

2006 Winners Awards for Excellence in Texas School Health



The Awards for Excellence in Texas School Health program recognizes and promotes effective school health programs and initiatives that strive to improve the lifelong health of students, staff and the greater school community.

Texas Department of State Health Services - School Health Program

www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth





2006 Awards for Excellence in Texas School Health



The following programs were honored by the Department of State Health Services as winners of a 2006 Award for Excellence in Texas School Health. Awards for Excellence is funded by the Texas Health Institute and the Texas Pediatric Society Foundation.

Belton Independent School District — “Walk Across Texas”

Pat Sleeth, RN, Health Services Coordinator and Winning Program Coordinator

Dr. Vivian Baker, BISD Superintendent

ESC Region XII

Requests from staff members concerned about their health and sedentary lifestyles prompted the initiation of involvement in the “Walk Across Texas” program. Without a display of personal self responsibility for their own health, the staff felt it would be difficult to teach the concept to their students. Healthy staff as role models became an important shared idea among staff throughout the district and led to the creation of individual campus wellness teams.

The following strategies were created to support the program:

- Provide a Wellness Challenge for district employees
- Unite to create a healthy vision for students, staff and community
- Improve overall health by increasing daily activity

A total of 59 teams and 472 staff (approximately 50% of the total district staff) participated in this centerpiece activity for the program; The “Walk Across Texas”, a physical activity challenge created by the Texas Cooperative Extension program. An assessment of the program from participant surveys will be completed by April 17th to evaluate outcomes. Expansion of the program will be decided based partially on those results.

“Without a display of personal self responsibility for their own health, the staff felt it would be difficult to teach the concept to their students.”

-- Pat Sleeth

Rose Shaw Special Emphasis School — “Healthy Bodies ... Healthy Minds”

Nelda Silva, Instructional Advisor, Winning Program Creator and Contact

Anna Hutchison, Assistant Principal, Winning Program Contact

Ms. Elida Ramirez, Interim Principal

Mary Kelley, Corpus Christi ISD Interim Superintendent

ESC Region II

“The health, emotional and academic needs of every child must be met by everyone that touches the life of a child;” is the “Healthy Bodies...Health Minds” philosophy of the Rose Shaw Special Emphasis School. Educators, parents and community members established and reinforced this philosophy through wellness objectives developed to meet the health needs of the students. These included self-care, community safety, asthma care, nutrition, ancathosis screenings, dental care and treatment of pediculosis.

The number of students who were overweight and diabetic had been increasing and began to appear at a younger and younger age. As a result of this, activities to reduce obesity and promote healthy lifestyles for both students and family members were increased. The Student Health Advisory Committee was developed when the school’s peer tutor program began to have a positive impact on academic learning and was quickly incorporated into the “Healthy Bodies...Healthy Minds” program. Students began educating other students by informing them of the benefits of a healthy life style. As a result, the program grew.

“The school’s peer tutor program began to have a positive impact on academic learning.”

-- Nelda Silva

Through the use of school and community resources, the “Healthy Bodies...Healthy Minds” program has been effective in teaching students and parents to be proactive in eliminating or decreasing health risks.



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Waxahachie Independent School District — “Give the Gift that Keeps on Giving”

Kris Rencher, R.N., Lead Nurse, Winning Program Contact
James Wilcox, WISD Superintendent

ESC Region X

This program is an extension of the WOW program started in 2003-04. Students were already walking and getting excited about healthier lifestyles. The goal was to also excite the adults about healthy lifestyles. The need to provide health information became apparent when 45% of the staff were found to be hypertensive at an annual health screening. A collaboration between the district SHAC, the district administration and the program’s creators produced a six week Healthy Living class for staff. Additionally, an easy cost-free walking program was implemented district-wide. Awareness of healthy lifestyle choices, creating a habit of regular, moderate exercise, like walking, and participating in regular health screenings were identified as staff goals.

“We wanted to create the same excitement in our staff with this program that we saw in our students.”
-- Kris Rencher

A buddy system was developed to encourage staff to maintain the walking program along with pedometers and health risk assessments. Community organizations provided ongoing educational programs, local media covered staff progress and student walkers provided enthusiastic support for their participating teachers.

Sterling City Elementary School — “Getting Into the Zone with Fitness and Nutrition”

Amanda Krejci, Physical Education Teacher, Winning Program Contact
Glen Coles, Principal
Ronnie Krejci, Sterling City ISD Superintendent

ESC Region XV

During the 2001-2002 school year, Sterling City ISD participated in a pilot program for a project called Coordinated Approach To Children’s Health (C.A.T.C.H.). This project provided a Body Mass Index (BMI) screening for all students in the district. When the project was over, Sterling City continued to monitor BMI and in 2003 found 43% of students had a BMI over the 85 percentile. In 2004 the percentage of overweight students increased to 53 percent. Those results indicated a need to increase the nutrition education and physical activity in SCISD schools in order to decrease the rate of obesity in the students.

The “Getting into the Zone with Fitness and Nutrition” program evolved from this challenge. The goal of this program is to reduce the risk of obesity through increased physical activity and nutrition education. Students are given skills to carry into adulthood to enable them to make healthy lifestyle choices.

“We saw a need to increase nutrition education and physical activity in SCISD in order to decrease the rate of obesity in our students.”
-- Amanda Krejci

The physical education teachers began a fitness assessment program and increased daily physical education from 30 to 55 minutes in elementary schools. Funds from a PEP grant award, enabled the P.E. program to move up to a whole new level. Curriculum was developed to integrate the physical education program with nutrition education and certified staff were hired to teach it. An outdoor education program has been so successful it has become an institution at Sterling. Students that had been in the program from its inception have learned to monitor their activities and incorporate them into their personal lifestyles outside of the school day.



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Fort Sam Houston Elementary School—“School Health Helper”

Robin Harvel, B.S.N., R.N., School Nurse, Winning Program Contact
Jayne Hatton, Principal
Dr. Gail Siller, Fort Sam Houston ISD Superintendent

ESC Region XX

The School Health Helper program is a teaching tool designed to instruct students in health practices that contribute to their overall health and wellness. Throughout the years, students at Ft. Sam have been taught various aspects of healthy decision making and to practice universal precautions. The School Health Helper program emphasizes the involvement of the students in their own personal health, self care and minor first aid treatment.

School staff received a School Health Helper orientation and printed health information addressing ways to create healthier classrooms. The teacher organized a classroom first aid station and appointed 2-3 School Health Helpers each grading period to serve as the class “School Health Helper”. The school nurse or other school health leader organized School Health Helper classes addressing emergency and first aid care, nutrition, exercise, personal health, safety and School Health Helper duties and responsibilities for the entire student body.

“We are teaching our students practices to improve their personal health that may possibly prevent the unnecessary use of an already overburdened health care system.”

-- Robin Harvel

Through the School Health Helper program, students are actively taught health practices that will ultimately improve their personal health and may possibly prevent frequent and unnecessary use of an already overburdened health care system. The program has been implemented in each classroom with enthusiasm and active support. Staff and students are more aware of proper care for personal health issues in general and the program has served as a catalyst for incorporating school wide activities for comprehensive school health and wellness.

Lampasas Independent School District — “STEPS to a Healthier You”

Jamie L. Jones, R.N., B.S.N., District Nurse, Winning Program Contact
Dr. Bryant Myers, LISD Superintendent

ESC Region XII

“STEPS to a Healthier You” is an employee wellness program that has expanded to include community members and students. STEPS resulted from a health screening sponsored by the local hospital in which a large percentage of employees screened had high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol levels, and were either overweight or obese. While the district looked at addressing child obesity rates, Lampasas ISD and the SHAC decided to lead by example. Implementation of a wellness based plan for employees was developed so staff could begin taking the “STEPS to a Healthier You.”

In its second program year — the primary objectives of the program are to focus on physical activity, encourage healthy food choices and reduce stress. Currently there are 85 employees and 20 community members enrolled in the program with over 300 students exposed to various components throughout the year.

“STEPS is not a contest. It’s based on the principle that anyone can take positive steps to improve their personal health regardless of weight or fitness level.”

-- Jamie Jones

The STEPS program consists of individual counseling, setting personal health goals and tracking the achievement of those goals; monthly educational seminars, healthy cooking demonstrations, motivational contests and awards, district sponsored fitness classes and an end of the year celebration bash. Through the STEPS program, participants have increased their knowledge of a healthier lifestyle and reduced blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Referrals have been made to primary care physicians as needed, a large amount of weight has been lost and daily measures have been taken to reduce and control stress levels.



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Jacksonville Independent School District — “Family Walk Night/Family Fitness Event”

Jamie Maddox, R.N., Health Services Coordinator, Winning Program Contact
Stuart Bird, JISD Superintendent

ESC Region VII

The Family Walk Night was a friendly competition between four elementary schools to see who could get the highest percentage of individuals to participate. All students were asked to bring a family member to walk with them. Cash prizes were awarded to each P.E. department based on levels of participation. Students were awarded action-oriented prizes. Community health providers saw this event as an opportunity to access a large population at one time with health information. The community struggles with poverty, obesity and lack of access to care. There is also a need to improve the involvement of the parents who never interact with their children’s school due to language and cultural barriers, transportation challenges or other reasons.

- **Objectives were:** decrease obesity, increase self-esteem, improve relations between parents and school personnel, improve the health of the community and improve community relations. Rewards and incentives were offered to motivate students to exercise. Bilingual notes to parents asking for their involvement were sent home and all efforts were district wide to ensure success. Relationships with community agencies were maintained or improved.
- **Key improvements:** using a district facility instead of a city park, designing walking trails for different fitness, levels increasing collaborative efforts with staff and older students and using healthy themes to create enthusiasm and increased community support from health providers.

“Our newest collaboration is with the office of Dr. Shirley Neely, our Texas Commissioner of Education who says she wants to... kick-off [our next] event by riding her Harley!”

-- Jamie Maddox

Timmerman Elementary School — “School-Based Flu Mist Clinic”

Diane Spellings, R.N., B.S.N., School Nurse, Winning Program Contact
Brian Ernest, Principal
Patricia Pickles, Ph.D., Plugerville ISD Superintendent

ESC Region XIII

During the height of the flu season in 2004-05, students and staff absentee rates reached 50-60 percent and cost Plugerville ISD approximately \$1,750 a day (not including cost of substitute teachers) in lost federal revenue for a total of \$52,500 over the 3-month flu season. With world-wide concerns about the possibility of a pandemic flu; prevention planning, implementation and education have become paramount issues on the agendas of national and state disaster preparedness and response agencies. The CDC recommends immunizing school age children against influenza as an effective containment measure which can greatly reduce the spread of flu across all age groups.

After collaboration with U.T. Austin, School of Nursing and others, a review of the literature was completed to address the appropriateness of hosting school-based flu prevention programs using intranasal vaccine instead of the traditional injectable vaccine. The pilot program produced immediate positive outcomes of decreased absenteeism and financial savings as compared to the same period the previous year. Federal income increased \$140 per day or a total of \$4,200 over the previous year. Similar intranasal flu vaccine clinics were held at the central administration office and other PISD schools.

From this experience the **following needs** were identified:

- Convenient, school based health services to support parents who cannot take time off work
- Provide non-traditional methods for vaccine delivery
- Cost - effective preventative vaccines
- Access to medical systems for parents who have language and cultural barriers, transportation challenges or lack health insurance.

“The pilot program produced immediate positive outcomes of decreased absenteeism and financial savings compared to the same period the year before.”

-- Diane Spellings



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Little Cypress-Mauriceville Consolidated Independent School District — “Minding the Business of Health: CATCH on to Healthy Behaviors”

Susan Bayliss, R.N., MSN, Director of Health Services, Winning Program Contact
Pauline Hargrove, Little Cypress-Mauriceville CISD Superintendent

ESC Region V

Education is a method to change behavior. Through the program “Minding the Business of Health: CATCH on to Healthy Behaviors,” the nurses of Little Cypress-Mauriceville CISD planned activities in order to provide opportunities for students and staff to learn healthy lifestyle behaviors. By building on the achievements of last year’s award winning program, “Hit a Home Run for Health,” activities were expanded to benefit a larger number of participants.

The eight areas of coordinated school health were covered in last year’s program. This year, activities were expanded in the nutrition area, including the mandated wellness policy approved by the SHAC and the district school board. Based on the healthy lifestyle principles and best practices, an increase in water consumption was started as a practice in the walking club.

“The Award for Excellence prize money we receive is earmarked for an AED for the Mauriceville campuses.”

-- Susan Bayliss

Physical activity best practices were utilized for elementary students through use of the CATCH activities and an all-school walk was held at the intermediate school. A unique plan to teach healthy food choices was implemented at the elementary school. At the request of the SHAC, speakers were invited to SHAC meetings to investigate the education information they could provide to the community. Educational information delivered to district employees and the community at large was expanded to include areas of safety as well as health and wellness.

Cannon Elementary School — “Cannon Roadrunners”

Susan Molle, R.N., B.S.N., School Nurse, Winning Program Contact
Tim Sutton, Principal
Kay Waggoner, Grapevine/Colleyville ISD Superintendent

ESC Region X

Initiated September 2004, Roadrunners is an after school program aimed at helping 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students become more active and more nutritionally savvy consumers. To address the increase in childhood obesity, Roadrunners was an attempt to get students moving and develop healthy habits now when they are more likely to become habits for life. Additionally, 20% of the children in this group were found to have the Acanthosis Nigricans marker. This alarming statistic reinforced the urgency of the matter.

The participating children were excited and saw the program as a very positive activity. The walking portion of the program, which is the primary focus of the project, was expanded this year to include community projects and fundraising walks -- which broadened the scope and purpose.

“Expanding the program to include community projects broadens our scope and purpose.”

-- Susan Molle

Roadrunners has regular meetings and students are invited to attend each week in addition to their weekly walks. The meetings include physical activities, nutrition education and lessons about the structure of our bodies. Other activities include walks, aerobics, Tae Bo, dancercise, etc. Spelling and math components are sometimes incorporated into the physical activities as well. This program has been so well received, it is being considered for expansion throughout the district next year.



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J. S. Gillett Intermediate School — “No Child’s Wellness Left Behind”

Pat Hayes, Department Chair for Physical Education/Health, Winning Program Contact
Mrs. Brenda Portis, Principal
Dr. Rudy Lopez, Jr., Kingsville ISD Superintendent

ESC Region II

Gillett is a 5th and 6th grade campus. Each year the 4th grade feeder schools identify the overweight students coming into the 5th grade and send the information to the school nurse. This past year, 42 percent of the incoming 5th graders were in the 90th percentile for weight.

Gillett wanted to be proactive in their approach to helping their children become healthy adults. These risk factors can lead to serious health problems that can become obstacles to learning. A “wellness” intervention plan implemented through the school and community is vital. Academic expectations are the same for all students regardless of health conditions. Young people do better in school and are less involved in risky behavior when the school has a well-rounded caring atmosphere.

Gillett developed the following objectives to improve student health and academic education:

- Maintain good health by using heart-rate monitors in physical education classes. The heart-rate monitors the students wear during class have encouraged them to improve the intensity of their physical activity and understand the benefits of the aerobic workout.
- Enrich the wellness of students through an after school Wellness Club where students learn self-discipline, wellness through physical activities, nutrition and good social skills.

Influenced by the efforts of this project, the district is in the process of revamping its nutrition program including a recommendation to serve bottled water in the cafeteria.

“Young people do better in school and are less involved in risky behavior when the school has a well-rounded, caring atmosphere.”
-- Pat Hayes



For more information about the Awards for Excellence program or, if you would like to contact any of the program coordinators identified in this publication about their award winning program, email Ellen Kelsey at ellen.kelsey@dshs.state.tx.us

or call 512-458-7111, Ext., 2140.