



Lincoln Elementary Staff and Student Wellness Success Story

TITLE: Small Steps That Benefit Small Steppers

PROBLEM OVERVIEW:

Prior to the Winter of 2012 there were not school-wide practices that provided fitness outside of physical education for all students and/or staff at Lincoln Elementary. Neither were their practices or policies that ensured healthy snacks at school. Teachers often handed out candy as rewards or treats in the classroom and parent involvement activities had donuts. Thus, there was not a clear message about the importance of healthy food choices or a promotion of physical activity outside of the gymnasium.

PROGRAM/ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

Five members of the school wellness team attended seven days of training in York through the Nebraska Department of Education's Coordinated School Health program. This opportunity was made possible by a grant from the West Central District Health Department. At these trainings they learned how other schools were successfully improving wellness at their schools. The team created an action plan that provided for small steps to be taken to make big improvements over the next few years, thus changing the culture of our community. In January of 2012 Lincoln Elementary implemented school wide Fitness drills. Twice a week the principal or another representative called over the intercom for all staff and students to take a 'Fit Break'. For three to five minutes all staff and students got out of their chairs and exercised. We also stopped having unhealthy snacks at Professional Learning Community meetings. Fruits, vegetables and water could easily be found for teachers to snack on. In May of 2012 there were no more donuts at the monthly parent involvement breakfast. Families ate bananas, bagels, fruit cups, orange juice and milk.

PROGRAM/ACTIVITY OUTCOMES:

In May of 2012, the faculty at Lincoln Elementary chose to support policy changes that would be placed in our student handbook for the 2012-2013 schoolyear. The rationale and policies state:

Rationale

Over the past few years concern has been growing across our country regarding the wellness of our children and their future. Taking care of our bodies and minds must begin at an early age if we are going to win the war against obesity and the related diseases which are devastating our entire nation. It can also be stated that, "A well student is a good student."

The effects of poor nutritional choices and lack of exercise are costing each of us dearly. We, as a nation, are spending more and more on health issues related to being overweight. These include high blood pressure which leads to heart disease, diabetes, and kidney failure. With this grim information in mind, the Wellness committee of Lincoln school has embarked on a mission to improve the overall health and well-being of our students. This committee has completed

extensive training in the “COORDINATED SCHOOL HEALTH MODEL” and we are making changes in our handbook to reflect our determination to model only the best in healthy lifestyle choices among staff and students at Lincoln school. This endeavor will ensure that Lincoln elementary students will have the best opportunity to grow to be healthy physically, mentally, and emotionally and therefore prepared to lead our nation as adults.

In addition to these health concerns many students attending our school have medical concerns or needs such as diabetes, or allergies to different types of foods and animals. This makes it difficult to monitor and maintain the safety of all students.

As a Lincoln Elementary staff we want to model wellness and to send a clear message to our students through our actions. We encourage parents and our community to support our efforts through their actions. Hopefully, we will then make a greater impact by improving the culture in our school and our community and make lifelong impacts upon the lives of our students.

Healthy Celebrations

No outside treats will be allowed to be brought into the school unless it is for a child's birthday. We strongly encourage parents to bring birthday treats that support our school efforts to promote health and nutrition. Here are some healthy recommendations for birthday treats: fresh fruit, pencils, jello, yogurt, fruit snacks, crackers, small toy items like yo-yos, spinning tops or stickers.

The school will provide a healthy snack for all major holiday celebrations (Halloween, Christmas, Valentine’s Day, and Easter). Valentine cards with candy will be allowed to be brought to school but they will be sent home with students before they are opened.

Healthy Class Rewards

Food will not be given as a reward or treat unless they are healthy (crackers, fruits or vegetables). Sugar free gum is acceptable.

Lunch Schedule

Students will attend recess before going to lunch and will have a scheduled lunchtime that provides them an adequate amount of time to eat.

Fit Breaks

All classrooms will have a daily 6-minute fit break during the morning or afternoon session opposite of their scheduled physical education class.

To conclude the 2011-2012 schoolyear jump ropes were sent home with every student to encourage summer physical fitness, water bottles were purchased for all staff members and a Culligan hot/cold water machine was purchased for the staff lounge along with oatmeal, Crystal Light, sf hot chocolate and soup mixes. All of these items for teachers and students were purchased with grant funds. The 2012-2013 schoolyear looks to be a healthier schoolyear for staff and students.

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