



Lake Bluff School District

Empowering Students

What sets this district apart from others in the area is their strong P.E. curriculum. "It is all about keeping students more actively involved. By playing small-sided games, kids do part of the teaching for these units, which keeps them more engaged." Doreen Buksa is a P.E. teacher at Lake Bluff Middle School who believes in empowering students to take an active role in their fitness. She and her colleague Dan Williams recently re-vamped the middle school's P.E. curriculum to include a fitness day twice a week in which students create their own fitness plan to follow during class time.

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-Doreen Buksa,

P.E. Teacher at Lake Bluff Middle School

Ryan Regan and Jeremy Corona have been teaching P.E. together for over 12 years at Lake Bluff Elementary School and have made considerable strides to enhance what was a sports- and skill-oriented physical education curriculum to one in which all students are more active. The cognitive benefits of physical activity have not gone unnoticed by Lake Bluff School District; they have even integrated math and spelling lessons into P.E.

10 Minute Wall-Sits and More!

Elementary students in Lake Bluff have 30 minutes of physical education per day in addition to daily recess. Recess should be enjoyable, but the school is currently looking into ways to make the physical activity that students get during recess more meaningful. Superintendent Sophie believes this can be done easily, but that teachers must understand the positive implications of meaningful physical activity in order to ensure a lasting model.

A Seamless Transition

"It has been a unified effort between the two schools in Lake Bluff to improve P.E." says Jean Sophie, the district's superintendent. Williams is planning to adopt a number of cutting edge practices at the middle school this school year to engage his students in more moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) through small-sided sports games.

Middle school students have 40 minutes of physical education daily, slightly longer than elementary students, as well as daily recess. The school is currently looking to secure a field where they can hold structured small-sided games during recess in an effort to engage as many students as possible in MVPA. Dance Dance Revolution®, resistance bands, agility ladders, and medicine balls are just some of the equipment used at the middle school to keep fitness the focus. Buksa is even hoping to bring some warrior training that she learned about at an Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance professional development session, including challenging her students to activities like a ten-minute wall sit. Because the middle school is

As a member of the Illinois Enhance P.E. Task Force, Superintendent Jean Sophie has been an active promoter of improving P.E. at her schools.

The Lake Bluff P.E. staff encourages students to become active participants in their health by facilitating the development of individualized fitness plans and goals.

Lake Bluff District

Level: Elementary and Middle School

Enrollment: 906

Low Income: 9.4%

- 82% White
- 5% Asian
- 1% Black
- 8% Hispanic

Resources

IAHPERD

www.iahperd.org

FITNESSGRAM®

www.fitnessgram.net

Enhance P.E. Task Force

www.isbe.net/EPE/html/EPETF.htm

The Community Guide

www.thecommunityguide.org



Lake Bluff Wellness Team

Left to Right: Allison Fink, Ryan Regan, Brad DeJong, Dan Williams, Jeremy Corona, and Doreen Buksa (center)

focused on fitness, the curriculum at the elementary school is based on the practice and improvement of fitness skills and short and long-term individual goal setting so that students are prepared for more demanding activities, like a ten-minute wall sit, once they reach middle school.

The Path to Change

Sophie is not only the Lake Bluff School District Superintendent; she is also a member of the Illinois Enhance P.E. Task Force. Her participation on the task force has been a significant motivating factor as her district makes improvements to their P.E. programs. "While wellness has always been a focus of our district, the more I learn about the importance of physical activity and the cognitive benefits of being a fit student, the more I believe that it is vital for me to get this information out there. We need more superintendents on board. We need to offer data to show how these changes are affecting our students' learning and health." While the wellness and P.E. programs in the district have been developed in-house, the district does employ FITNESSGRAM® software to measure students' fitness progress.

In addition to the curriculum changes, the district makes it a point to offer extra-curricular opportunities that engage their students in physical activity such as a "Girls on the Run" event that will be held at the middle school. This event will give the student council the responsibility of organizing eight weeks of after school trainings for a 5k that incorporates emotional wellness along with physical activity. The overall community awareness of health and wellness is also driving the success of such programs, like the access to bike trails and emphasis on family biking. In the same spirit, Lake Bluff Elementary school is LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified and has shower facilities so that staff can ride their bikes to work.

Wellness Focus

Twelve years ago when Corona and Regan began "enhancing" their P.E. curriculums, they faced some opposition from parents who didn't like that their children were not playing the games they had played when they were younger, like softball. It took time to explain why these changes were desirable. Today, the research showing the health and academic benefits of physical activity helps parents better understand the emphasis on small-sided games instead of traditional sports. Superintendent Sophie hopes "to bring the wellness team of teachers in her district to the forefront such that they are equally recognized and valued as other teachers."



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