



# Healthy HotSpot

*Connect to places for healthy living.*

## HEALTHY HOTSPOT SUCCESS STORY

### Healthy Schools Summits as a gateway to improving physical activity in schools

#### Summary

Illinois has revised physical education (P.E.) learning standards and a new state law requiring fitness testing. Schools need resources and support to meet these unfunded mandates. With funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, partners of the Healthy HotSpot initiative organized Healthy School Summits in suburban Cook County, Illinois. The success of the Summits has proven to be gateways to improving physical activity levels among students by supporting effective implementation of the new requirements.

*"Children should get at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day," says Dr. Terry Mason, MD, FACS, CCDPH Chief Operating Officer. "Regular physical activity for students has been linked to better health, better behavior, and better learning – which are all important to achieving academic success."*

#### Challenge

Kids should get at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Yet, 1 in 2 high school students in suburban Cook County, Illinois do not meet the recommended daily standards for physical activity (SCC YRBS, 2010).

Regular physical activity for students has been linked to better health, better behavior, and better learning, which all support academic success. Recognizing the need to promote enhanced P.E., schools are required to implement new P.E. standards and fitness testing. While both are beneficial for students, schools face challenges with effective implementation due to competing priorities and limited resources.

#### Solution

*Providing enhanced P.E. entails changing policies and practices so that students spend more time in moderate to vigorous physical activity during class. To support making these changes happen, the Cook County Department of Public Health partnered with several agencies to raise awareness about the new requirements; build knowledge and skills; and link schools with resources. Key champions were the Intermediate Service Centers - intermediate agencies between the Illinois State Board of Education and the 140+ school districts in suburban Cook County.*



Cook County DEPT. of  
**Public Health**

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Healthy HotSpot is an initiative led by the Cook County Department of Public Health that aims to build healthy places in suburban Cook County through community partnerships. For more information, visit [healthyhotspot.org](http://healthyhotspot.org).

Made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



"We need more institutes that benefit P.E. teachers. This Healthy Schools Summit was a great example!"

Participant, Healthy Schools Summit

### Results

Four Healthy School Summits were held in Fall 2015. This professional development opportunity addressed the importance of physical activity for academic achievement; discussed the revised learning standards; and offered workshops on evidence-based best practices. A total of 124 participants, majority of whom were physical education teachers, participated.

The Summits resulted in a positive gain in knowledge and abilities of attendees, including a better understanding of the relationship between health, fitness and learning outcomes, and strategies for implementing successful physical education.

The success of the Summits led to 64 schools registering for *Let's Move! Active Schools*, and over 300 school personnel signing up for enhanced P.E. teacher trainings, which began in November 2015.

### Sustainable Success

Healthy Schools Summits were a gateway through which schools were activated to incorporate physical activity throughout the school day and enhance their P.E. classes. Schools will continue to have opportunities to: develop a customized School Physical Activity Action Plan through the *Let's Move! Active Schools* website; participate in P.E. teacher trainings that equips teachers to implement and disseminate new strategies that increase physical activity and align with Illinois' new learning standards, and to administer fitness testing; and obtain ongoing professional development and technical assistance from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and the Illinois Public Health Institute to implement their Action Plan.

#### Learn more

- Discover the benefits of physical activity in school: [www.cookcountypublichealth.org/healthy-hotspot/healthy-schools/healthy-active-schools](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/healthy-hotspot/healthy-schools/healthy-active-schools).
- Learn more about how enhanced physical education supports better health, behavior, and learning at the [Illinois Public Health Institute](http://www.illinoispublichealth.org).
- Connect to resources and support through [Let's Move Active Schools](http://www.letsmove.org) and the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program](http://www.allianceforahealthiergeneration.org).
- Use the [Healthy HotSpot map](http://www.healthyhotspot.org) to find places that support healthy living.