

# Success Story



School: Van Buren Middle School and High School (Van Buren CSD)  
Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program Takes Off  
2014-15 School Year

## Summary

A team was formed at the secondary level and met regularly to plan and implement the Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP). Several activities were piloted at the Middle School level to increase physical activity during the school day. During a professional development day, a presentation was made to middle school staff to get buy-in and input regarding the program. Activities included participation in Live Healthy Iowa Kids with teachers serving as team captains, reporting weekly challenge information and posting weekly results on a bulletin board. “Fitness Friday” was implemented in Physical Education to focus on fitness activities. Staff was encouraged to implement brain breaks during class. An Agilities Club, open to all students, was formed to increase physical activity opportunities before school.

## Success Strategies

Everyone on the CSPAP team had a part in the process and helped to make it successful. Teachers that already use physical activity in the classroom have been great resources to other staff. The Middle School Student Wellness Council was invaluable in their sharing of ideas and thoughts about the activities.



## Challenges

In a small, rural area it was difficult to find “guest speakers” to come in and lead different types of fitness classes during “Fitness Fridays.” The PE teacher did a great job of finding topics the students were interested in. One example was inviting a staff member to demonstrate yoga for students.

The school district is planning a big construction project at the secondary school so purchasing more equipment was difficult due to lack of storage space.

The Agilities Club was opened to all students 7-12<sup>th</sup> grade. However, only high school students participated mostly due to transportation issues before school.

## Results

Input from the Middle School Student Wellness Council found that students were participating in brain breaks in the classroom at least once a week and they would like to spend more time on weight lifting during “Fitness Fridays.” Their ideas for the future includes walking in the gym at lunch and moving the Kinect game system with fitness and dance games to a classroom in the middle school instead of the wrestling room to make it more accessible.

Parents were asked to complete a survey during parent-teacher conferences, unfortunately few parents come to conferences. Of the surveys returned, parents reported that they were aware of the school’s wellness goals. They rated the school’s overall wellness practices and initiatives (including breakfast cart, Fitness Fridays, Agility/Weight Club, Live Healthy Iowa, and brain breaks) as “good” or “excellent,” and all parents reported they think their children are moderately to vigorously active during the school day. Parents were also asked for suggestions about ways to increase physical activity at school. One parent wrote, “make exercise part of the curriculum.”

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## Future Directions

- Educate high school staff about CSPAP and implement the program in 7-12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Create a physical activity guide as a resource for all teachers.
- All students will participate in physical activity in at least one classroom daily.
- Analyze participation in physical activity club.
- Continue participation in Live Healthy Iowa Kids program (7-12<sup>th</sup> grade).
- Utilize fitness assessment to assist middle school students in creating individualized fitness plans.
- Use activity monitors to monitor progress with fitness plans.

## Grant Information

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