

## **MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LEARNING**

### **Type:**

- Physical activity program

### **Setting:**

- School-based
- Community-based

### **Partners:**

- State health department

### **Goals:**

- To strengthen the role of coordinated school health in promoting physical activity in youth aged 9-13, their parents, and adult and teen influencers.
- To reinforce and align the messages from the state and National Youth Media Campaign.
- To facilitate and support local sustainable opportunities to encourage healthy activity, especially physical activity, to promote healthy lifestyles, and to displace unhealthy, risky behaviors in preteens.

### **Description:**

The status of physical education and physical activity practices and policies statewide was assessed through a survey conducted as an addendum to the School Health Education Profile survey. A sample of elementary principals and physical education teachers was also surveyed. Physical activity was promoted through presentations at conferences, expansion of information and resources on the coordinated school health (CSH) website ([www.mnschoolhealth.com](http://www.mnschoolhealth.com)) and in its newsletter, and work with local youth risk behavior projects, CSH pilot sites, and local schools and public health agencies. Walk to School programs were promoted through mini-grants to schools and agencies, training workshops, technical assistance, and participation in a local initiative.

### **Successes:**

- CSH strengthened its leadership and partnership roles with numerous organizations.
- Its partnerships have led to the training of 220 educators in the use of physical education technology (pedometer, heart-rate monitor, etc.), the funding and promotion of Walk to School programs, establishment of a Be Active Minnesota school physical activity work group, exploration of increasing physical activity in after-school programs, and increased technical assistance.
- Staff achieved a 70 percent return rate for the statewide survey.
- Five school districts received \$2,000 mini-grants to support physical activity among 9- to 13-year-olds.



**Challenges:**

- The most challenging task was development of survey tools applicable to a variety of policies, practices, grades, and school systems while avoiding reduced survey return rates.
- Even in the face of reduced busing services, schools are not highly focused on alternative transportation. Implementation of the new Walk to School concept takes grassroots organization and effort.

**Strategies for sustainability:**

- Ways to continue to fund the state CSH physical activity position are being explored.
- Each mini-grant recipient plan was required to address sustainability.
- Local councils that include youth have been created/strengthened and plan to continue their proposed efforts. Promotion of Walk to School concepts will continue.

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