

Success Story



Weeks Middle School (Des Moines CSD)
Weeks Explores Before/After School Physical Activity

Summary

Weeks Middle School Physical Education Teacher, Angelique Smyth, took on the challenge of leading the school through the Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP) planning and evaluation. After the wellness team met to complete the process, Ms. Smyth moved forward with planning and implementing before-school and after-school physical activity options for students as well as increasing options for the intramurals program.

Students engaged in intramurals using various equipment such as training ropes and slam balls and engaged in games of cardio kickball, flag football, exergaming, yoga, golf and circuit stations. Students loved Zumba as well.

Before-school and after-school options were offered to various grades on a rotating basis to allow for more involvement and participation by the students.



Challenges

Ms. Smyth shares that she seeks grants to support health and wellness efforts as funding for health and wellness efforts is limited but critical for this school. Weeks Middle School has been designated as a “Persistently Low Achieving School” and many of the students are low-income or living in poverty (82%). With a limited department budget for physical education and nutrition education materials, this funding provides the opportunity to enhance physical activities and wellness activities for direct benefit of the students.

Strategies

Ms. Smyth looked for ways to get kids moving before, during and after school as a way to engage and fire-up their brains for learning. She added, “If we can find ways to get them active, we have a chance of increasing their test scores while instilling the importance of health and wellness through healthy lifestyle choices.”

Results

Weeks Middle School students enjoyed the before-school and after-school activities, both boys and girls. The boys especially enjoyed the various activities. The girls enjoyed the chance to be active but they felt insecure and uneasy because they felt like other students were watching them. This led to a schedule change so the girls could have a separate opportunity from the boys for physical activity. Having two days a week after school for the girls and two days a week before school for the boys helped the groups enjoy and engage in physical activity.

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Future Directions

Weeks Middle School has engaged in numerous health, wellness, physical activity and nutrition activities over the past several years.

Weeks Middle School was recently awarded the Gold Level Healthier US School Challenge Award. They plan to continue their efforts in creating and sustaining a healthy school environment for all students and to look for ways to engage students and staff to make healthy choices a way of life.

Grant Information

Funding for this project was made possible (in part) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through a cooperative agreement with the Iowa Department of Public Health and the Iowa Department of Education