

**Boston Public Schools
Alliance for a Healthier Generation Award Winners 2010**

Silver Award Winner

YOUNG ACHIEVERS SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS PILOT SCHOOL (Mattapan)

Exploring the physical world and engaging in physical activity go hand in hand at Young Achievers Science and Mathematics School. This Boston school has taken advantage of a wealth of local resources to provide their students with a breadth of learning experiences that get students out of their seats and outdoors.

The school created a Green Time Guide to help teachers take advantage of the green spaces that are within walking distance from the school for adding more physical activity opportunities. Science and math students are moving outdoors while using nature as a classroom for observations and experiments. A teacher/staff survey of in class and out-of-class physical activity per week by season revealed that students receive 140-160 hours of physical activity per year, which helps them exceed the amount recommended by the district wellness policy.

Physical activities such as walking, sailing and farming are linked to experiential learning throughout the grades. According to Heidi Fessenden, a second grade teacher at Young Achievers, "My students love and are extremely engaged in our experiential curriculum, including taking bird walks in the forest, working on a farm, planting our school garden, and visiting various Boston Neighborhoods on foot. They retain what they learned in previous years because the learning feels connected to real life, and they build on that prior knowledge each year."

Bronze Award Winners

LILLA G. FREDRICK PILOT MIDDLE SCHOOL (Dorchester)

The wellness council at Fredrick Middle School has realized the importance of providing everyone the chance to engage and participate in a wealth of healthy decision-making opportunities. They have focused on improving the food and beverage options available so that students can make better choices. They worked diligently to fill their vending machines with foods and beverages that would promote their student's growth and development.

They were also able to increase opportunities for their students and staff to participate in physical activity before school, during school, after school and on the weekends. All of these changes were implemented with very few obstacles. Amy Daniels, health and physical education teacher at Fredrick said, "I believe the biggest lesson learned is to be patient with the process."

NATHAN HALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (Roxbury)

"It takes lots of talking, listening and convincing to understand the 'need' for eating better food to stay healthy. Even so, we are moving in the right direction," said Principal Sandy Mitchell Woods. That direction involved launching a wellness program with several new healthy opportunities available for students and staff. The wellness council researched available resources and decided to implement the Eat Well, Keep Moving health education curriculum, Playworks intramural programs, a staff walking club and health information sessions for parents.

The Hale school wellness council wants to keep the momentum going for the next school year by incorporating a new nutrition education program, increasing the number of minutes for physical activity during and after the school day and continuing to make changes to the school lunch program. They also plan to expand the walking club so that students can participate, as well as reach out to community organizations for additional support and guidance on nutrition education and physical activity.

MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL (West Roxbury)

The wellness council at Media Communications Technology High School set out to “create a platform to facilitate dialogue about issues and concerns related to wellness, as well as the connection between good health and academic success,” said Grace Diggs, assistant headmaster. Wellness Wednesdays were introduced as a wellness education series for 9th graders that enable students to participate in discussions about healthy eating. Taste tests were conducted by student members participating on the wellness council to help select healthy snacks for the school store that meet the Alliance’s Competitive Foods Guidelines.

Several classes participate in a walking program during the day known as Westie Walkers. Staff members are also getting active with yoga classes, a walking club and fitness activities. Diggs shares, “We envision increased student involvement by offering community service credit to those who participate in these projects, giving them the added benefit of developing leadership skills and leaving a positive legacy to their school.”

MISSION HILL SCHOOL (Roxbury/Mission Hill)

“Our school community efforts towards creating a healthy school grew from small meetings among people with big ideas,” said Mission Hill Principal Ayla Gavins. Students, staff and community members came together to improve the school lunch program and to enhance the entire eating experience.

“We wanted better tasting, fresher and more culturally relevant food,” said Gavins. The Boston Public Schools food services department formed a partnership with a local farm to deliver produce directly to the school. They also set out to give their dining area a much-needed makeover to make it more inviting for students to dine. A small team of students created a new design, surveyed their peers for approval and presented their ideas to the school governance board. Funds were set aside for the project and the renovations took place over the summer, with help from a parent and his team of staff.

NEW MISSION HIGH SCHOOL (Roxbury/Mission Hill)

New Mission High School embarked on a journey to creating a healthier school environment when a team of New Mission staff, parents, administrators and students met during the summer of 2008 to discuss how the school could achieve and maintain a better standard of wellness on campus. The meeting resulted in the development of the New Mission wellness council, taking an assessment of school health needs and developing an action plan.

First, they reached out to community organizations such as the Peer Health Exchange which trains college students to teach a comprehensive health curriculum to high school students, the Boston Scholastic Program that provided healthy snacks after school for athletes and the University of Massachusetts Extension of Greater Boston which provided a health teacher for two quarters. The wellness council also added a weight room, shared education literature and materials with parents and introduced a Weight Watchers program for staff. “The lessons that we learned are that adults should not only teach healthy eating and exercise, but also model those behaviors for the younger generation,” said Headmaster Naia Wilson.

JOSIAH QUINCY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (Chinatown)

Everyone at Josiah Quincy is focused on moving more! The school has partnered with Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s National Athlete Spokesman, Boston Celtics Captain Paul Pierce, whose Fit Club34 provides students with activity watches to track their progress, monthly fitness challenges and prizes. They are also participating in the Fuel Up to Play 60 program sponsored by the National Football League. To motivate classes to keep up with their JAMmin’ Minutes they created a Golden Sneaker Award which is given to the class that tallies the most JAMmin’ Minutes per month.

The Quincy teachers are getting into the act by participating in a program that physical education teacher Pauline Yee calls "Are You Fitter Than a 5th Grader?" Teachers are using the FitnessGram to assess their physical health as it compares to 5th graders. Teachers set goals for themselves and Yee posts the highest marks for each activity. The test has helped teachers identify areas for improvement whether it is strength, flexibility or conditioning. Yee hopes that it motivates both teachers and students to work on and monitor their own physical fitness.