



San Diego Unified School District

Keys to Success: **Connecting Physical Education with Academic Instruction**

Hage Elementary School is located in the San Diego Unified School District and offers a unique physical education program designed to meet the needs of students in kindergarten through fifth grade, including children with special needs. The program provides quality physical education instruction; daily opportunities for students to improve motor skills and to increase their muscular strength and muscular endurance; and prepares students with activities for a lifetime of movement.

The physical education program at Hage Elementary is based on the Physical Education Model Content Standards for California Public Schools. Students participate throughout the year in learning opportunities to improve their motor skills performance. In addition, students are required to demonstrate content knowledge in physical education. This is facilitated through collaboration between physical education and classroom teachers. Research indicates when learning is linked with movement the learning is stronger. Lessons presented in physical education are transferred into the classroom, where teachers apply their content and children produce evidence, which connect the academic and physical education instruction.

The Increased Movement and Physical Activity Class Time (I.M.P.A.C.T.) provides all students time to practice skills learned during physical education class, including daily moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA), and focuses on the state mandated physical fitness test. This program is run during the school day so all students can benefit with the assistance of classroom teachers. I.M.P.A.C.T is a model for the school district and is being replicated across the district through web-based lessons.

Activity for a lifetime is ultimately the goal for any quality physical education program. For the past eleven years every third through fifth grader and children with special needs receive ten free-swimming lessons, paid for by private donations and fundraising activities. The data collected over the years consistently demonstrates the success of the program. Approximately 60% of students entering the program as third graders are unable to float on their front or back, meaning they would drown if they fell in a swimming pool. By fifth grade the number is reduced to 10% and the majority of these children were not present all three years. Through funding and support of the San Diego Junior Life Guard Foundation, fifth grade students are then exposed to the Junior Life Guard program with a day at the beach and given opportunities to continue their learning with the Junior Guard's summer program.



Sacramento City Unified School District

Keys to Success: **Clear Leadership, Accountability
and Partnerships**

Sacramento City Unified School District administrators decided take a comprehensive approach to student health. They restructured the entire school day, changing food served in the cafeteria, physical education classes, the curriculum, and extracurricular activities.

The key is focused leadership. In order to present a more cohesive physical education program, Superintendent Jonathan Raymond hired Heather Deckard to Coordinate Physical Education efforts district-wide. Ms. Deckard provides professional development via training sessions for teachers so that they can provide standards-based physical education for K-12 students.

“We want to encourage physical activity throughout their lifetime,” said Ms. Deckard. “We don’t want them to hate exercise because they were forced to remember a thousand rules for badminton or run a mile in physical education class.”

The goal is to keep it fun, while adhering to state standards of 200 minutes of physical education every ten days. In order to help students pass the California Physical Fitness Test, more commonly referred to as the FITNESSGRAM, Deckard encourages the 135 physical education teachers in her district to hold physical activity “interventions”—just like they would with a student struggling with reading or math, teachers in the Sacramento City Unified School District administer a pre-test in mid-October to see who might be struggling to pass the FITNESSGRAM test in the Spring. This unique approach keeps students moving throughout the year and focused on a goal.

Community partnerships are an integral part of their success. The California Endowment generously funds the Physical Education Coordinator position. The Sacramento Kings, an NBA basketball team, partners with the district at the elementary school level and provides tickets to games for students who meet certain criteria such as maintaining a 3.0 GPA, dressing and participating in physical education classes and good attendance. FitGuard Inc. has donated approximately \$20,000 in exercise equipment. Other local companies have donated items such as water bottles and pedometers for events.

In addition, Sacramento City Unified School District uses assessments and evaluations provided by the EPIC physical activity questionnaire, which helps train teachers to evaluate the success of their physical education programs and classes. The program also encourages parental involvement and encourages community engagement.

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Los Angeles Unified School District

Keys to Success: **Incorporating Fitness into After-School Hours**

How is the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)—the second largest school district in the country—working to reduce obesity, increase high school graduation rates while simultaneously ensuring work/career readiness? Through working with a program called A World Fit for Kids! (WFIT).

Since 1993, WFIT has served more than 170,000 elementary, middle and high school students in communities with some of the highest obesity rates and lowest high school graduation rates in Los Angeles.

WFIT trains and staffs “Physical Education Fellows” who in turn provide “standards-based” physical activity to hundreds of students in the LAUSD in after-school programs each day.

A key component of WFIT is its mentorship program. LAUSD high school students are trained and offered paid internships to provide physical education to elementary and middle school students. The situation is win-win: the teens gain valuable jobs skills—they learn to be punctual and presentable, communicate with superiors—and are therefore more likely to stay in school and graduate, while the younger students benefit from the physical activity and subsequent boost in self-esteem and test scores.

A program evaluation conducted during the 2008-09 school year concluded that participating youth not only improved their physical health, they were also more likely to succeed in school and other areas of their lives. Survey highlights include:

- 90% reported becoming more physically active and drinking more water.
- Students consistently reported improved leadership skills, self-confidence and self-efficacy.
- 8 out of 10 parents reported children’s improved academic skills, increased physical activity levels, and greater personal responsibility and motivation as a result of program participation.



Baldwin Park Unified School District

Keys to Success: **Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity and Physical Education**

The Baldwin Park Unified School District (BPUSD) presents all students in grades K-12 with opportunities, support and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis. Physical Education (PE) courses support state standards through opportunities for moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) during PE classes by providing teacher trainings, monitoring minutes and time spent in MVPA during PE class time. All 13 elementary schools in the district spend 50% of PE class time in MVPA.

In 2008 BPUSD elementary schools adopted GameDay as part of the School Physical Education curriculum. GameDay is an inclusive elementary school PE curriculum designed to meet or exceed state and national standards, including time spent in MVPA. It provides a 36-week customized lesson plan with expert designed classes in eight sport activities. On-site training, training materials and equipment are also provided. Healthy Eating Active Communities (HEAC) School Site Representatives are teachers at pilot sites and act as HEAC Coaches. HEAC Coaches help with implementation of GameDay and assist in monitoring of PE minutes. Students in grades K-6 are assured of 200 minutes of physical education every ten days as well as meeting MVPA standards.

All BPUSD middle schools, junior high schools and high schools standards for PE minutes are being met and all classes are very active (including calisthenics during attendance, running, soccer and other MVPA-gearred activities). Opportunities for students to increase physical activity are offered through voluntary participation in running clubs and intramural sports during lunch and after school, as well as After School Fitness Clubs. As an added benefit, increasing MVPA will help students pass the California Physical Fitness Test or FITNESSGRAM, which includes a test for Body Mass Index (BMI). Finally, health and wellness standards are also monitored by BPUSD students through the Associated Student Body "Health Commissioner" position.

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