

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, MA

Type:

- Physical activity program
- School/community health education
- Professional development

Setting:

- School-based

Partners:

- Local school district/school(s)

Goals:

- To develop sustainable elementary school programs that increase physical activity, improve nutritional status and knowledge, and reduce sedentary lifestyles.
- To support and implement the National Youth Media Campaign as materials become available.
- To move the six program elementary schools toward greater compliance with state and school district health and physical education standards.

Description:

Elementary school teachers received professional training and implemented the “Eat Well and Keep Moving” curriculum. Equipment was provided to schools lacking it.

Successes:

- The “Eat Well and Keep Moving” curriculum was implemented in six elementary schools.
- Thirty-one teachers attended curriculum training and taught the curriculum.
- One person from each school was trained to conduct step aerobics during the regular school day or in the after-school program.
- Classroom teachers became enthusiastic about the curriculum and its value.
- The School Health Index for physical activity and healthy eating was implemented in four schools.
- Under-equipped schools received physical education equipment, including “steps,” an aerobics video, a cabinet to store equipment, and a CD player.
- A return training session allowed teachers to share successes.
- Unanticipated benefits included a social-studies-oriented walking club, use of the patterns of steps in a third-grade geometry lesson, a game based on *Family Feud* that provided a review of lessons for all classes, a “health promotion for staff” spa day at one school, a fourth-grade class helping teach a third-grade class, use of aerobic steps at a school health and fitness fair, and interest generated among children not in the formal program. Teachers benefited as well, demonstrating increased appreciation of school-day physical activity, increasing their



networking and mentoring with one another, and showing new interest in their own health and role-model responsibilities.

Challenges:

- The project had to compete with math and English language arts for staff-development time.
- Overtime demands for coordination of a school program created funding issues.

Strategies for sustainability:

- The major strategy was to keep reminding school-based coordinators and their schools to plan for sustainability. The principals and/or staff of some schools want to continue next year.

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