

Health is Academic



OFFICE OF HEALTHY SCHOOLS
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Volume 3, Issue 1

Fit, Healthy and Ready to Succeed

Fall 2010



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SAVE THE DATE MASH Conference

September 30-October 1, 2010

Theme: "A Decade of Change,
A Future of Healthy Choices"

mashweb.org

New School Milk Standards

Good Nutrition News for Mississippi Students

"One important change for the 2010-11 school year is the new policy for milk choices adopted by the State Board of Education in March," says Shane McNeill, Director, Office of Healthy Schools, Mississippi Department of Education (www.healthyschoolsms.org/). "The new standard is that the milk choices in Mississippi schools will only be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%). By lowering the fat content of school milk, children get the nutrients they need without extra fat and calories that can contribute to weight gain."

According to Amy Olson, MS, RD, Director of Training for Child Nutrition Programs in the Office of Healthy Schools, small changes in the fat content of milk can add up to a really healthy difference for Mississippi children. "Over the course of a school year, Mississippi schools serve over 29,200,000 cartons of milk. Even the change from 2% to 1% milk means that schools will be serving substantially less fat and calories, as well as significantly more nutrients to students." Here's how the change from 2% to 1% adds up for just one year in Mississippi schools:

- More than 71,841,000 fewer grams of fat
- More than 584,078,000 fewer calories
- More than 4,964,000 more grams of protein
- More than 350,447,000 more milligrams of calcium



"As children gradually become accustomed to fat-free or skim milk, the reduction in fat and calories will be even greater," explains Olson. "Low-fat and fat-free dairy products are critical for children's growth and for their overall health." Nutrient-rich milk, yogurt, and other dairy foods provide calcium, vitamin D, protein, and potassium that are necessary to build strong bones and teeth. The same nutrients can also help to lower blood pressure. Recent surveys, like the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), indicate that very few Mississippi youth are consuming the recommended three servings a day of dairy foods.

Lowering the fat content of milk is just one of the healthy changes headed for Mississippi school cafeterias and kitchens during the coming year notes McNeill. "Mississippi K-12 schools serve an average of more than 3.6 million breakfasts and 7.5 million lunches every month. Our goal is to make these the healthiest meals possible to promote students' overall health and their academic success.

————Continued on Page 3————

Mississippi Summer Sunshine Award

Lillie McGowan, sponsor of the Summer Food Service Program at Little Rock MB Church in Foxworth, Mississippi, was the proud recipient of the *2009 Mississippi Summer Sunshine Award*. This award is presented by the Office of Child Nutrition to a sponsoring organization of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) that exhibits successful, creative strategies for expanding the program in their area. McGowan and her staff partnered with other faith-based organizations in her community to provide nutritious meals to children during the summer. They expanded the pro-

gram by implementing activities that focused on physical fitness, nutrition, and other creative ideas that encouraged kids to participate in the SFSP on a daily basis. It was the first year her organization sponsored the program.

For more information on the SFSP, please contact the Office of Child Nutrition, Division of Technical Assistance at 601-354-7014.



Pictured from left: Gary May, Former Director, Office of Child Nutrition; Lillie McGowan, Award Recipient; Lenora Phillips, Division Director of Technical Assistance

Crossing Guard Training for Mississippi Schools

The Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Healthy Schools (OHS), and the Mississippi Department of Transportation partnered to ensure that crossing guards have uniform training and the equipment necessary to protect children who walk or bike to school. Four training sessions were held in Jackson, Oxford, Greenwood, and Hattiesburg on September 16th and 17th.

In these train-the-trainer sessions, individuals from districts with crossing guards became certified to train others. They received a safety kit for each crossing guard. These kits contained appropriate equipment, including a reflective vest, STOP sign, flashlight/flare light, gloves, cap, and whistle. The trainings were conducted by OHS staff, who recently attended national training. They used a new curriculum developed especially for Mississippi school crossing guards.

“Comprehensive training for crossing guards is one important part of our Safe Routes to School Program,” Shane McNeill, Director, Office of Healthy Schools said. “We

know that there are both health and education benefits when children walk or bike to school. We want to make sure that they are as safe as possible on their way to and from school buildings.”

The program is designed to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety for not only students, but also the community. Twenty-six individuals were trained to go back to their districts and train school crossing guards, and they in turn trained 110 crossing guards during the program emphasis. Training for these individuals has not been readily available in the past. This program filled a critical gap by providing crossing guards with the latest information and the right tools for their important job.



While the main responsibility of an adult crossing guard is to guide children across the street, a well-trained guard can also help stu-

dents develop the skills necessary to safely cross streets at all times.

According to Christine Philley, School Health Administrator, “The crossing guard trainings were tied to other Safe Routes to Schools programs, including classroom lessons to teach students about the value of walking or bicycling to school.”

“Daily physical activity helps children be fit, healthy, and ready to succeed at school. Walking or biking to and from school is an easy way for students - and their families - to enjoy a daily dose of physical activity. It also reduces traffic and congestion around schools - and can actually improve air quality. Safe Routes to School are a win-win-win for families, schools, and communities.”

Delta State University Educational Leadership Cohort Conference

The ongoing partnership between the Office of Healthy Schools and Delta State University promotes another positive opportunity for Mississippi teachers and administrators. One example of this partnership is the Delta State Educational Leadership Conference. Staff members from the Office of Healthy Schools, along with other state agencies joined to provide a conference agenda that highlighted Coordinated School Health.

"Partnerships allow us to maximize our resources, and training future administrators and teachers allows us to really think about sustainability and expansion for school health programs," says Shane McNeill, Director, Office of Healthy Schools.

Institutions of Higher Learning are to be commended for these efforts.

The Educational Leadership Conference agenda included information for educators on how to implement quality coordinated school health programs in their schools. Each participant had an opportunity to work on an Action Plan to take back for implementation purposes.

Agencies joining MDE in this effort were: Department of Mental Health, Delta Health Alliance, Grenada School District, Office of Insurance, American Lung Association, West Bolivar School District, and Clinton School District.



Dr. Tom Taylor, Assistant Professor and Coordinator of the Educational Leadership Cohort Program had this to say about the conference: "Our recent three-day Delta Health Leadership Institute was a fabulous opportunity for educators and health professionals to come together to address real solutions to real problems in regards to healthy lifestyles and academic achievement with our Mississippi children. The partnership between the Office of Healthy Schools, Delta State University, and the Delta Health Alliance was only strengthened by the Office of Healthy Schools' fantastic sessions and their willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty to address our individual needs in supporting this endeavor."

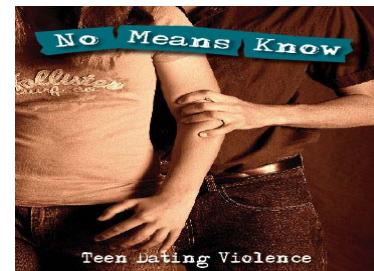
Dating Violence Prevention Month

February was designated as National Dating Violence Prevention Month. To assist secondary teachers in teaching violence prevention in their classrooms, the Mississippi Department of Education's Office of Healthy Schools partnered with the Attorney General's Office to provide violence prevention lesson plans for teachers. Highly qualified Mississippi teachers were selected to write lesson plans for English,

Drama, Marketing, Economics, History, Art and Government that can be used by high school teachers to teach this topic.

The lesson plans are available in the Health In Action database at: [http:// activities.healthyschoolsms.org](http://activities.healthyschoolsms.org). To access the lesson plans, a teacher can go to the site, click on 9th-12th grade and type "Violence Prevention" on the subject line. For

more information about these lessons and the Violence Prevention Initiative, please contact cphilley@mde.k12.ms.us.



New School Milk Standards Good Nutrition News Continued from Page 1

Mississippi Child Nutrition directors, school administrators, and the Office of Healthy Schools are all working together to ensure healthy environments for children. With support from the Legislature, the State Board of Education, and The Bower Foundation, Mississippi has become a national leader in school nutrition improvements over the past five years. Ongoing changes in school kitchens and cafeterias include:

- Greater variety of vegetables and an increase in whole grains
- Specific timelines for the elimination of deep-fat fryers
- Incentives for more schools to meet the strict criteria for USDA's HealthierUS School Challenge awards (www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthierus/index.html)
- Comprehensive training for school superintendents, business managers, foodservice directors, and other district staff on implementing and marketing high quality Child Nutrition Programs

Advancing Physical Fitness in Mississippi Schools



During tough financial times, physical education teachers from across the state have taken advantage of funding and training opportunities offered by the Office of Healthy Schools. With funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH), twenty-five schools participated in Physical Best and Fitness Gram trainings to improve the quality of physical education instruction in these schools. Each school also had the opportunity to purchase \$2,000 to \$3,000 in physical education equipment and \$300 in Fitness Gram software to implement physical education best practices and fitness testing.

The following schools were awarded:

Quitman Upper Elementary School
 Quitman Lower Elementary School
 Quitman Junior High School
 Franklin County Lower Elementary
 Franklin County Middle School
 Franklin County Upper Elementary
 Lawrence County High School
 Monticello Elementary School
 New Hebron Attendance Center
 Rod Paige Middle School
 Topeka Tilton Attendance Center
 Coahoma County Jr./Sr. High
 Jonestown Elementary School
 Friars Point Elementary School
 Lyon Elementary School
 Sherard Elementary School
 Chambers Middle School
 Simmons High School
 West Bolivar Elementary School
 East Sunflower School
 West Bolivar Middle School
 West Bolivar High School

Moorhead Middle School
 Ruleville Middle School
 Ruleville Central High School

In addition to these grant opportunities, the Office of Healthy Schools was picked by the National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) to offer a PIPEline training. This training focused on lifetime fitness practices and was held in Hattiesburg, MS. Twenty-four physical education teachers attended. The attendees were given information on the implementation of standards-based curriculum, how to examine appropriate practices and instructional strategies, and an interdisciplinary approach to teaching physical education. The Office of Healthy Schools would like to remind you to continue to check our website at www.healthyschoolsms.org for more training and grant opportunities.



The Colors of Health

Fruits and vegetables come in terrific colors and flavors, but their real beauty lies in what's inside. Fruits and vegetables are great sources of vitamins, minerals and other natural substances that help protect you from chronic diseases.

To get a healthy variety, think color. Eating fruits and vegetables of different colors gives your body a wide range of valuable nutrients, like fiber, folate, potassium, and vitamins A and C. Some examples include green spinach, orange sweet potatoes, black beans, yellow corn, purple plums, red watermelon, and white onions. For more variety, try new fruits and vegetables regularly.

Source: 5aday.gov

A New Opportunity for Health Educators



Have you been looking for resources to use to enhance your delivery of instruction on topics concerning STDs, HIV & AIDS Education? Beginning this Fall, a seven-week online course will be offered by Mississippi E-learning for Educators. The course titled, "Addressing HIV Prevention Education: A Primer for Health Educators" is designed to help health education teachers develop basic teaching skills and provide basic knowledge about HIV & AIDS. As a participant you will receive practice in a number of areas to help you prepare for working with students on this sensitive subject. Individuals who complete the course will also receive 6 CEU credits.

For more information please contact Shalonda Matthews at 601.359.1737 or by email at

scmatthews@mde.k12.ms.us.

Health and Literacy

Janet K. Hankins, NBCT

Eastside Elementary School, Clinton Public School District

Why health and literacy? What do the two have in common? Much more than one would think at first glance. In fact, the students of today will be in a "heap of trouble" if we as educators do not take the time and initiative to teach our students how making the wrong personal health decisions right now in their present lives could adversely affect their future lives.

But, in all honesty, when I was told that I would be responsible for teaching health literacy, I began thinking, "Oh no, one more thing added to my already overcrowded

plate! How am I going to handle this additional requirement, especially with the recent budget cuts, the possible increase in student/teacher ratio, and the accountability for teaching the objectives for the MCT2? How is all this going to be feasible?" But then I chided myself, "No, health literacy is not just one more thing; it is one of the most important gifts I could give my students. What good is knowledge if one cannot enjoy a healthy, productive life?" So, imagine my excitement when I recently had the opportunity to attend a **HEAP of Books** (Health

Education Assessment Program) Pilot Project Training in my school district sponsored by the Office of Healthy Schools.



The purpose of the **HEAP training** was to show me, an educator, how to teach health topics and skills while increasing the literacy of my students, thus making better use of my already limited instructional time. One of the most important things I learned was that health skills are generic and can be applied to any health issue or topic.

If you would like to read the complete article "Health and Literacy" please visit the Office of Healthy Schools' website at www.healthyschoolsms.org.



Evaluating the Impact the Mississippi Healthy Students Act

The Center for Mississippi Health Policy issued a report summarizing key findings from the first year of research, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Bower Foundation, evaluating the impact of the Mississippi Healthy Students Act. The report, [Assessing the Impact of the Mississippi Healthy Students Act](#), presents the results of studies conducted by three Mississippi universities – the University of Southern Mississippi, Mississippi State University, and the University of Mississippi – as part of the comprehensive evaluation project.

Research results demonstrate considerable progress in implementation of school wellness policies. Statistically significant improvements were measured in several areas, such as establishing school health councils, conducting self-assessments, providing health education, serving fruits frequently, and keeping students physically active during PE time. Researchers found strong compli-

ance with vending and competitive food regulations. Evidence of schools making tremendous improvement in the nutritional quality of foods offered to students is confirmed by data from surveys conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In [CDC's report](#), Mississippi was recognized as making the greatest strides among all surveyed states in removing unhealthy foods from its schools.

Data from the project indicate that childhood obesity rates in Mississippi may be leveling off. The study shows that overall childhood obesity rates, which had been increasing for more than two decades up until 2005, dropped from 25.5 percent in 2005 to 23.9 percent in 2009. The research, however, reveals a growing disparity between White and Nonwhite students in the prevalence of obesity and overweight. In 2005, there was a 4.5 percentage point difference between the two racial groups, and in 2009, the difference was 10.3.

Teresa Hannah, Executive Director
Center for Mississippi Health Policy

The most recent data from the project demonstrate a strong connection between student fitness and test scores. Students with higher levels of fitness showed higher scores in both language arts and math on standardized tests. More fit students also had fewer absences from school.

The Center for Mississippi Health Policy and the research teams from the universities are grateful for the exceptional cooperation and assistance provided by local school personnel, school district officials, and staff of the State Department of Education making this research possible. Copies of the summary report, as well as the detailed reports from each of the universities can be downloaded from the Center's web site at <http://www.mshealthpolicy.com/Year1Evaluation.htm>. Printed copies of the summary report are available by contacting the Center for Mississippi Health Policy at 601-709-2133 or by e-mail at info@mshealthpolicy.com.

Congrats to our MS Junior Cadets

The Legion of Valor Bronze Cross for Achievement Award is for those cadets of the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) and the Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) who have demonstrated excellence in military, scholastic, and civil affairs. Less than 50 cadets from the ROTC and JROTC programs nationwide are selected to receive this award each year. It is the highest award for JROTC cadets. The following Mississippi JROTC cadets received the Legion of Valor Bronze Cross for Achievement Award in the 2009/2010 school year:



Ashley Hoffer, Army JROTC, McLaurin High School
 Clayton Marshall, Navy JROTC, Moss Point High School
 Justin Pelot, Army JROTC, Richland High School
 Sierra Williams, Army JROTC, Lanier High School

The Benefits of JROTC

The Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) units in our schools provide wellness and physical fitness instruction, promote healthy lifestyle choices, and support student behaviors that contribute to safe school environments. The purpose of JROTC is to instill in students in United States secondary educational institutions the values of citizenship, service to the United States, personal responsibility and a sense of accomplishment. In Mississippi, JROTC can serve as a substitute for the physical education graduation requirement. Most of the funding for JROTC units is provided by the military. For information regarding establishment of JROTC units in Mississippi high schools, contact Mike Curry at 601-359-1816 or mcurry@mde.k12.ms.us.

The Office of Healthy Schools would like to thank the MS School Principals and Lead Health Education



Teachers who participated in the 2010 School Health Profiles Survey. Data from this survey is invaluable for future planning and funding opportunities.

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