



Texas Department of State Health Services
SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM
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2007 AWARD WINNERS

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

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

The following programs are winners of a 2007 Award for Excellence in Texas School Health. The Awards for Excellence in Texas School Health program is funded by the Texas Health Institute and the Texas Pediatric Society Foundation and sponsored by the School Health Program of the Texas Department of State Health Services.



Connally High School - "Bright Beginnings Pregnant and Parenting Teen Program"
Diane Scheler, RN, BSN, School Nurse and Winning Program Coordinator
Daniel Garcia, Principal, Connally High School
Charles Dupre, Superintendent, Pflugerville ISD
ESC Region XIII

"Destiny is not a matter of chance; it is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for; it is a thing to be achieved." These thoughts describe the school's philosophy as they work with their parenting teen population. The increased frequency of students becoming parents before graduation from high school, prompted the development of this parenting teen program.

By working at staying in school, graduating with their classmates and keeping themselves mentally and physically healthy; students will be more likely to graduate and become productive adults; and, less likely to live in poverty. By achieving these outcomes through the program they also have a better chance of having a healthy baby, and navigating the medical system and the wealth of information and area resources available to them.

Objectives were created to overcome the taboos that face the teen parent population in many school districts:

- ☆ Demistify perceptions through program assessment.
- ☆ Provide afterschool classes to educate students about pregnancy, labor, delivery and care of their baby.
- ☆ Develop resources for the school nurse and the student to reinforce the content of the afterschool classes.
- ☆ Assist the student to obtain early pregnancy care and access local resources.

“Our program is a first step towards the accomplishment of a much bigger goal in the lives of students facing this huge challenge.”

Diane Scheler

A team of caring and involved staff, extensive community partners and support from administrators were key to the success of this program. A resource book for the school nurse and social workers to use when working with students was developed in cooperation with committed expert community partners. Staff training was held to support the goals and make sure clear and consistent messages would be delivered to students in all campuses.

Afterschool classes for the students were held utilizing community partners as speakers on a variety of topics related to the care of a baby as well as the health of the teen parent. A “diaper bag take-along” baby booklet was developed for students that emphasized what they learned in the program and reinforce the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.



**Fort Bend Independent School District - “Creating Healthy Relationships”
Mary Kiernan, Safe Schools Advocate and Winning Program Coordinator
Timothy R. Jenney, PhD, Superintendent, Fort Bend ISD
ESC Region IV**

The “Creating Healthy Relationships” (CHR) program is a collaboration between Fort Bend ISD (FBISD) and the Fort Bend County Women’s Center. This “relationship violence prevention” pilot program and curriculum is taught by Safe and Drug Free Schools staff members. They train high school students in Peer Assisted Leadership (PAL) classes; and the students, in turn, teach the information in seventh grade health classes. Studies show that information especially that of a sensitive nature will be better received and utilized when delivered peer to peer.

Because of the national rise in female high school students reporting physical and/or sexual abuse by a dating partner, FBISD staff felt it critical to proactively implement the CHR program.

The program objectives are:

- ☆ Raise awareness of the importance of self-respect and the skills needed to become self-directing.
- ☆ Enable peer educators to teach CHR to seventh grade health students about self-respect in relationships.
- ☆ Provide resources so students can maintain the knowledge and skills learned in the course.

“CHR focuses on the well-being of students in establishing healthy behaviors designed to last their lifetime.”

Mary Kiernan

Assessments showed that students appreciated having their peers teach them about relationship abuse. Data also showed that examples the peers shared were more relevant than examples the adults would use. Peer teaching also provided an opportunity to teach about other wellness topics in addition to safe school environments. PALs students received a two-day training including role playing and practice teaching time. A Power Point presentation was provided to the peer teachers so training would be consistent and concise. The seventh grade students received a reference manual and were encouraged to share the information they learned with their parents.



Fort Bend Independent School District - "Project WATCH"
Mary Kiernan, Safe Schools Advocate and Winning Program Coordinator
Timothy R. Jenney, PhD, Superintendent, Fort Bend ISD
ESC Region IV

Project WATCH is a cardiovascular awareness and prevention program created by the Texas Medical Association and provided to Fort Bend ISD (FBISD) by the Fort Bend County Medical Society Alliance.

The program objectives are consistent with standard WATCH objectives and are:

- Weight:** ✓ Create an awareness of **weight** as a risk factor for cardiovascular health.
- Activity:** ✓ Encourage exercise and increase physical **activity** on a daily basis.
- Tobacco:** ✓ Educate about the harmful effects of **tobacco** use.
- Cholesterol:** ✓ Create an awareness of high **cholesterol** as a risk factor for heart health.
- High blood pressure:** ✓ Create awareness and educate for the prevention of **high blood pressure**.

"Having a partner in the Oliver Foundation provided credibility for the necessary information to carry out the program and validated the importance of teaching students and the community about the harmful effects of tobacco, high cholesterol and blood pressure levels, high fat diet and lack of physical activity."

Mary Kiernan

High rates of obesity and diabetes, changes in environmental influences and increasing sedentary lifestyles are creating a nation of "at risk" children, brought the problem to the forefront. The need for education and awareness in the district became evident after a study for FBISD funded by a local foundation revealed risk factors for overweight in some students were higher than national levels.

The methods used to meet the WATCH objectives included educational presentations by notable speakers, school-wide walking activities, signing of student health pledges, contests,

participation incentives, staff and student trainings, media announcements, educational displays, cafeteria menu changes, and a community health fair. The results of these initiatives showed; 1) an increase in student awareness of risk factors, 2) an understanding of the importance of making healthy nutritional choices, 3) the necessity of daily physical activity and 4) a decrease in tobacco use.



Lampasas Middle School - "LMS Walking Club"
Angela Chesnut, LVN, District Nurse and Winning Program Coordinator
Dwain Brock, Principal, Lampasas Middle School
Brant Myers, EdD, Superintendent, Lampasas ISD
ESC Region XII

LMS Walking Club is a student fitness program that promotes walking as a lifetime physical activity, and provides an opportunity for peer support and camaraderie while exercising.

Results from a student poll showed that most students receive no form of physical activity, spend hours a day watching TV or playing on the computer or video games and demonstrate an inadequate understanding of good nutrition. The walking club was created to address the limited student participation in physical education and other fitness-related programs. Making the program "fun" was another important objective.

Meetings are also held to plan activities and set walking goals. Prizes are offered for meeting the goals. The club is also used as a forum to discuss healthy eating habits and lifestyle changes that promote health. Students meet after lunch with school personnel who walk with students on a nature trail three times a week.

“By forming a walking club, students who were just standing around and talking to friends after lunch are now walking. They enjoy being part of a group organized activity. They are not forced to participate – they choose to participate. They are forming a mind-set that walking is easy and fun, and this mind-set will carry over to their adult lives.”

Angela Chesnut

Any changes in the program are made by the students themselves. They review the pre and post elevation data midway and at the end of each year. Based on results, students then determine what adjustments need to be made to the program to ensure on going success.



Lyford High School - “Wellness Works”
Bibiana Bernal, RN, School Nurse Coordinator and Winning Program Coordinator
Isabel Solis, Principal, Lyford High School
Eduardo Infante, Superintendent, Lyford Consolidated ISD
ESC Region I

The Lyford High School “Wellness Works” program was developed with the goal of empowering district staff members to live healthy lifestyles. The program’s objectives are:

- ☆ To promote a healthy lifestyle by providing information on nutrition, disease prevention, physical activity and safety.
- ☆ To provide special events that offer healthy lifestyles information, training and screenings.
- ☆ To promote the benefits of eating 5 to 9 fruit and vegetable servings per day as part of a healthy lifestyle.

The results of a detailed survey revealed the types of health information of interest to staff as well as delivery preferences. A topic-specific, monthly health promotion and wellness newsletter was then developed as the preferred format for delivering health information to staff. The newsletter was provided in both English and Spanish which allowed the information to benefit all staff in the district as well as family members.

“Providing written materials to staff members allows them to read the information at their leisure and share with family members.”

Bibiana Bernal

Health Fairs for general information and awareness campaigns were also implemented targeting specific health topics such as a diabetes program that included a risk assessment and screenings. The “Recipe and Ingredient” program was also implemented. The program consists of a local produce vendor delivering fresh fruits and vegetables each month to enrolled staff. Using the produce they received and a recipe given to them through the program, the menu item is prepared at home. Always a surprise, a different recipe is distributed each month along with the fresh ingredients needed for preparation. Employees are encourage to share their own healthy recipes with each other as a fun, team building bonus to the program.

Since the program began, staff absences have decreased 18%. As a result of this and other positive outcomes, the district is expanding the program to the middle school this fall.



Pflugerville Independent School District - "The Student with Diabetes"
Susan Franzetti, RN, MSN, School Health Specialist and Winning Program Coordinator
Charles Dupre, Superintendent, Pflugerville ISD
ESC Region XIII

The 2005 Texas House Bill 984 mandates the designation of an unlicensed diabetes care assistant (UDCA) by the principal of each campus for the care of students with type 1 diabetes. In order to meet the requirements of the mandate, Pflugerville ISD (PISD) developed objectives not only to be in compliance but to bring awareness to the entire school population, student families and the community about this growing problem. More than 30 students in PISD with diagnosed diabetes attend school and many more students and staff attend with undiagnosed and pre-diabetes.

The objectives of the program are:


- ☆ Gather information about HB984.
- ☆ Educate school nurses on current standards of care related to diabetes.
- ☆ Train personnel to become UDCA's.
- ☆ Train transportation personnel about diabetes and diabetes emergency actions.
- ☆ Establish an Individual Health Plan (IHP) for each student with diabetes.

"Diabetes touches the lives of almost everyone. Increasing the knowledge and awareness about diabetes for all PISD staff and transportation personnel will better serve the community of Pflugerville."

Susan Franzetti

Through the education and awareness program, PISD aimed to reduce the incidence of emergencies and diabetes complications for students as well as provide students with a feeling of normalcy as they begin participating in extra-curricular activities. Freedom from misinformation or noninformation about their disease and an increase in physical activity, would also improve school attendance and increase academic opportunities.

Since the program started, a UDCA is trained and in place at each campus with a student with diabetes; there is consistent knowledge base and practice throughout PISD; transportation personnel are educated in emergency actions; stakeholders are involved and aware; and, there is an increase in student self management and participation outside of school.



Rose Shaw Special Emphasis School - "Healthy Bodies ... Healthy Minds"
Nelda Silva, Instructional Advisor and Winning Program Coordinator
Anna Hutchison, Assistant Principal, Winning Program Co-coordinator
Ralph Silva, Principal, Rose Shaw Special Emphasis School
D. Scott Elliff, Superintendent, Corpus Christi ISD
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 reinforce this philosophy through wellness objectives developed to meet the health needs of the students.

The objective of the “Healthy Bodies...Healthy Minds” program is to continue the health initiatives successfully put into place that address weight issues, wellness, self-care, dental care, acanthosis screenings, treatment of pediculosis, reducing adult diabetes risk, and nutritional classes. This year, the reduction of the **changeable risk factors** for cardiovascular disease (CVD) was added as a new focus.

School and community resources are utilized proactively to provide “real time”, hands-on activities and instruction for the reduction or elimination of unhealthy lifestyle choices. These unhealthy lifestyle choices make up the **changeable risk factors** for CVD and include:

- ☆ Physical inactivity
- ☆ Elevated cholesterol levels
- ☆ Diabetes
- ☆ Overweight
- ☆ Undetected and uncontrolled high blood pressure
- ☆ Unchecked asthma

“Students need education in the skill of daily self care in order to improve their quality of life. Though a majority of nutrition and physical activity can be handled through school activities, prevention of disease and injury is a twenty-four hour activity.”

Nelda Silva

For the program to work, the entire school and community needed to be involved. Therefore, the program was developed collaboratively and includes; instruction on wound care by the school nurse for elementary school students, classes for parents on prevention of pediculosis, student and parent classes on asthma triggers and monitoring and, access to the community mobile unit providing dental screenings and instruction on oral care.

The results of these kinds of interactive initiatives resulted in many successes. Some of those included a 10% decrease in asthma incidents, a decrease of 15% of students referred for dental treatment, and a decrease to 6 from 28 children with chronic pediculosis.



San Antonio Independent School District
“Physical Education/Health (Wellness) - Academic Support SAISD”
Roger Rodriguez, Academic Support Director and Winning Program Coordinator
Robert J. Durón, EdD, Superintendent San Antonio ISD
ESC Region XX

The incidence of overweight and type 2 diabetes in SAISD has been identified as higher than the U.S. average. To address this growing challenge, SAISD is involved in the following initiatives:

- ☆ Implemented the Bienestar (targeting Hispanics) and Nemma (targeting African-Americans) health programs at the elementary school level since 2000.
- ☆ Participated through UT Health Science Center at San Antonio, as one of seven national diabetes prevention, middle school intervention sites funded by the NIH (2004-09).
- ☆ Received federal *Carol M. White Physical Education Program* (ESCAPE/25Alive!) funding for three years (2004-07) for the eight SAISD high schools to promote improved nutrition and increased physical activity in the prevention of overweight/type2 diabetes.

The following strategies have been implemented to address diabetes risk factors facing SAISD students:

- ☆ Regular teacher/staff inservices are conducted promoting improved nutrition, increased moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA), and an understanding of healthy lifestyle messaging.
- ☆ Health/fitness equipment for all schools has been purchased.
- ☆ Collaboration with the community, local universities and medical centers takes place on a regular basis within all program components.
- ☆ Presentations, including published support materials of the results of implementing the program, have been delivered and continue to be available for all SAISD schools.

“District wide coordinatrn and implementation of best practices based upon these findings has been a notable aspect of this program.”
 Roger Rodriquez

Positive change in student behavior has been recorded and observed resulting from planned, systematic coordination of the program’s goals of; 1) promotion of healthy eating behaviors, 2) increased MVPA and 3) delivery of positive health/fitness messaging. Cafeteria management staff recorded improved eating habits from their evaluation of food selected by students.

Selective heart rate monitoring in P. E. classes showed students reach their heart rate targets for at least 50% of the class time. Student surveys indicate a cognitive understanding of the interrelationships between financial, individual and social messaging; an important step in helping them change unhealthy behavior.

The design of the program allows each department staff group to take responsibility for developing, recording and communicating the ongoing data supporting the goals. This strategy brought district wide buy in for the program and resulted in part of the program’s success.



Sterling City Elementary School - “Getting Into the Zone with Fitness and Nutrition”
Amanda Krejci, Physical Education Teacher, Winning Program Coordinator
Glen Coles, Principal, Sterling City Elementary School
Ronnie Krejci, Superintendent, Sterling City ISD
ESC Region XV

During the 2001-2002 school years, Sterling City ISD (SCISD) 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. Even though the project was over, Sterling City continued to monitor BMI and in 2003 found 43% of students had a BMI over the 85% minimum. In 2004 the percentage of overweight students increased to 53%. 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 its students.

The "Getting into the Zone with Fitness and Nutrition" program evolved from this challenge and is now in its fourth year. The goal of the program is to reduce the risk of obesity through increased physical activity and nutrition education to give students the skills to make healthy lifestyle choices that carry into adulthood.

“The school is the center of life for children outside their home. With limited health care available in Sterling City, many health issues are addressed in the school. The school then must be the place to address our obesity problem though education.”
 Amanda Krejci

Funds from a two-year *Carol M. White Physical Education Program* grant enabled the P.E. program to move to a whole new level. The physical education teachers began a fitness assessment program that increased daily physical education in elementary schools from 30 minutes to 55 minutes.

Curriculum was developed to integrate the physical education program with nutrition education and certified staff was hired to teach it. Many coordinated strategies were put into place, some of which focused on nutrition education as follows:

- ☆ A registered dietician was employed in the district to teach nutrition classes to all children.
- ☆ Students participated in food selection surveys and cafeteria menus were developed that blended student preferences, healthy food selection choices and nutrition education information.
- ☆ Parents were surveyed about their children's eating habits. Ninety-five percent of parents returned the survey.
- ☆ Community classes were offered to parents interested in taking the healthy eating message home.



For more information about the Awards for Excellence Program or, if you would like to contact any of the coordinators identified in this publication about their award winning program, go to: www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/awards.shtml; or email Ellen Kelsey at ellen.kelsey@dshs.state.tx.us or call 512-458-7111, Ext., 2140.