

SCHOOL WELLNESS INITIATIVE

Executive Report



Six-month Progress Reports Summary:
Outcomes, Successes, and Opportunities

Osteopathic Heritage Foundations

The mission of the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation and the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation of Nelsonville (the Foundations) is to improve the health and quality of life in the community through education, research and service consistent with the principles and philosophy of osteopathic medicine.

The Foundations advance this mission through a broad spectrum of funding awards, initiatives and funding methods. Since 1999, the Foundations have approved over \$100 million in support of programs and initiatives that advance osteopathic biomedical research and osteopathic medical education, nationally, and the health and quality of life in central and southeastern Ohio.

To learn more about the Osteopathic Heritage Foundations, please visit www.osteopathicheritage.org.

Executive Report

February 2009

Report Compiled by the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs at Ohio University

Six-month progress reports have demonstrated continued success by the thirteen (13) participating school districts in the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation of Nelsonville's School Wellness Initiative. The School Wellness Initiative is a multi-year, multi-phase Initiative designed to advance district level wellness efforts, based on the coordinated school health model. This executive report includes outcomes, successes, and opportunities for participating school districts in the following counties Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Morgan, Perry, and Vinton.

Cohort 1 includes Alexander, Athens, Federal Hocking, Morgan, Nelsonville-York, Trimble and Vinton and Cohort 2 includes Crooksville, Eastern, Logan Hocking, New Lexington, Southern Local (Meigs) and Southern Local (Perry). The grant period for this report includes the first half of academic year (AY) July 2008 – June 2009.

The Foundation approved up to \$50,000 for each participating district to achieve measurable impact in the areas of school health council development, increased physical activity/education, improved nutrition, and advances in health services. Following is a summary of each impact area, investment level, participating districts/counties, and accomplishments to date.



School Health Councils

Foundation Investments for AY 08-09: \$54,000

Districts Participating: 13

Counties Participating: 6

The Foundation has made a sustainable investment in school wellness with infrastructure development of all 13 of the districts' school health councils. Resources and leadership have built the capacity of district councils to positively influence school wellness. Councils have progressed from being small groups of individuals with a passion for wellness, to organized groups that successfully plan and implement policy and programs and engage school and community members. Districts have taken different approaches to structuring the wellness councils. Some have established building-level teams and others are working in subcommittees. Both structures appear to be effective, with strong council and district leadership critical to overall success. Furthermore, school districts that have fully embraced the wellness initiative by actively involving a wide variety of members in their assessments, planning, and implementation appear more integrated and sustainable.



Physical Activity/Education

Foundation Investments for AY 08-09: \$410,000

Districts Participating: 12

Counties Participating: 6

Walking Trails

- Number of trails: 6
- Miles of trails: 4.5 miles
- Fitness equipment: 19 installed for use on trails to date

Fitness Centers

- Number of school-based fitness centers: 5

The Foundation's capital improvements and physical education equipment have increased opportunities for physical activity for students, staff and community members in 12 school districts.

- With Foundation funding, six school districts have constructed nearly 4.5 miles of walking trails, including Alexander, Crooksville, Eastern, Morgan, New Lexington, and Southern Local (Meigs). All are accessible to the community. At full implementation, five of the six walking trails will be equipped with fitness equipment for use by students, staff, and the community. To date, nineteen pieces of fitness equipment for cardio fitness, strength, flexibility, and endurance have been installed at one district. In addition, four districts will install fitness equipment this spring. The sixth district that installed a walking trail plans to develop additional trails, all will have community access. The walking trails in Morgan and Perry counties provide their communities with access where none existed before.

✓ **Sustainable training model:** Alexander Schools installed fitness stations in 2007 and physical education teachers made video segments demonstrating the correct use of the equipment, which have been used with staff during in-service training.

- During the school day, trail use includes both recess and/or regular physical activity. In five districts, physical education departments have incorporated the walking trail into class activities and curriculum. Reported usage of the walking trails in two districts includes physical education classes involving over 1,300 students and over 170 adults and families. Examples of successful events and special programs promoting the use of the walking trails include a twelve-week fitness camp, community hikes, and a Halloween-themed junior-class fundraiser.
- The Foundation has supported the opening and continuation of five school-based fitness centers with capital renovations and fitness equipment. School districts with centers include Alexander, Federal Hocking (2 centers), Southern Local (Meigs), Trimble, and Vinton. Between July and December 2008, one school district documented 690 students having used the fitness center and 28 staff members using it 2,000 times. School districts documented over 3,000 community members using the centers. To help fitness centers become self-sustaining, some districts implemented user fees for community members for their fitness centers this year with what appears to be only minimal impact on usage. Morgan Local will fully implement fitness equipment this spring. Ten districts have invested Foundation support in equipment upgrades for physical education classes and curriculum. Examples of equipment that has been purchased includes a climbing wall, Dance-Dance Revolution, Wii Fit™, archery supplies, Fitnessgrams®, Biomeasure® systems, body mass index measurement tools, and pedometers.



Nutrition

Foundation Investments for AY 08-09: \$76,000

Districts Participating: 7

Counties Participating: 5

Equipment purchased: 3

Gardens: 3

Foundation investments in school wellness, kitchen equipment, and gardens have made healthier foods more available through food service, a la carte, snack/party foods, and vending offerings. Only seven districts received funding for nutrition, but nearly all reported improvements as a result of broader district initiatives. Although districts have healthier menus, a challenge for schools is balancing the desire to offer healthier foods with financial constraints. Nine districts specifically reported increased offerings of fresh fruits and vegetables. For example, the New Lexington Middle School has nearly tripled the number of times they serve salads with the use of their new salad chopper. Most districts have also attempted to lower fat and/or salt, add whole grains, and make other healthy menu changes. Three districts reported reducing the use of fryers, including Crooksville who uses their new oven to bake more than fry. Eight districts have campus-wide universal breakfasts.

✓ Trimble used Foundation funds for gardens and reported 18 middle school and 102 high school students grew, harvested and prepared at least seven types of vegetables. They also started a grape arbor and small apple orchard.

Nearly all school districts have improved snack/party policies and vending. Several provide a recommended list of healthy snacks/treats. Some have addressed it in their Wellness Policy with one district adopting a strict policy. With beverage vending, seven districts have improved offerings, including limiting access or switching to water, juice, milk, or lower calorie drinks. With snack vending, six districts reported improvements with four using Snackwise, a vending assessment tool, one removing all candy, and one moving machines out of the cafeteria. Two districts report eliminating a la carte/snack lines. Two districts reported progress in increasing healthier options with fundraisers, athletics, or school stores.

✓ Logan-Hocking offered an in-service training for staff on healthy eating options for student incentives, rewards and class parties.

✓ Vinton reports the milk machines are "financially successful."

Districts used posters, bulletin boards, newsletters, and special events to increase nutrition education for students. Three districts reported teaching nutrition education curriculum in the classroom. After the installation of the greenhouse in Athens, students will have the dual benefit of access to locally grown vegetables and hands-on nutrition education.



Health Services

Foundation Investments for AY 08-09: \$60,000

Districts Participating: 3

Counties Participating: 2

Foundation investments have increased the mental health and wellness screenings in the school districts and decreased crises. Districts provide health screenings, health education, body mass index assessments, and family support from social workers. Although only three districts received funding for this goal, 11 districts report they now address some aspect of mental or physical health. Specifically, nine districts are monitoring students' body mass index, but some struggle with parental consent and staff buy-in. Alexander has taught nearly 400 middle school students LifeSkills, which includes a mental health component. Foundation support for a social worker at Trimble has resulted in no crisis encounters this year. The social worker also oversees a LifeSkills class and provides a self-esteem program for girls. For staff and the community, districts now conduct a variety of health screenings (e.g., blood pressure, blood sugar, body mass index) and offer new training. Alexander has trained and certified 33 individuals in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and automated external defibrillation and plans more trainings for students, staff and community members. Morgan has a unique incentive for staff. They receive a one-month reprieve from their insurance premium if they lower their body mass index and maintain it at a healthy level. Districts are partnering with area health and mental health agencies.

In conclusion, districts are successfully implementing strategies and policies that are improving wellness opportunities for students, staff, and the community. As a result of Foundation funding in these thirteen (13) school districts, documented improvements have been demonstrated. Further, school districts are commended for efforts to sustain wellness improvements.



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