



Wellness Buzz Clay County Schools

Clay County has been successful at taking the sting out of school wellness. The buzz here is about which school staff members are the healthiest, knowing that they set the example for students.

Often, the challenge with implementing any new school policy is gaining buy-in and support. Not so in Clay County - support for a healthy school environment can be found at all levels, thanks in part to the efforts of the School Health Advisory Council.

The message is "Healthy Kids Equal Kids Ready to Learn". That sentiment led to the development of a wellness policy brochure distributed to all school staff. The pamphlet highlighted suggestions for non-food rewards, nutritious snack options, active celebration ideas and healthier fundraisers, including those without food.

Clay County is creative in capturing their audience. School staff learned more from 'Bathroom Buzz', short clips of health-related and/or wellness policy info placed on the doors

of the teachers' bathroom stalls.

Clay County Schools is in the business of education and their motto is "Excellence in Action". The Associate Superintendent, Carol Arnold, took action to lead teacher training on incorporating Energizers into classroom lessons. Arnold, also a SHAC member, has been a strong advocate for the Healthy Schools Institute. Clay County has allocated funding to send a team to HSI for the last four years, resulting in a number of school wellness ambassadors.

Administration has demonstrated leadership in creating change, and faculty are following suit. The Hayesville High School Principal raffled off her prime parking space as an alternative fundraiser, which turned out to be more lucrative and popular than the typical candy sales. The Honors English teacher assigned students the task of creating a newspaper with articles on all eight components of Coordinated School Health. The "Bee Healthy" journal was distributed to all staff, students

and the Board of Education.

Communication has been key in Clay County, but also commitment to the cause. Staff are the first line of defense in making a difference and that is evident in the importance given to staff wellness. School staff have the opportunity to participate in health fairs, Lifeline Screenings, a yearly Flu Shot Clinic, Weight Watchers group, pilates class, or health topic lectures for credit hours. Many utilize the on-site fitness trail and recreation facility.

Friendly competition in the 'Bee-N-Charge' Pedometer and Healthy Food Challenge pitted teams from each school and the central office in a race for a coveted trophy. The 'Biggest Loser' weight loss initiative was a team and individual success with 301.5 total pounds lost on campus. The local newspaper covered both events.

Everyone is now on board and this close-knit Clay school campus and community are truly making a difference in the lives of staff and students.



Hayesville Yellow Jackets



Bee-N-Charge Pedometer and Healthy Food Challenge Coverage

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