

ABSTRACT

WE-GO FOR FITNESS

Community High School District 94 is located in West Chicago Illinois. This is a one-high school (grades 9-12) district that serves 2,122 students from West Chicago and small portions of several neighboring towns. West Chicago, population 23,469, is 48.6 percent Hispanic; many of them are newer immigrants from poorer areas of Mexico. The ethnic make-up of the school is 35.4% Hispanic, 61.5% White, 3% Black, 1.5% Asian and 0.1% Other. The Hispanic population at the high school is projected to rise to 57% within the next seven years. The school's poverty rate is 19.4 percent; 10.5% of our students are Limited English Proficient; and 9.38% are classified as Special Needs students.

The Carol M. White Physical Education Grant will enable Community High School District 94 to institute "We-Go for Fitness," a comprehensive program that will give students the tools, knowledge and motivation to become physically fit and active and to make healthy choices throughout their lives. The program will address several key deficits in our existing physical education and health program and allow us to make significant progress in meeting Illinois State Standards for Physical Development and Health. Elements of staff and community fitness will be addressed as well.

The funding will enable the high school to put a high quality program in place. Major changes in curriculum will be made that will better serve the needs of our students. Aging equipment will be replaced, and professional development for our staff will be provided. The We-Go for Fitness team will also recommend significant changes to the school environment to support improved nutrition for students. The changes will enable students to make positive lifestyle changes and to make wellness a central part of their everyday lives.

1. Need for Project - The extent to which specific gaps and weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses:

Lack of activity and poor diet have led to a health crisis in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association that deaths due to poor diet and physical inactivity rose by 33 percent in the past decade and may soon overtake tobacco as the leading preventable cause of death. ("Actual Causes of Death in the United States," JAMA, March 10, 2004). Those figures also reflect the unfortunate trends in child and adolescent fitness.

In addition to the daunting task of addressing the critical need of high school students for improved fitness levels and nutrition, Community High School District 94 faces considerable gaps in meeting Illinois State Standards for Physical Development and Health. While the high school has focused on a student-centered curriculum with the goal of meeting the needs of individual students, our assessments indicate that there were still significant weaknesses in meeting state standards.

When approximately 1,150 CHS students were tested for fitness during the second semester of 2002, the results were disturbing. Only 28% of those tested were able to meet standards in the Mile Run; 54% met the standard for Sit-Ups; 59% passed the Flexibility test; and only 37% exhibited the required amount of Upper Body Strength. Furthermore, in a self-assessment by students completed within the past month, only 19% stated they were "very knowledgeable" of the fitness (FITT=Frequency-Intensity-Time-Type) principles. Thirty-three percent of respondents stated they exercise only if they are in a physical education class or a team sport. Only 30% of students reported exercising vigorously at least three times a week in

PE class. Many of the weaknesses are directly related to growth areas for the Physical Education curriculum.

Our current physical education program, an elective program at all grade and developmental levels, shows the following gaps in meeting the Illinois state standards for physical education: **In reference to Goal 20 – Achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness based upon continual self-assessment, we find several weaknesses:** A physically educated person develops and maintains a healthy level of fitness. This level of fitness is periodically assessed and is maintained at sufficient levels to lead a healthy lifestyle. Currently, only 20% of our students are given this opportunity to participate in assessing their fitness levels. In our new program, all students would be required to take Fitness Education I and II during their freshman and sophomore years. Concepts of achievement, assessment, and maintenance of healthy levels of fitness would be the focus of the new program. All students will be given the Cooper Institute Fitness Test to measure basic components of fitness: cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility and body composition. Students will be tested three times each year.

Another weakness in our current program is our alignment with State Goal 21: Develop team building skills by working with others through physical activity. In our present program, students do not receive any training in team building concepts. Team building increases confidence, teaches support for others, and gives one a sense of success through non-competitive experiences. Specifically, team building teaches cooperation, acceptance, and trust. Team building concepts also are important to developing positive self image and school climate.

We are strongly committed to adding Team Building to our new curriculum. In our new program, all students will be required to enroll in Team Building I and II in order to experience basic and advanced initiatives in team building.

Other areas of concern in our current curriculum are nutrition, good decision-making, and health promotion. **Specifically, there is a gap in meeting Illinois PDH Goal 24 with regard to promoting and enhancing health and well-being through the use of effective communication and decision-making skills.** Many of our students do not make wise choices concerning nutrition. Evidence of this was noted when 66 Health class students responded to the Nutrition Assessment Profile from the Cooper Institute. In that assessment, only 18% scored good or excellent in the Prudent Diet category and only 58% scored good to excellent in the Calorie Control category.

A lack of proper nutrition habits may be a result of their home environments. Survey results indicated that many students come from families that do not practice good nutrition habits due to lack of nutritional knowledge, parents not being at home when students come home from school, or for financial reasons. Specifically, in the Wellness Self-Assessment administered to 1,367 of our students, 64% stated that at least one of their family members is overweight. Fifty-two percent of students have at least one family member with high blood pressure, and 39% that there is diabetes in their family. Only 26% of respondents were aware of fats in foods and how to limit them in their diet.

One other aspect of the Wellness Assessment was particularly unsettling: 62% of the 1,367 respondents stated that our school lunch program did not meet healthy nutrition standards outlined on the survey. Only 27% of the students reported eating from 3 to 5 servings of vegetables per day, and only 14% said they consume at least four servings of fruit per day. In

addition 33% percent of our students reported consuming either none to one daily serving of milk or dairy products per day. Further, when asked about their body weight, 30% of our students stated they were "a little heavier" to "much heavier" than the ideal weight for their height and build.

Our school needs to implement a plan to build a healthier environment that will support student nutrition by providing healthier foods and helping them to make better choices. One of our self-assessments indicated that while the school's Food Service contractor has high standards for food safety and makes a good effort to meet the taste preferences of our diverse student population, there were some serious problems. Specifically, there was a lack of available healthy food choices for students and staff (i.e. vegetables, fruits and low-fat items).

Currently, nutrition education is presented in a very limited way during Freshman Health class. Our new curriculum would explore nutrition, good decision-making and health promotion in greater depth. Our Fitness Education I and II, Team Building, and Food and Fit classes would enhance nutrition education.

We have attached a chart (appendix # 1) that links the new physical education and health curriculum classes to the related Illinois Goals and Standards for Physical Development and Health and the National Standards. When we implement our proposed curriculum changes and the We-Go for Fitness Program, we will be in alignment with all the state and national standards in these areas.

Weaknesses Related to Equipment: Maximum participation for every student for the entire class period is one key to attaining our curriculum goals. Damaged equipment and lack of equipment are common obstacles for students in our current fitness classes. Waiting in line for a weight machine or working on a treadmill for a short interval so others can have a chance to use

it, interferes with a properly prescribed workout. If we are teaching our children to be fit, we need to give our students the proper tools. With proper funding, new equipment and technology will be available to all students to help them reach their fitness goals. Furthermore, because of our high student population (2,122), considerable strain is placed upon aerobic fitness equipment. Therefore, instead of equipping our aerobic fitness center with low quality items (e.g. exercise bikes, elliptical machines), we need to buy equipment that can withstand the strain of 8-12 hours per day of constant use.

We also are in desperate need of new equipment for the weight room. Strength training classes serve approximately 35-40 students each period of the school day. We currently can accommodate only 20. If we make our children a priority by offering them adequate access to appropriate equipment, they will have a better opportunity to improve their own fitness levels.

We also plan to increase access to the fitness and weight rooms by hiring fitness specialists to supervise those areas for three hours per day after school, Monday through Friday. The additional opportunities to work out will allow more students to maintain individual fitness routines. Without supervision and guidance, participants are more likely to "fall out of routine," perform skills that are not fundamentally sound, and ultimately fail in their fitness pursuits. In fact, school policy maintains that students are not allowed to use the fitness and weight equipment unless they are supervised. The specialists would implement personal training programs and give practical advice to participants. They would ensure that students demonstrate proper exercise techniques and would oversee workout routines that are consistent with the achievement of both student and school goals. Many in our community cannot afford to join health clubs; therefore, it is very important to provide this opportunity. Most importantly, the

Administration and School Board have already endorsed the idea of opening the fitness and weight rooms to the community during after-school hours.

Funds also will be needed to purchase team building equipment and supplies for the Adventure Education classes. We have received approval of General Mills Foundation grant to purchase vertical and horizontal climbing walls for this program. The Carol M. White grant would allow us to purchase the high ropes course, kayaks and safety equipment integral to the program.

Technology Needs: We have critical needs in the area of technology to help our students and school reach state standards. We have only 27 heart rate monitors in working condition. This grant would help our program purchase more heart rate monitors to provide scientific information to assess heart rates during exercise. Heart rate monitors provide instant feedback as to whether students are exercising in their target heart rate zones. Students can download information into a computer after their workouts. Students can monitor, assess, and improve workouts by using heart rate monitors. Abnormal heart rates or patterns have also been detected in children who have used monitors. Another tool needed to bridge the technology gap is the Palm Pilot. Each physical education teacher would have his or her own Palm Pilot with which to maintain personal records of students' fitness plans, skills testing, and goals. Several lap top computers also would be necessary to record and store fitness information. Personalized workouts could be possible with the use of heart rate monitors and the use of Palm Pilots by teachers, as well as students. These tools are used in health clubs and professional health care facilities; our students would be familiar with them as a result of our program. Part of our technology gap is in the audio/visual area. We have old stereo equipment with outdated speakers in several teaching stations. Because vandalism and theft are high for this type of equipment, we

need a built-in system with controls accessible only to the teacher. Video projectors and screens that are permanent fixtures are ideal.

Weakness in Staff Development: This grant would provide staff training in teaching team building, fitness and nutrition to all students. As previously noted, the new We-Go for Fitness Program will include classes in team building, yet only two out of fifteen staff members currently are trained to teach team building. Our goal is to certify all physical education teachers in team building, as it is a critical component of our revised curriculum. We have a consultant who travels to our school during in-service days to teach team building to our physical education teachers. Additional funds needed, however, to continue this in-service training program for school year 2004/2005. After physical education teachers receive training in team building, they will train other faculty members in those concepts.

The Carol M. White grant funds also will give our physical education teachers the opportunity to stay abreast of the latest research, issues and trends in the field of physical education and health. Grant funding would allow staff members to attend state convention of the Illinois Alliance of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. Funding for our Project Director and additional staff member to attend the Project Directors meeting and the OSDFS Conference in Washington D.C. would provide significant advantages to our Physical Education and Health staff. Participants return with knowledge to share with the other team members.

To address staff development in the area of nutrition, a licensed, registered dietician will consult with our teachers. This will help to ensure that the nutrition portion of the We-Go for Fitness Program will be of high quality consistent with best practices in the field of nutrition education. This also will ensure that content is delivered consistently among staff.

The Carol M. White Physical Education Grant will give *all* our students the opportunity to be active participants in a wellness based physical education program.

Needs of Latino Students: Community High School faces the challenge of meeting the needs of our Latino students, especially in light of the No Child Left Behind legislation. The community is 48.6 percent Hispanic; many of them are newer immigrants from poorer areas of Mexico. The ethnic make-up of the school is 35.4% Hispanic, 61.5% White, 3% Black, 1.5% Asian and 0.1% Other. The Hispanic population at the high school is projected to rise to 57% within the next seven years.

Despite offering comprehensive academic services for Hispanic students at Community High School, only 24% of them met or exceeded Illinois state standards for reading, 24.2% for mathematics, 20% for writing, and 41.3% for Social Studies on the latest Prairie State Achievement Exam. Also, many of them have not had the advantage of access to current information on nutrition within their families.

While other programs are being put into place to address the academic and social aspects of our programs for Latino students, we believe that improving nutrition and fitness levels will contribute to raising their academic performance. There is extensive research connecting the ability to learn to good health. Specifically, a recent research study published by the National Academy of Sciences on March 2, 2004, which demonstrates that physical activity changes brain structure and function in ways that improve decision-making. (Author: Dr. Arthur B. Kramer, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.) The improvements and changes that will be accomplished by the We-Go for Fitness Program will help to ensure that no child will be left behind.

2. Significance of Project:

a. The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.

The comprehensive approach of We-Go for Fitness to improving student fitness and nutrition is certain to have a significant impact on the quality of Community High School's physical education and health programs. Our goal is to establish systemic change that will lead to improved health and fitness for students.

Systemic change has already begun within our school. The Administration and Board of Education have given their approval to the concept of adding Adventure Education, which focuses on team building and adding new activities of interest to students to the physical education curriculum. They also have given their support to changing the curriculum by adding required Freshman and Sophomore Physical Education Academies to ensure that all students receive our proposed wellness foundation. As previously noted, they also support opening the fitness and weight rooms to the community during after school hours.

Our physical education and health staff enthusiastically support this program. The Carol M. White Physical Education Grant will give us the opportunity to effect needed changes in our programs and help our Community High School students make significant progress toward meeting Illinois State Standards.

Employee wellness is one of the components of a healthy school (Allenworth and Rolbe, Eight-Component Model for Coordinated School Wellness). The addition of a wellness program for all Community High School faculty and staff will provide an environment that supports wellness for students as well. When staff members embrace healthier lifestyles, they serve as positive role models for students. The Administration and School Board will be asked to support proposed changes that will build a healthier nutritional environment for students.

We have built collaborative partnerships with agencies and businesses in the community that will help to implement these proposed improvements and continue to support the program after the grant period has ended. For example, we have received approval of a General Mills Foundation grant to help fund the climbing walls for the Adventure Education Program. General Mills is a major employer in West Chicago.

Other collaborative partners to the development of our new program include Julie Scheer, registered dietician from Central DuPage Hospital; Certified Personal Trainer Diana Bartlett; Bob Kapheim, Manager of Curriculum and Instruction for Skylight Lab (Adventure Education and Team Building training) through St. Xavier University, YWCA DuPage, West Chicago Park District, General Mills, West Chicago Chamber of Commerce, Illinois NET (Nutrition Education and Training Program), Richard Temmerman Self-Defense Academy, Lifetime Fitness, Mike McNeil Martial Arts and the Winfield Park District. Dr. Nancy LaCursia, Department Chair of Kinetic Wellness at New Trier High School will serve as a consultant for curriculum development and assessment.

Students may be more likely to make lifestyle changes if they receive support in the home environment as well as at school. Therefore, students, parents and community members also will be involved in the planning and implementation process to ensure that all stakeholders will be supporting the program. Our program partners and evaluators will help the district stay focused on program goals and objectives, and measure our progress. This adds an additional measure of accountability to the program. Our school and our stakeholders are committed to continuing the program beyond the grant period. The more the community is involved, the greater the impact our program will have on the health and well being of the community.

All of the above factors will contribute to the likelihood of systemic improvement and change.

Upon completion of the new We-Go for Fitness Program at Community High School the student will be able to:

- Perform a variety of physical activities.
- Demonstrate physical competence in individual and team sports, creative movement and leisure activities.
- Demonstrate knowledge of rules, safety, and strategies during physical activity.
- Assess his/her personal level of fitness.
- Know and apply the principles and components of health-related fitness.
- Develop a personal fitness plan.
- Develop a personal healthy eating plan.
- Demonstrate basic water survival and rescue skills
- Demonstrate individual responsibilities during physical activity.
- Demonstrate cooperative skills during structured physical activity.
- Know the physical, mental/emotional and social benefits of involvement in physical activity.
- Know basic concepts of proper nutrition.
- Value the importance of good nutrition and its contribution to a healthy lifestyle.
- Value physical activity and its contribution to a healthy lifestyle.
- Demonstrate personal and social behavior in physical activity settings.
- Demonstrate understanding and respect for differences among people in physical activity settings.

- Understand that physical activity provides opportunities for enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and social interaction.
- Describe and explain factors that influence health.
- Promote health and well being through effective communication and decision-making.

b. The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.

We propose to add new programs that will further strengthen the physical education and health program we currently offer. Despite limited funding due to budget cuts, our PE/Health Department already has instituted some creative programs for our students. Some of those include our Food and Fit class, the Teen Moms program to address the fitness, nutrition and educational needs of pregnant teens and teen mothers; self-defense training and some individual activities such as in-line skating. With the funding from Carol M. White grant, Community High School can take a quantum leap forward in meeting the needs of all students by addressing our specific gaps and weaknesses in meeting Illinois State Standards.

The bedrock of our new program will be changes to curriculum by adding Freshman and Sophomore Academies to ensure that all students will receive fitness education, team building and nutrition education. Currently, when classes are chosen only as electives, more than 70% of our physical education students choose team sport activities rather than fitness-based classes. Furthermore, many students choose to repeat them several times. The proposed changes in class structure and requirements would solve that weakness in our program by ensuring that all students build a solid knowledge base of fitness and nutrition in mandatory physical education and health classes in the Freshman and Sophomore Academies. Student will have a choice of electives, however, during their junior and senior years.

Through the Freshman/Sophomore Academies, students will gain a cognitive understanding of fitness principles and competency in many movement forms. (State PDH Goal # 19) These strategies will help students to increase their everyday level of activity and embrace a lifelong commitment to health and fitness that are the hallmark of a healthy lifestyle.

In the area of fitness assessment, students will be able to measure their progress toward fitness goals and objectives throughout their high school years. (State PDH Goal #20) These assessments will enable staff to gauge student progress and the program's success.

Through improved health curriculum and the wellness program, students also will learn how to make better decisions that will support their health and fitness. (State PDH Goal # 24)

Successful implementation requires teacher training. Professional development opportunities for PE/Health staff will enhance the success of the proposed curriculum changes.

The addition of the Adventure Education Program, focusing on team-building activities through use of climbing walls, high ropes course and kayaking, hopefully will spark students' interest through non-traditional fitness activities to increase individual fitness levels. With the addition of the Adventure Education and Team Building Course, students will be able to:

- 1) Work together to problem-solve in a safe manner.
- 2) Learn to use safety equipment.
- 3) Increase their sense of personal confidence.
- 4) Experience an increase in their levels of agility and strength.
- 5) Improve their communication and critical thinking skills through problem-solving activities.
- 6) Enhance leadership skills through the team work exercises.

We also anticipate that the We-Go for Fitness Program will develop personal social skills and build a greater spirit of cooperation among our diverse student population, (State PDH Goal #24). This result was noted at other area schools that have instituted similar programs. Specifically, Thornton Fractional South High School in Lansing, Illinois noted a distinct lessening in tension between student groups that had traditionally been at odds with each other. That will be of great assistance in relieving tension between students and building bridges between ethnic groups here at Community High School.

Technology: The addition of requested technology such as Palm Pilots, more heart rate monitors and pedometers will encourage students to meet personal fitness goals and allow them to measure their progress. The added technology also will enable teachers to track student progress.

Nutrition: To address nutrition, we want to create a culture at our high school that helps students, staff members, parents, (and eventually the community) embrace a healthier lifestyle for lifelong fitness. In addition to providing more nutrition education, we will provide decision-making tools that will help students make healthier choices. (State PDH Goal # 24) We also want to take an approach that encourages participants to begin making small, manageable changes to their diet and fitness routines to enhance their health.

Further, Community High School staff will form a Nutrition Committee to address changes that will support a healthy school nutrition environment. Julie Scheer, a licensed, registered dietician from Central DuPage Hospital will serve as a consultant to the students, parents and educators on the committee. Staff representatives on the Nutrition Committee will include the Project Director, (who is also the chairman of the Physical Education/Health

Department,) the school nurse, a guidance counselor, the Food and Fit teacher and a health teacher.

Action items for the Nutrition Committee will include:

- 1) Meet with high school administrators and school board members to gain their support for improving nutrition education, cafeteria food and vending machine choices.
- 2) Meet with the Food Service contractor to suggest changes to lunch menus for students and staff. The emphasis for these changes will be to meet USDA nutrition standards. Resources such as "A la Carte and Vending Items for a Healthy School Environment" from the Illinois Nutrition Education and Training Program will be used at that time to provide suggestions for healthier beverage choices, low-fat grain foods, healthy entrée options, fruits and vegetables and healthy treat options.
- 3) Request that more vending machines be added that provide water, milk and 100% fruit juices.
- 4) Schedule a training session provided by the Illinois Nutritional Education and Training Program to train grant team members and appropriate faculty and administrators about how to provide the environment, motivation, services and support necessary for students to develop and maintain healthy eating through classroom lessons and a supportive school environment.
- 5) Increase the amount of nutrition information that is offered in the health classes through changes in curriculum and by providing written resources for all students through the school-wide wellness initiative. Ensure that the information is accurate, up-to-date and consistent with best practices in the field by consulting with the dietician and professionals from Illinois NET.
- 6) Institute the "One Small Change" Program with students and staff. This program will provide

education about the impact on health of making small changes in nutrition and exercise. Further, this program will give specific ideas regarding types of changes that can be made and will encourage people to make small incremental changes that can be built on as they begin to experience success. Students in the Food and Fit classes and Health classes will work with their teachers and the consulting dietician to research specific examples of incremental changes and the impact of those changes on their health. In addition, students will design and produce laminated posters highlighting ten of these suggested changes to be placed on the walls within the school building. These posters will serve as visual reminders to reinforce the positive message and goals of the One Small Change program for students and staff.

7) The Food and Fit teacher and the consulting dietician will work with several Latino students and their parents to suggest healthier ways to prepare traditional ethnic foods. These suggestions would be sensitive to cultural traditions and tastes while still providing a healthier product. One example would be teaching students to cook tortillas with vegetable oil rather than lard. Food and Fit class students also would be engaged to provide demonstrations of healthy ethnic cooking during lunch periods. As these nutrition tips are shared with parents, we hope we can begin to have an impact on the health of the community.

8) Food and Fit students also will provide visual demonstrations during lunchtimes of the fat content in some typical teen food choices such as pizza and French fries. This is a suggested activity designed by the Illinois Nutrition and Education and Training Program.

9) Develop WebPages for our school's website to feature healthy recipes and tips for better nutrition so that they may be accessed by students and the public. Each of our classrooms contain at least one computer with Internet access for students and staff.

10) Encourage more students to take the "Food and Fit" class, our award-winning class

that combines education on personal fitness and nutrition.

11) Address the emotional and behavioral aspects of eating in the curriculum and provide resources lists for students and staff (e.g. list Overeaters Anonymous meetings, Weight Watchers programs.)

12) Provide information for staff and students about body image and disordered eating.

13) Offer a Weight Watchers Program for students if there is sufficient interest.

14) Educate faculty and activity sponsors about non-food rewards that can be used for students rather than candy and other empty-calorie foods, and about fund-raising ideas other than selling candy bars and other unhealthy food items (Non-Food Ways to Raise Funds and Reward a Job Well Done, Texas Department of Agriculture, 2004.)

3. Quality of the Project Design

a) The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of training in the field:

We-Go for Fitness has been designed as a comprehensive program that will systematically address Community High School's identified weaknesses in meeting the needs of students in fitness, nutrition and personal social skill development. This presents an integrated approach to address the six elements of the Carol M. White Physical Education Program:

1) Fitness education and assessment to help students understand, improve and maintain

their physical well-being: The change in curriculum structure to require fitness and nutrition classes in Freshmen and Sophomore Academies will ensure that all students receive fitness education. All students will set personal fitness goals and be given the tools to measure their progress. During the junior and senior years, students will be able to take advantage of a wide variety of electives, after receiving a foundation of solid training during their first two years. Students will be encouraged to make fitness a high priority throughout their lifetime. The

program requires periodic fitness assessments for all physical education students. The Project Director will be responsible for this.

- 2) **Instruction in a variety of motor skills and physical activities designed to enhance the physical, mental and social or emotional development of each student:** All students will receive instruction in a variety of motor skills and physical activities designed to enhance their physical, mental and social/emotional development. Students will be exposed to a wide variety of activities and individual sports and will have access to individual aerobic fitness equipment and weight training equipment.
- 3) **Development of and instruction in cognitive concepts about motor skills and physical fitness that support a lifelong healthy lifestyle:** Students will develop an understanding of cognitive concepts about motor skills and fitness through their participation in physical education and health classes. The comprehensive We-Go for Fitness Program will encourage students to make fitness an everyday and lifelong lifestyle and provide an environment that supports their healthy choices.
- 4) **Opportunities to develop positive social and cooperative skills through physical activity participation:** Team building training and activities will be a major and required component of the new curriculum for all students. This provides excellent opportunities to develop social and cooperative skills in our students. In our new program, all students will be required to take Team Building I and II to experience basic and advanced initiatives in team building. Working together to help team members in the Adventure Education courses will also build these skills. The Project Director and a PE teacher will be responsible for this area.
- 5) **Instruction in healthy eating and good nutrition:** The program will provide much more intensive and comprehensive information on healthy eating and nutrition in the required

Health classes and in the Food and Fit class. Also, a school-wide wellness program will educate all students in staff in healthy eating. The Health teachers, the Foods and Fit teacher and the school nurse will take the lead in this area, with the assistance of our consulting dietician. Having input from students and parents will also be helpful, because their support is critical to encouraging good choices by their children. The decision-making training the students will receive in health classes will also support healthy choices.

- 6) **Opportunities for professional development for teachers of physical education to stay abreast of the latest research, issues and trends in the field of physical education:** Funds have been included in the budget for professional development for teaching staff. All physical education and related staff will receive training in team building. Attendance at regional and state Physical Education Conferences, attendance for two teachers at the national conference of physical education teachers, opportunities to consult with fitness and nutrition experts, and training from the Illinois Nutrition Education and Training Program have been built into the plan. Written professional resources will be provided to all physical education and health teachers as well. The Project Director will be responsible for Professional Development, with assistance from Dr. Tom McCann, Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Instruction.

The appropriateness of the approach for the age and developmental levels, gender, and ethnic and cultural diversity of the target population, and how the program will engage and respond to the needs of the target population. The program has been carefully designed to fit the needs of our target population. It addresses the ethnic and cultural diversity of our student body. The needs of Latino students will be met through providing written materials in Spanish as well as English. One of our Health classes is geared for English as a Second

Language students. The importance of honoring other cultures will be included in the nutrition portion of the program through providing information on healthy ways of cooking traditional favorite foods of other cultures. Latin dancing and Mexican Folk Dance will be offered to appeal to Latino students. Several Latino students and parents will be included in the We-Go for Fitness Team. Bilingual and special education teachers will be consulted about the appropriateness of program materials and activities for their students. Some of the ways the needs of special education students will be accommodated include the addition of a horizontal traverse wall in the Adventure Education Program that will have students only one foot off the ground, and the use of recumbent bikes for those who are physically challenged. The program was designed to reflect the developmental stages of Early High School and Later High School students as listed in the Illinois State Learning Standards. Our students are ages 14 to 17+. The program activities and curriculum will be appropriate and of interest to both genders as well. Adventure Education activities will be of interest to both males and females. Special activities such as yoga, Pilates, self-defense, and dance will engage the interest of female students. Even the needs of pregnant teens and teen moms are addressed through the Teen Mom Program.

Both male and female and Latino and Anglo students will serve on the We-Go for Fitness Committee to provide input throughout both planning and implementation. The Bilingual Programs Director and the Special Education Director will be consulted to ensure that programs and materials are appropriate to meet the needs of special needs students and second language learners. The Project Director, the Health teacher and a PE teacher will assume responsibility for this aspect of the program.

Coordination of proposed strategy with similar or related efforts and the linkages that have been or will be established with other appropriate agencies and organizations providing

services to the target population: The We-Go for Fitness Program will take advantage of existing collaborations and add new ones that will benefit our students. Collaboration is a key element of our program. In fact, our Food and Fit class received an award from DuPage College to Careers as an excellent partnership with business/education partnership. As noted previously, some of the organizations, agencies and professionals that will serve as partners include: St. Xavier University, Skylight Lab, the YWCA DuPage, Julie Scheer, a registered and licensed dietician from Central DuPage Hospital; fitness consultant Diana Bartlett of Sorelli B, the West Chicago Police Department, the West Chicago and Winfield Park Districts, the Illinois Nutrition Education and Training Program, Midtown Martial Arts, the Welcome Center (serving new immigrants), Whole Foods Market, USA Skills/VICA, the Illinois Learn and Serve Grant Program, Lifetime Fitness Center, and the West Chicago Chamber of Commerce.

b) The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice:

The We-Go for Fitness Program was designed after careful research of the PEP legislation and the Illinois State Learning Standards for Physical Development and Health. It is also based upon principles espoused in the No Child Left Behind Legislation. The program reflects the "New PE" curriculum approach that has been endorsed by AAHPERD. There was careful review of information from the Illinois Nutrition Education and Training Program, TEAM Nutrition USA, and the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Journal of the American Medical Association.

The Illinois State Learning Standards for Physical Development and Health are built on the premise that "comprehensive physical development and health programs offer great potential

for enhancing the capacity of students' minds and bodies. Healthy bodies are essential to academic success." That is the cornerstone of our program.

In line with best practices, the We-Go for Fitness Program was based upon the results of assessments including the CDCP's School Health Index, the Student Wellness Self-Assessment, the Physical Best Fitness Tests and the Nutrition Assessment Profile from the Cooper Institute.

Some of the research sources upon which we have based our program include:

American Alliance of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

Actual Causes of Death in the United States, 2000, JAMA, March 10, 2004.

Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) 2010: Addressing Disparities in Health 2004, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

KidsEatWell.org (Illinois Nutrition Education and Training)

Guidelines for School Health Program to Promote Healthy Eating, CDC

Health Status of School Age Children and Adolescents in Illinois, July 2002. IDPH

Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, March 2, 2004. Research study demonstrates that physical activity changes brain structure and function in ways that improve decision-making. Author: Dr. Arthur B. Kramer, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

School Health Profiles, 2004, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Journal of the American Medical Association

4. Quality of Project Evaluation:

a) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible, and b) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

To measure the progress of our students and the success of our new program, we will employ a variety of quantitative and qualitative assessment tools. We currently have several assessments in place. One assessment we currently use is our yearly Fitness Testing. We will be

expanding those tests for freshmen and sophomores to include pre-testing and post-testing when we begin our new curriculum in the fall of 2005.

In addition to the fitness testing, we will be adding and enhancing other evaluations. One of the foundations of our assessments will be in student development in Personal Fitness Plans. These will be written and performed three times with pre-tests and post-test by all student during the freshmen and sophomore years. The introduction will occur in the freshmen health unit. The second time the students will create Personal Fitness Plans will be during the second semester of the freshman year when the students will be enrolled in our Freshman PE Academy. Here they will create a plan, fulfill the plan as they prescribed, and then self-assess the plan with a post-test. This process will be repeated once again during the Sophomore PE Academy. By reinforcing this process three times, having two chances for implementation, and by evaluating the post-test we feel we can bring understanding to the factors that are included in a comprehensive fitness scheme. A similar process will be followed for a Personal Nutritional Plan.

Along with our new curriculum we have devised a new grading system to reflect student growth, learning, skill mastery, and participation. The skill grading component includes rubrics that determine skill mastery rather than a traditional “how many free throws can you make” approach to grading. These rubrics will be used in a variety of skill testing scenarios as well as to determine assessments for teamwork, strategy, appropriate interaction, decision-making, and safety; all traits that are difficult to measure on a quantitative scale. Using handheld computers with grading software will be an effective and efficient method of grading students in the large group PE setting we have at Community High School.

In each of our units we require a written examination to assess cognitive gains in a given activity. These tests will show basic understanding of rules, procedures, biomechanical principles

and fitness benefits of the activities. In our PE Academy Fitness classes, we will test on the fitness goals of our PE department as well as the state standards for PE. This will be done on both the freshman and sophomore years to track student growth.

Other assessments to gain wellness data will include 1) Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which includes fitness, nutrition, and safety--both intentional and unintentional injury and illness); 2) School/classroom climate surveys or Social Responsibility Rubrics completed by both students and teachers; 3) Student and PE/Health staff focus groups; 4) Staff wellness survey to gain data for needs assessment for Employee Wellness initiatives; 5) Follow-up staff program or initiative survey for feedback to guide further program planning; 6) Report data from students and staff evaluations to all stakeholders to gain future and continual support. 7) Include on written student tests an opportunity for students to evaluate the unit or class.

Our initial assessment process to determine our needs and weaknesses has been consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention assessment process recommendations in "Ten Strategies for Promoting Physical Activity, Healthy Eating and a Tobacco-Free Lifestyle through School Health Programs."

We will contract the services of Dr. Nancy LaCursia, Department Chair of Kinetic Wellness at New Trier High School in Winnetka as our consultant to help design assessment tools and serve as an outside evaluator to give additional validity to our evaluation process. She will ensure that our performance measures are clearly related to the intended outcomes of our project. She will consult with us during the summer and then quarterly after the new curriculum has been implemented so that we may receive feedback on our performance and make any necessary adjustments to the program and our assessment tools.

Dr. LaCursia's doctoral program contained program development and planning courses that included assessment methods. She also helped develop the Illinois State Board of Education state physical education standards benchmark. She has instituted and developed successful physical education and health curricula and assessment programs at New Trier High School. Her assistance should prove invaluable in ensuring accurate measurement of project success and the students' and school's progress toward meeting state standards.

In closing, instituting the We-Go for Fitness Program would help students at Community High School develop the knowledge, attitudes, behavioral skills and confidence needed to adopt and maintain a physically active lifestyle. The Carol M. White Physical Education Grant would help make that goal a reality.

