



 A Live Well Allegheny School District

# Live Well Allegheny: Becoming a Live Well School

## **About Live Well Allegheny**

Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, under the leadership of the Board of Health and Health Department Director Dr. Karen Hacker, has launched a comprehensive, innovative strategy on wellness called *Live Well Allegheny*. Living well is a broad concept that incorporates physical health, mental wellness, personal and community safety, prevention and preparedness, nutrition, physical activity, fitness, managing chronic disease, improving well-being, quality of life, education, improving our standard of living, cessation programs, vaccinations, weight loss, healthy-aging, health literacy and so much more.

While there are already a number of programs, studies, outreach events and other efforts aimed at improving the health of our county residents, a coordinated, local effort is the best approach for making a concentrated impact on the health and well-being of our county. Behavior change requires a cultural change. *Live Well Allegheny* will draw on resources throughout the county including existing weight-control programs, school activities and programs, health care providers and nutrition professionals, unions, businesses, foundations, health-focused organizations and community groups.

## **Live Well Allegheny Schools**

At the January 2014 launch, County Executive Fitzgerald announced that one of the main initiatives of the *Live Well Allegheny* campaign would be to encourage programming in all 130 municipalities, including the 90 neighborhoods in the City of Pittsburgh, and 43 school districts that call Allegheny County home. In order to accomplish that goal, *Live Well Allegheny* intends to enhance the capacity of schools to effectively plan, implement, evaluate and sustain activities and evidence-based interventions that accomplish the mission of the campaign. As its stakeholders join together to strategize on how to address issues such as childhood obesity and the lack of physical activity, and also identify gaps in programming, that information can be shared with schools to enable them to better encourage healthy eating or active living. Together, we can assist each other and foster sharing best practices among all Allegheny County schools.

## **Becoming a Live Well Allegheny School**

In order to be designated as a *Live Well Allegheny* School, a district or school must first indicate its intent to work with Allegheny County to accomplish the goals of the campaign. This can be achieved by executive action, if appropriate, or by resolution of the school board.

In addition to referencing willingness to work with the campaign, the district should indicate 1) its willingness to share student BMI data (by school) with the county annually; and, 2) identify what additional steps it is willing to take within its own schools toward *Live Well Allegheny* goals. At a minimum, at least four action steps should be committed to in the district's formal action. The following listing is a sampling of possible evidence-based practices, but is by no means exclusive or exhaustive:

- Provide 15 minutes of exercise four times a day and incorporate non-traditional exercise options like dancing, yoga, hula hoops or other opportunities into physical education classes
- Make a commitment to a comprehensive healthy schools program
- Share information on wellness campaign events with district residents to encourage the voluntary

participation of parents and students

- Ask your vending machine company to add healthy foods, and work with the company to post calories and nutrient contents and amounts for the foods offered
- Plan, promote and implement a *Live Well Allegheny* event in cooperation with the campaign that encourages active living
- Offer fresh fruit and vegetables at all meals; and provide 2% milk and chocolate milk instead of whole milk
- Enhance health education to include nutrition and physical activity information
- Conduct a youth survey (PAYS or YRBS) that includes questions on physical activity and nutrition; share the resulting data with the Allegheny County Health Department
- Initiate employee wellness activities such as walking clubs to encourage physical activity
- Engage in the Safe Routes to School Program
- Implement an evidence-based social skills curriculum Initiate a school garden with connection to education program
- Record student insurance information and share overall data with Allegheny County Health Department
- Incorporate fitness measures into physical education classes Expand opportunities for fitness to all staff and students (i.e. conduct administrative meetings in an active manner (walking, standing); schedule and encourage walks during free periods
- Promote water drinking (provide bubblers with attachments to fill water bottles)
- Develop health food policies for food served at school meetings or school-sponsored events

Once formal action has been taken which includes detail on how the requirements of the program will be met, written notification should be made to the Director of the Allegheny County Health Department. Upon review by the Department, designation of the district as a *Live Well Allegheny* School will be formally made. The district will then be recognized as a partner in the campaign and will be entitled to all benefits being a partner entails.

Want to learn more?

Contact the Live Well Allegheny Campaign through its website at [www.LiveWellAllegheny.com](http://www.LiveWellAllegheny.com) or call the Allegheny County Health Department at 412-687-ACHD (2243).

Letters of commitment can be sent to:

Dr. Karen A. Hacker

Director

Allegheny County Health Department

542 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Contact Information: Hannah E. Hardy, 412-247-7946, [hannah.hardy@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:hannah.hardy@alleghenycounty.us).