



Health Is Academic

OFFICE OF HEALTHY SCHOOLS
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Coordinated School Health Office of Child Nutrition
Safe and Orderly Schools EPSDT/School Nurse Program

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Safe, Fit, Healthy, & Ready to Succeed

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Inside this issue:

Welcome

Pg. 2 – Taking the Fryers Out!

Pg. 2 – Committed To Move

Pg. 3 – SmartTrack Survey

Pg. 3 – 5-Star Food Grants

Pg. 3 – Office of Child Nutrition

Pg 4 – School Bus Safety

Pg 4 – Getting the Word Out

Pg 4 – Calendar

Success Stories are featured throughout this issue. Look for the colored boxes. To read about other successes, visit the OHS website.

In the past year, we have celebrated many school health successes together to ensure that all children have the opportunity to be Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Succeed. To highlight a few of these successes:

- The Mississippi Legislature passed the MS Healthy Students Act.
- The State Board of Education has approved the Physical Education and Comprehensive Health Education Rules and Regulations and Nutrition Standards to support student achievement.
- Child Nutrition Programs have replaced deep fat fryers with combination oven steamers and provided fresh fruits and vegetables as part of the reimbursable meal pattern.
- Many schools have committed to improving or implementing a physical education program and providing opportunities for physical activity throughout the school day.
- School Nurse legislation has ensured a continued commitment by the Mississippi Legislature to the importance of the Health Services component in ensuring all children are successful.
- School health conferences have had record attendance.
- Schools have adopted hydration policies to increase water consumption.
- Teachers have become nationally board certified in physical education.

Each success has been vitally important in building the framework for school health in Mississippi to ensure that every child has every opportunity to be successful. The beginning of this new year provides many new and exciting opportunities to move school health forward to support every child in Mississippi public schools. The commitment to implementation of the Mississippi Healthy Students Act will be a critical point in meeting the needs of children and allowing them to be successful academically, socially, mentally, and physically. The Office of Healthy Schools is committed to providing the technical assistance and resources you need to ensure quality implementation. Another crucial area for ensuring success is our commitment to creating a healthy school environment. For children to achieve academically, we must create environments that are conducive to learning. In order to create this environment, we must commit to the safety of our students, the reduction of asthma triggers, and maintaining attractive buildings. The number one reason for school absenteeism is asthma-related illness and it is important that we monitor cleaning products, maintain appropriate pest control, reduce exposure to exhaust fumes from school buses, and provide health services to ensure medication is administered. These steps are very important to ensure that the school environment is conducive to learning.

To highlight your success, please complete the Office of Healthy Schools Success Reporting Form at www.healthyschoolsms.org.

We look forward to sharing your successes in 2008.

Taking the Fryers Out!

In the past, fried foods have comprised a large percentage of the foods selected by children in the school cafeteria setting. In 20 schools in Mississippi, that will no longer be the case. Combination oven steamers will be replacing fryers because of their school's participation in the Nutrition Integrity Grant through funding from The Bower Foundation. Mississippi Public Schools were offered the opportunity to apply for up to \$26,640 in grant funds to enable them to replace fryers with Combination oven steamers.

Much thought, planning and preparation has gone into this grant opportunity that not only gives schools the opportunity to replace fryers, but it also allows schools to provide healthier school meals so that students can be fit, healthy and ready to learn.

The Bower Foundation funded the Nutrition Integrity Pilot Project in January of 2007 to examine the impact of removing fryers and replacing them with a Combination oven steamer. Preliminary results indicate that the Nutrition Integrity Pilot Project was a success, showing a significant reduction in calories. The project also indicated positive response by students and staff to the new baked products. There were no changes in school lunch participation and no unanticipated change in extra sales of baked fries. The project clearly demonstrated schools' commitment to serving healthful, tasty meals that support academic success in the classroom.

Promotion and sharing of the feasibility and cost of removing fryers and installing the new ovens with other food service personnel in Mississippi Schools is another part of the grant. Participating schools are required to eliminate fried foods for a period of five years. Schools from Corinth, Choctaw, DeSoto County, Petal, George County, Grenada, Harrison County, Jackson Public, Lamar County, Noxubee County, Pascagoula, Sunflower County and Webster County received the Nutrition Integrity Grant. For additional information contact Christine Phillee, with OHS, at cphillee@mde.k12.ms.us.

Success Stories.....

The staff and faculty of **Grenada Upper Elementary** will be featured in the January 2008 issue of *Weight Watchers Magazine* for the brilliant example they set in losing a cumulative total of 916.5 pounds since last school year.



84 schools across the state will be offering fresh fruits and vegetables more often on their school breakfast and lunch menus as a result of their participation in the Five Star Foods Grant.

Committed To Move Quality Physical Education Program Grant



The Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Healthy Schools, along with The Bower Foundation, was pleased to award to 25 schools state-wide the Committed To Move Grant. The Committed to Move Grant will aid these schools in implementing a quality physical education program and assist the schools in becoming compliant with the Healthy Students Act, which all schools will have to comply with in the 08-09 school year.

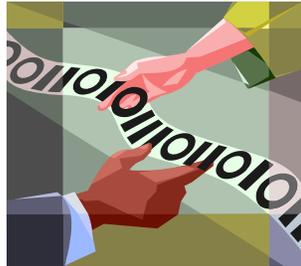
The Committed To Move grant will aid these schools by providing up to \$4,700 in matching funds to provide curriculum, training and resources. The grant will also enable these schools to purchase approved equipment and supplemental materials to support their physical education programs, to participate in Physical Best Training and Fitnessgram Software Training. The Physical Best training will provide the physical educators an opportunity to become Certified Physical Best Health-Fitness Specialist and the Fitnessgram software training will give them resources to conduct biannual fitness testing on their physical education students. The Physical Best classes were taught in three locations around the state (Clinton, Starkville, Hattiesburg). The grantees also received fitness-gram software training that was conducted at the MS Department of Education. Along with the training, the grantees also received the software, manual, skin-fold calipers, and other useful materials that will aid them in completing their fitness assessments of their students.

The 25 schools that received the Committed to Move Grant are very excited to take the information and training that the grant provided back to their schools and apply it to the curriculum that is already in place. Payton Ragon from the Biloxi School District said he was "concerned with getting support from administrators for new ideas in the program. The concern was quickly relinquished when I was given the opportunity to apply for the Committed to Move Grant." The Committed To Move Grant is just another way The Office of Healthy Schools and the Bower Foundation are demonstrating their commitment to help get the students of Mississippi fit, healthy and ready to succeed.

For any additional information contact Dale Dieckman at 601-359-3873 or jdieckman@mde.k12.ms.us

SmartTrack Survey, A 2007 State-wide Report

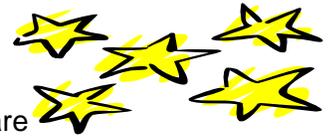
Data has become an essential tool in the decision-making process of school districts statewide from how much money a district receives, to educational programs and even what is served in the cafeteria. *SmartTrack*, a survey administered to 6 through 11 grade students statewide, compiles data on a number of topics related to antisocial behavior among school-aged youth. The 2007 *Mississippi SmartTrack Survey* was administered to 110,778 public school students from January to May with 476 public schools and learning centers opting to participate. The results of this survey supplies valuable information to help reduce and prevent alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, as well as violence and school dropout rates. Listed below are a few examples of the data derived from this survey:



- Among the overall sample of MS students, 55.8% “sometimes,” “frequently,” or “always” participate in school sports and 58.0% in school clubs and activities.
- About 70% of MS students believe that experimentation with cocaine or crack cocaine poses a great risk, and more than 80% say that regular use poses a great risk.
- Nearly three quarters of surveyed students, 74.9% reported that smoking “one or more packs of cigarettes per day” posed a “great risk.”

The data from the 2007 *Mississippi Statewide Report* will be posted to **Snapshots** (The Mississippi Prevention Data Improvement Project) website. *Snapshots* host a comprehensive listing of data and resources that is accessible by going to www.snapshots.ms.gov.

Five Star Foods Grants Improve Child Nutrition



Schools across Mississippi are serving more fruits and vegetables and serving them in a more appealing way because of their participation in the Five Star Foods Grant. The grant, funded by The Bower Foundation, awarded \$3,000 to purchase a sectionizer and slicer to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables by preparing attractive service lines that focus on healthful food choices for children in the school setting.

Another benefit of participation in the grant was that cafeteria managers from the schools attended a chef-led training session on how to use the new equipment. The training session included hands-on demonstrations on quick and easy ways to make the fruits and vegetables more appealing. This training was conducted by Chef Cyndie Storie. Follow-up, on-site training is being conducted by Mississippi State Extension Service professionals who are partnering with Office of Coordinated School Health on this exciting grant project.

Success stories are flowing in from around the state as schools begin to receive the new equipment, use the equipment and see increased acceptability of fruits and vegetables by the students. It is wonderful to be able to help schools make fruits and vegetables more appealing to students, encourage them to try them and make them a part of meals and snacks everyday.

Districts participating in this grant include: Corinth, Starkville, Webster County, Choctaw County, Benton County, DeSoto County, Union County, Pontotoc County, New Albany, Oxford, Monroe County, Jackson Public, Hinds County, Yazoo City, Newton, Meridian Public, Lauderdale County, Natchez-Adams, Lamar County, George County, Marion County, Petal, Stone County, Bay-Waveland and Jackson County. For additional information contact Christine Philley, with OHS, at cphilley@mde.k12.ms.us.

The Office of Child Nutrition Programs conducted regional training sessions during the fall on *Marketing Sense: Make a Star Choice*. Approximately 600 school foodservice administrators and managers attended the one-day session and learned about marketing healthy choices on the service line. This training will assist them with the implementation of the MS Healthy Students Act that encourages marketing in school foodservice operations.

The 2008 Simplified Summer Feeding Program (SSFP) training is scheduled for early April. This program provides free meals to children during the summer months at eligible sites. We encourage those school districts that do not participate to take advantage of the opportunity to provide this service to children in the community. Orientation for new SSFP sponsoring organizations will be held April 1-2, 2008 in Jackson, MS. Training for returning school sponsors will be held April 11, 2008. Information regarding the program will be mailed to all school districts in February 2008. For further information, please contact the Office of Child Nutrition at 601-354-7015.

The manager recertification course, “*Leading and Loving It: Gems of Leadership for School Foodservice Managers*,” will be taught to school foodservice managers at designated sites across the state during the spring of 2008. This course is designed specifically for those managers whose certificates will expire June 30, 2008. Information regarding the course was sent to all school districts in December 2007. For further information, call the Division of Training at 601-354-7016.

School Bus Safety

School Buses are the safest form of transportation for students traveling to and from school and school related activities. Mississippi was one of 45 states in 2007

that did not have a single school bus fatality. We should commend our MS School Bus Drivers on their incredible driving record.



For more information about school bus safety, visit the OHS website at www.healthyschoolsms.org

Online Resources

easy-to-use lesson plans & reading materials by topic

The LEXILE Framework

www.lexile.com

Magnolia

nt.library.msstate.edu/magnolia

Discovery Education

www.discoveryeducation.com

Fit, Healthy, and Ready To Succeed “Getting the Word Out”

The Office of Healthy Schools in collaboration with the Office of Communications has developed a Communication Plan to build community awareness about school health activities and the link to academic performance, to build and sustain public support for the Mississippi Healthy Schools Act and to build community support for school nurses.



The goal of this plan is to ensure that the media coverage at the local and state levels is accurate and consistent. Therefore, training has been conducted with school district nurses, child nutrition directors and public information officers to encourage them to “Get the Word Out” through press releases and special events.

State press releases regarding school health initiatives should appear each month and school districts are also encouraged to submit monthly press releases. It is important that our communities are aware of everything that schools are doing to keep Mississippi children Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Succeed!

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