”**
- **Professional development workshops**

### **Type:**

- Physical activity program
- School physical education
- Professional development
- Policy
- Media campaign/event
- Research

### **Setting:**

- School-based

### **Partners:**

- State AAHPERD association

### **Goals:**

#### *Project #1*

- To disseminate to youth and their families information on how to incorporate physical activity and nutrition more easily and effectively into one's lifestyle.
- To increase family and community members' awareness of the importance of physical activity and nutrition.
- To increase community awareness of physical education programs in the schools.

#### *Project #2*

- To assess how often physical education is being taught, how it is being taught, who is teaching it, and what equipment and facilities are used.
- To identify professional needs of teachers in becoming more effective, competent, and comfortable in their teaching and with their profession in general.

#### *Project #3*

- To develop and implement seven “Tools for Teachers: Moving Pennsylvania Physical Education into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” workshops and eight “Physical Best” workshops for professionals.

### **Description:**

#### *Project #1*

On ACES Day, starting each year at 10 a.m. on the first Wednesday in May, millions of children, school staff members, and community group members participate in physical activity for 15 minutes. This year, as part of the CDC grant, the Pennsylvania State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance officially recognized ACES Day and promoted the event through its public-relations committee and network



and a new brochure. The full-color, informative, and readable brochure, titled *Stay Balanced Inside and Out* and printed in a run of 500,000, was distributed to children on ACES Day. Physical educators throughout the state completed the distribution and reported on use of the brochure and on local results of ACES Day.

*Project #2*

A 56-item survey was sent to more than 4,000 public and independent physical educators in the state and made available on a website for ease of completion. The return was 1,478 surveys, only 250 via the Internet. Only 100 surveys were returned by private schools. A summary will be developed and distributed.

*Project #3*

The well-received "Tools for Teachers" workshops were led by a traveling core team of four educators assisted by eight physical educators. About 330 instructors participated in the physical education workshops, which included standard-based instruction on the proposed Academic Standards for Health, Safety and Physical Education; inclusion; new and innovative activities; classroom assessment; and technology. The "Physical Best" workshops also were completed.

**Successes:**

*Project #1*

- Many more schools participated in ACES Day in 2002, and even more schools plan to participate next year. Many community members worked in partnership with schools on this event. The brochure was an instant hit, and more schools want the brochures for next year. Several schools/physical education programs received excellent write-ups in the community papers regarding their efforts with this special event.

*Project #2*

- The survey will provide important information to assist teachers and improve physical education.

*Project #3*

- Until this project, the Department of Education had been unable to provide workshops for physical educators.
- The workshops were well-received.

**Challenges:**

*Project #1*

- Start early on the campaign to get schools on board.
- Begin the media blitz early.
- Collaborate with other groups on promotion.
- Make the event easy, e.g., a teacher gives directions for physical activity over the public address system, and everyone throughout the school participates.

*Project #2*

- The professionals participating in this survey are still very much tied to answering surveys via paper rather than over the Internet.



- Physical educators in public schools are very willing to answer surveys about their discipline. A majority took the time to write on the surveys that they were grateful for the opportunity to have input.
- It is extremely difficult to get independent schools to respond to this type of survey.
- The next survey probably will not be anonymous.
- Inability to follow up with nonresponders cut the data pool significantly. Inclusion of independent schools requires a special effort and perhaps personal contact. Internet response should be more strongly encouraged.

*Project #3*

- Physical educators desperately want workshops geared specifically to their discipline.
- A majority of physical educators who attended the workshops are interested in exploring "how we do physical education" and are willing to make changes if provided accurate information and appropriate resources. The ability to communicate directly with physical educators must improve.

**Strategies for sustainability:**

*Project #1*

- For 2003, each school will receive a set of ideas, including both easy and more complex events. The Pennsylvania Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sport will be a partner in the event. Promotion will occur through numerous PSAHPERD opportunities. We are planning to mail newsletter information to members of PSAHPERD in the fall to help them become more aware of the event. With funding, the brochure will be reprinted.

*Project #3*

- Target more areas to reach more educators in the northern and central parts of the state.
- Sponsor the workshops in public schools and use basic education teachers as school coordinators. This creates a strong link with the administration.
- Improve workshop marketing strategies to reach educators more effectively.

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