Starting in the 2006-2007 school year, federal legislation required every school receiving monies for child nutrition programs to adopt a school wellness policy. This policy began a dialogue on student health that is leading to improvements in nutrition and physical activity/physical education.

Governor Haley Barbour signed the Mississippi Healthy Students Act into law in April 2007. Among its provisions are requirements that public schools provide activity-based instruction and health education instruction for all students. Specifically, the act instructs all schools, grades K-8, to involve their students in a total of 150 minutes of activity-based instruction each week. Implementation would consist of physical education programs, integration into other subject areas, and other teacher-led activities throughout the school day. High school students are required to obtain a one-half carnegie unit in physical education to meet graduation requirements.

CATALYTIC CONVERSION

The Mississippi Department of Education is helping Mississippi schools get a jump start on implementation of the Mississippi Healthy Students Act. Well in advance of the fall 2008 mandate, the Office of Healthy Schools (OHS), with funding and assistance from The Bower Foundation, began providing critical outreach and online services that benefit all schools throughout the state.

To encourage effective ways of implementing the Healthy Students Act, a Committed to Move grant for the 2007-2008 school year was awarded to twenty-five individual schools statewide.

The receiving schools demonstrated dedication to the program by providing the initial funds that were later matched by OHS. Through these grants, staff received Physical Best Training to become certified specialists in the area of physical education, paving the way for enhanced educational instruction. Fitnessgram® software and training were also provided to aid in evaluation of student fitness, in order to show how each individual child improved their flexibility, strength, and endurance over time.

www.healthyschoolsms.org
CREATIVE SUCCESS
Starting Actively
Sudduth Elementary School
STARKVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

At Sudduth, the principal, teachers and staff begin every day with an exercise program. Certified physical education teacher Wendy Gibson believes that “physical education is the heart of learning,” and toward that end she and two additional staff provide 30 minutes of instruction per day in grades K-2.

Keeping a Full Schedule
East Corinth Elementary School
CORINTH SCHOOL DISTRICT

At East Corinth, students are constantly reminded of the importance of physical education. Each morning at assembly, students receive five minutes of health tips. In addition, they have 20 minutes of recess each day, and twice a week they have a 30-minute physical education session. In the spring of 2007, students participated in a “Walk Across America,” walking over 10,000 miles during the program and celebrating their accomplishments with a luau lunch.

Involving Community
Poplar Springs Elementary School
MERIDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

Through the leadership of Principal Penny Wallin, who believes “the best exercise for the brain is exercise,” Poplar Springs has adopted a number of inventive exercise programs as part of their physical education curriculum.

Once a month, parents are invited to join their children in a spirited game. Physical education teacher Rose Hudson said, “It is really fun for the students to watch their parents play.”

Making Music
Madison Station Elementary
MADISON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Madison Station has created an inventive music-based aerobic program. “We select music that enhances our instruction. For example, we study a composer each month, so this month we warm up with Beethoven,” said physical education teacher Kathy Shows. In another workout program, the students learned the fifty states while dancing to music such as “Nifty Fifty” or “Oklahoma.” In addition to the music-based physical education programs, the school has a rock climbing wall and stationary bikes.

Students in grades 3-5 participate in “Run to Disneyland,” in which they keep track of the distances they run, and try to build up enough miles to equal running to Disneyland and back.

The school has also benefited from the efforts of countless volunteers, who spent the past year restoring the school’s nature trail, which covers nearly 15 acres. The trail, with its 10 new fitness stations, is also open on the weekends to the entire community.

ACTIVE ALL DAY

Every learning experience throughout the day can be creatively enhanced with physical activities. Try it and watch concentration and academic performance improve!

Maximize morning opportunities to be physically active and begin focusing for the day.

EXERCISE

Make a chart to set goals and document fitness progress.

COMPUTER

Study the heart and how it works by measuring heart rates at rest and after activity.

SCIENCE

Walk the long way to lunch and back and calculate the distance traveled.

LUNCH

Learn the rules of grammar using demonstrative motion.

LANGUAGE

Students in grades 3-5 participate in “Run to Disneyland,” in which they keep track of the distances they run, and try to build up enough miles to equal running to Disneyland and back.

The school has also benefited from the efforts of countless volunteers, who spent the past year restoring the school’s nature trail, which covers nearly 15 acres. The trail, with its 10 new fitness stations, is also open on the weekends to the entire community.

www.healthyschoolsms.org
PROACTIVE PROGRESS
Building Up to Success
Senatobia Middle School
SENATOBIA MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Adopting a planned sequential program, Senatobia is focusing on teaching physical education in a positive environment. This instruction is student-centered and incorporates individual and group activities. In a given week, each student participates in 90 minutes of physical education instruction.

Involving Family
Rawls Springs Attendance Center
FORREST COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

At Rawls Springs, students have at least 30 minutes of physical education instruction every day, supervised by a certified physical education teacher. In addition, the school has sponsored family fitness nights to encourage the parents of students to exercise as well.

Recognizing Excellence
The Governor’s Commission on Physical Fitness and Sports awarded 40 Mississippi schools either a Gold, Silver, or Bronze level award for providing a quality physical education program to their students.

Realizing the Benefits
Poplarville Upper Elementary School
POPLARVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

As a recipient of a Committed to Move grant, Poplarville Upper Elementary was immediately aware of the benefits of the Fitnessgram software and the importance of fitness testing of their students. After studying the result, the entire school district administration made a commitment to provide the software and training to all schools in the district. They also decided to initiate fitness testing for every student in the district.

Making Way for Fitness
Margaret Green Junior High
CLEVELAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

Margaret Green’s faculty and staff have signed on to provide students with monitored recreational activities that promote moderate physical activity. By assessing safe routes to travel and installing bike racks at school buildings, they hope to encourage students to bike or walk to school. In addition, the school has also partnered with Delta State University to conduct fitness testing for all students.

Promoting Lifetime Learning
Ocean Springs Middle School
OCEAN SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT

At Ocean Springs, health fitness classes are offered to provide students with nutrition education and help them to develop their own personal fitness plans. Physical education teacher Courtney Shivers stated that the purpose of these classes “is to promote participation in lifetime fitness activities,” and “they have become very popular among students.”
A FLEXIBLE PLAN

One of the strengths of the Healthy Students Act is that although it carefully outlines time provisions for activity-based instruction, the individual teachers are given wide latitude in their scheduling methods to accomplish the goals of the act. As illustrated below, the required 150 minutes of activity-based instruction can be incorporated into an existing school schedule by using creative approaches. The success reported by schools around the state proves that not only can requirements be met, but both students and staff will benefit from an enhanced physical education program.

Teachers and students alike can find more ways to express themselves creatively through the planning and execution of activity-based instruction, supplemented by the required physical education time. Many Mississippi schools have already committed to making physical education a priority in addition to their regular academic instruction. They have demonstrated that it not only can become, but should be, a part of every child’s school day.

SCHEDULING MADE EASY

150 minutes weekly can be structured in a number of ways, allowing for the variety of school schedules already in place.

FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

150 MINUTES

FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLS

150 MINUTES

HERE TO HELP

To support students being fit, healthy, and ready to succeed, The Office of Healthy Schools provides a wealth of services and online information based on CDC’s eight-component model. Visit us online for user-friendly offerings of physical education programs, contacts, services, linked references, and downloadable resources:

www.healthyschoolsms.org

Look for the following:

MISSISSIPPI PHYSICAL EDUCATION FRAMEWORK
Comprehensive state standards for successful implementation of physical education for grades K-12.

HEALTH IN ACTION
(available fall 2008)
Health and physical education lesson plans written by teachers and presented online in a convenient searchable database organized by grade levels.

Also, check out these easy-to-use resources for lesson plans and reading materials based on topic and/or Lexile measure.

THE LEXILE FRAMEWORK ®
www.lexile.com

MAGNOLIA
nt.library.msstate.edu/magnolia

DISCOVERY EDUCATION
www.discoveryeducation.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mississippi Department of Education
Office of Healthy Schools
P.O. Box 771 • Jackson, MS 39205
601.359.1737

www.healthyschoolsms.org