



Champions for bringing healthy choices to life.

A CASE REPORT:

SUPER+ CHALLENGE SCHOOLS



THE PROBLEM

Childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past 30 years. Now, one in every three children in the United States is overweight or obese. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 17% (or 12.5 million) of children and adolescents ages 2-19 are obese. Obese children are more likely to become obese adults leading to chronic obesity-related health problems like heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes and asthma. The American Heart Association (AHA) now reports that childhood obesity is now the number one health concern among parents in the United States, topping drug abuse and smoking.

According to the American Heart Association (AHA), only 3.8% of elementary schools, 7.9% of middle schools and 2.1% of high schools provide daily physical education or its equivalent for the entire school year. 22% of schools do not require students to take any physical education at all.

According to the Institute of Medicine (IOM), many schools fall short of providing 60 minutes of the recommended daily physical activity and many schools offer meals, snack foods, and drinks that are too high in unhealthy fats, sodium, and added sugars.

THE SOLUTION

Schools are uniquely positioned to be a national focal point for obesity prevention. More than 95% of children and adolescents ages 5-17 years are enrolled in schools each year; spend up to half of their waking hours in school; and consume close to one-half of their daily calories there. Because no other institution has as much continuous and interactive contact with children, the school environment provides an excellent opportunity for preventing and treating obesity. Evidence shows that improvements in physical activity and nutrition at school give students of all backgrounds opportunities for leading healthier, more productive lives. In contrast to clinical programs, school programs can be delivered at little or no cost to families and can reach low income children who otherwise may not receive treatment.

"Once we did kick off the program the kids loved it! We have received such positive feedback from the students. The initial response was overwhelming and we had so many students eating at the salad bar that the other lunch lines were nearly empty!"

– Food Service Director



OUR ROLE

In 2010, the Highmark Foundation took its eight million dollar Highmark Healthy High 5 school challenge program to a new level by providing \$650,000 in Super+ School Challenge funds to 13 Pennsylvania schools located throughout western and central Pennsylvania.

Selected in part because of the successful implementation of their initial School Challenge Grants, each school was awarded up to \$50,000+ to make effective and sustainable changes to their school environment in the areas of nutrition and physical activity. These changes are enabling students to make better nutritional choices and regularly engage in physical activity for years to come.

To oversee the success of the grant program, Penn State Hershey PRO Wellness Center served as the Coordinating Center for the Super+ School Challenge grant program.

Furthermore, the Center provided technical assistance to ensure grant requirements were met. With expertise in public health programming, data collection, and program management, the Center interacted with these schools regularly through meetings, webinars, one-on-one calls and site visits throughout the two-year funding period to help ensure each school's success.

THE RESULTS

Specifically, these schools increased physical activity with new recreation and activity-related curriculum in physical education classes; purchased heart rate monitors and mountain bikes; retrofitted unused building space into fitness centers; implemented physical-activity based after school programming; and built an outdoor fitness train. In addition, Super+ Schools have incorporated nutrition education into classrooms; put salad bars into elementary school buildings; grew fruits and vegetables; and, implemented nutrition-based after-school programming, all yielding significant results.

The Super+ School Challenge provided an innovative opportunity for this elite group to lead the way in the prevention and reversal of childhood obesity in its schools. The Highmark Foundation, in partnership with Penn State Hershey PRO Wellness Center, developed a comprehensive and practical approach for the Super+ Schools to build upon and improve the success of the nutrition education and physical activity programs already implemented in their schools.



STAY CONNECTED



LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW WE CAN HELP YOUR ORGANIZATION:

email: PROwellness@hmc.psu.edu

facebook: [/pennstatehersheyPROwellness](https://www.facebook.com/pennstatehersheyPROwellness)

twitter: [@PSH_PROwellness](https://twitter.com/PSH_PROwellness)

www.pennstatehershey.org/PROwellness



ABOUT PENN STATE HERSHEY PRO WELLNESS CENTER

Penn State Hershey PRO Wellness Center helps Pennsylvania communities live healthier lives using evidence-based strategies for measurable and sustainable results. Historically focused on childhood obesity prevention, the Center has helped children and their families eat well, engage in regular physical activity and incorporate healthy habits into their everyday lives since 2003.

Our approach of Prevention, Research and Outreach provides schools, communities and like-minded organizations with educational programs, technical assistance, collaborative partnerships and access to proven wellness interventions.

PREVENTION

The Center provides an evidence-based approach to understanding and reducing the risks of childhood obesity. We facilitate proven interventions and capacity building, and offer technical assistance and hands-on project management to overcome obstacles that prevent access to healthy alternatives. In addition to educating and inspiring people to make healthy choices, the Center focuses on environmental and lifestyle changes that remove barriers and increase access to healthy behaviors where we learn, work, play and live.

RESEARCH

We recognize the importance of integrating research, evidence and data into our programs to ensure value and credibility to those we serve.

OUTREACH

We strive to educate and inspire youth and families to incorporate healthy lifestyle choices daily. Our outreach efforts include increasing public awareness through regional event participation as well as providing various materials related to nutrition, physical activity and other obesity related issues.



*PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION • ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION
CAPACITY BUILDING • TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE • COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS
TRAINING • ACCESS TO PROVEN WELLNESS INTERVENTIONS*



Champions for bringing
healthy choices to life.