



The Center for Rural Health and Social Service Development at the Southern Illinois University of Medicine has helped facilitate the change to enhanced physical education in over 60 schools.

Jeff Franklin, the project coordinator at the CRHSSD, believes enhanced P.E. is a part of a comprehensive approach to improving student health and wellness in the schools that they work with.



### 106 by 2016

As a region, southern Illinois is leading the charge to enhance physical education! P.E. has been enhanced in over 60 of 100+ schools throughout 16 counties in southern Illinois thanks to widespread implementation of the CATCH® (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) program. CATCH® is an evidence-based program that includes enhancing P.E.

Jeff Franklin is the Project Coordinator at the Center for Rural Health and Social Service Development (CRHSSD), a unit of the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in Carbondale, IL (SIUC). SIUC has held the Delta States' Rural Development grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for 15 years, and for the last six years the focus has been coordinated school health. By 2016, Franklin is confident that they will have impacted the health and wellness of all 106 schools in their region.

### Action Steps

Every school that participates in Southern Illinois University's school wellness program is required to have a wellness committee and, more importantly, a wellness priority. "When SIU – Carbondale is going to provide funding to a school, we ask them to conduct the School Health Index and then convene their wellness committee to facilitate the creation of an action plan. Schools find this approach more tangible, and more durable than simply identifying areas in need of improvement without direction."

Franklin believes that this approach gives the schools the ability to comprehensively understand the state of health and wellness and develop actionable steps in their school without overwhelming the administration with a wish list of changes that are not supported by evidence or best practices. Next, Franklin and his department focus on the amount of

time the school's students spend in moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) by using the SOFIT tool (System for Observing Fitness Instruction), striving for 50% or more class time spent in MVPA.

The CATCH® program is an integral part of CRHSSD's development of a school's overall health and wellness. Once the program is purchased, Franklin and his team ensure that the staff is properly trained. "After we train them, we stay a part of things and we help coordinate events with the staff, even encouraging staff wellness" says Franklin.

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### Report Cards

Over the past three years, CRHSSD has collected data from schools and now use those data to create report cards to show their progress. These report cards include information on the percentage of time students spend in MVPA as well as a breakdown of how the lesson is spent.

Starting this year, Franklin says his department will expand their data collection and begin a three year longitudinal study which will follow 1500-2000 students in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade throughout their education to evaluate students' physical activity (MVPA), health behaviors, and nutrition using the Student Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) survey tool.

## Resources

### CRHSSD

crhssd.siu.edu

### SoFit

www.activelivingresearch.org

### CATCH

catchusa.org

### SPAN

sph.uth.edu/research/centers/dell/span/

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**-Jeff Franklin**

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**-Jeff Franklin**  
CRHSSD, Southern Illinois University School of Medicine

### Collaborating for Change

Throughout the fifteen years that SIUC has held the Delta grant, Franklin found that “change can be difficult. Most of the time [teachers] are just thrilled, but the CATCH® program requires a change in approach. Not only are we able to provide them with equipment, but a whole new way of thinking about physical activity and student health.”

The CATCH program avoids elimination games, and Franklin understands that this can be a drastic change for some physical education programs. “We provide [our schools] with the technical assistance that is necessary to the success of their physical education program.”

Health departments play a key role in the partnership between CRHSSD and the schools. As the technical assistance

providers for the CRHSSD, local health departments work to secure additional funding such as the We Choose Health grant from the Illinois Department of Public Health, which funds coordinated school health in many parts of Illinois.

Heart rate monitors are used in 10 of the 60 schools Franklin has worked with, and other equipment needed by the school is always considered. “I think the amount of change we have seen is very eye opening.” When asked about the success of his group, Franklin reflected, “Knowing that these types of projects do not get done alone, particularly in rural areas, and when I look at how our consortium pulled together, I am very proud. Our team functions as a family, and this has been pivotal in our success.”

### Background

CRHSSD aims to promote opportunities for enhancing health, primarily in rural communities. Franklin specifically works to improve school health through the CATCH® program. This model has four components from the Coordinated School Health model: health education, physical education, nutrition services, and family/community involvement.

Funding from CRHSSD can be distributed to schools to implement the CATCH program and purchase necessary equipment for physical education classes.

