



A Closer Look: Coordinated School Health in Action: Elementary School Stories

Silverthorne Elementary

The kitchen staff at Silverthorne Elementary observed a number of students consistently making unhealthy choices at the school's salad bar. Staff decided to approach the school media tech and producer of the monthly school news program, "KSVE News," about creating an information segment for students called "How to Build a Healthy Salad."

The idea started with the salad segment, and grew into a monthly nutrition report using a student nutrition reporter. Other segments featured "Portion Sizes" and an interview with "Pyramid Pete." Staff also staged "cooking" segments to demonstrate simple, healthy recipes that students could easily prepare, such as trail mix, fruit kabobs with yogurt dip, and chocolate-dipped strawberries.

The segments, airing four times a week on the local TV station, Channel 10, reached every student and adult in Silverthorne.

For more information about this program, contact Karen Maginity or Natalie Boyer at 970-468-6700.

Columbine Elementary

Columbine Elementary decided to schedule recess before lunch to allow students an opportunity to eat in a more relaxed manner. Their rationale: when students don't rush through lunch to get to recess, they eat more and waste less. Staff also wanted to decrease the number of disciplinary referrals that were occurring during lunch recess.

A challenge arose as a result of the new schedule—10% of the students that finished eating early became mildly disruptive. To resolve this issue, books and games were provided in the cafeteria as an alternative activity for those students who had finished their lunches before the lunch period was over.

The initiative was successful. The amount of food thrown away by students decreased 15% over a six month period. Additionally, discipline referrals during lunch recess decreased 20%, leading staff to believe the schedule change was beneficial for both students and staff. Teachers reported that student engagement improved after the schedule change to recess before lunch, a change that they anticipate will lead to increased student achievement over time.

For more information about this program, contact Sara Doud or Marla Wise at 719-686-2300.

Gateway Elementary

Many parents in the Gateway Elementary community were driving their children to school and dropping them off at the front door. The Coordinated School Health (CSH) team saw an opportunity to promote walking to school as a healthy alternative, but a safe route needed to be identified in the town where the school was located—Woodland Park, Colorado.

Staff encountered an immediate challenge with parents—convincing them to allow their children to walk to school alone. To overcome the resistance, staff members volunteered to meet students at three different locations in Woodland Park, and then to escort students to the school building.

It worked. The school accomplished its CSH objective of "65% of students and staff walking a safe route to school." Because of this positive experience, more community members in Woodland Park are confidently walking to school with their children.

Walking is a healthy habit that can lead to higher academic performance and fewer behavioral incidents as students arrive at school.

For more information about this program, contact Lorelei Gammons or Leslie Conrad at 719-686-2051.