

INVOLVE SCHOOL STAFF IN PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Overview

When school staff (administrators, teachers, bus drivers, custodians, etc.) commit to good health practices, they are better equipped to support student participation in physical activity. Staff can be positive role models for students by being physically active in and out of school and getting involved in the school's employee wellness program.



There are **three aspects** to staff involvement¹:

1. School staff serve as positive role models for wellness, including physical activity.
2. School staff support physical activity offerings for students, such as classroom physical activity, recess, clubs, and intramural programs.
3. School staff participate in employee wellness programs that promote physical activity.

For **staff**, involvement in physical activity may²:

- Reduce stress and better mental health
- Lower risk of chronic conditions
- Increase job satisfaction and productivity
- Decrease absences

When staff are role models for physical activity and wellness, **students** also benefit and experience²:

- Learning and behavior improvements
- A healthier school environment
- Increased school connectedness
- More physical activity opportunities



What's happening nationally?

Supporting the physical, social, and emotional health of school staff is beneficial to both staff and students, yet only:



54% of districts require schools to have an employee wellness program.³



60% of districts have someone in the district who oversees or coordinates employee wellness programs throughout the district.³



35% of districts provide employee subsidies or discounts for off-site health promotion activities.³

According to 2014 School Health Policies and Practice Study, the percentage of schools offering health promotion activities and services to staff are as follows:



70% made indoor or outdoor school physical facilities or equipment (e.g., gym, swimming pool, weight-lifting equipment, etc.) available for staff use.⁴



25% provided physical activity and fitness counseling to staff.⁴

While there is still room for improvement, progress is being made. For example, the percentage of schools offering physical activity programs to faculty and staff increased from 40% in 2000 to 50% in 2014.⁴

What are ways to improve staff involvement?

Strategies & ideas for school staff

Below are strategies and ideas for school staff to be more involved in promoting student physical activity and invest in their own health:

Be a healthy role model

- Participate in school's employee wellness program or consider starting one.
- Be physically active during the school day to model healthy behaviors to students.
- Join students during classroom physical activity, recess, and other physical activity opportunities.

Promote and support opportunities that encourage students to be physically active

- Create a physically active classroom and work with a physical education teacher to get ideas, information, and resources to help students stay active throughout the school day.
- Make recess a part of each school day and provide opportunities for students to be active indoors during inclement weather.
- Use physical activity as an incentive (e.g., reward good behavior with a longer recess or time outside to participate in physical activity, etc.)
- Include physical activity topics in health education (e.g., physical activity national recommendations, setting personal goals, etc.)
- Encourage students to participate in school physical activity programs such as intramural sports and walk-and-bike to school programs. Promote school-led physical activity events such as fun runs and field days.
- Volunteer to organize or provide adult supervision for before and after school physical activity programs.

Build physical activity knowledge and skills

- Participate in professional development opportunities related to physical activity for students.
- Take part in wellness opportunities offered by school's employee wellness program (e.g., onsite biometric health screenings, staff softball league, etc.).

Visit CDC's [Tips for Teachers: Promoting Healthy Eating & Physical Activity in the Classroom](#) for more information and tips on how to be involved.

Additional resources

The following resources can be used by schools to improve staff involvement:



[Healthy School, Healthy Staff, Healthy Students: A Guide to Improving School Employee Wellness \(National Association of Chronic Disease Directors\)](#)

Provides a suggested process and resources for building or expanding an effective employee wellness initiative.



[Supporting the Implementation of School-Based Employee Wellness Programs Position Statement \(SHAPE America\)](#)

Provides a position statement on supporting schools in planning, implementing, and sustaining school-based employee wellness policies and programs.



[School Employee Wellness Resource Page \(Kaiser's Thriving Schools\)](#)

Provides ideas on how to add physical activity to the school environment to support school staff.

SOURCES:

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Increasing Physical Education and Physical Activity: A Framework for Schools](#); 2019.

² National Association of Chronic Disease Directors. [Healthy School, Healthy Staff, Healthy Students: A Guide to Improving School Employee Wellness](#).

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [School Health Policies and Practices Study 2016](#).

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [School Health Policies and Practices Study 2014](#).