



Indiana Department of Health

Division of Nutrition & Physical Activity

Indiana Healthy Schools Newsletter

October 2023 Edition

Success Story

IDOH, DNPA Offers Four Statewide Professional Development Trainings

The Indiana Department of Health, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity (IDOH, DNPA) sponsored four, free, one-day professional development trainings designed for K-12 Indiana physical education teachers, health educators, and youth-serving organization program coordinators this past September. The trainings were facilitated by the organization, **PL3Y, Inc.**, where content and activities focused on teaching participants how to engage students to participate in movement throughout before, during, and afterschool settings. Participants explored new games that will help their students develop fundamental movement skills using Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU), a student-centered approach that develops decision-making and skill acquisition through game-based activities. Participants also learned yoga and mindfulness activities, as well as practical strategies to promote students' focus and well-being through non-traditional dances, brain breaks, indoor recess activities, and more.

Trainer and PL3Y, Inc.'s Founder and CEO, Melanie Levenberg traveled all the way from Whistler, Canada, where she brought her positive energy and professional experience to engage participants from across the state of Indiana. The four trainings were held in the cities of Indianapolis, Terre Haute, Fort Wayne, and South Bend, where a grand total of 88 professionals participated (one of the most well-attended IDOH, DNPA sponsored trainings in recent years). Several participants said this type of training was one of the most fun professional developments they had ever experienced! Others were pleasantly surprised by the non-traditional dances taught by Melanie. "I will forever approach and teach dance differently (in my class) after attending this training," said Horace Manny Elementary School PE teacher, Amy Degitz. "Dance is no longer scary for me!"

For more information on professional development opportunities, physical activity and physical education resources, please contact Emma Smythe, Youth Physical Activity Coordinator, IDOH, DNPA at esmythe@health.in.gov.



Division of Nutrition & Physical Activity



Farm to School Month

Every October, National Farm to School Month is celebrated by the National Farm to School Network in all 50 states. The Indiana Grown for School Network encourages you to celebrate too! Join the IGFSN and other organizations across the state in recognizing the importance of farm to school through activities, lesson plans, local food, and fun! The Indiana Grown for Schools Network will have 4 themed weeks during farm to school month highlighting different pillars of farm to school and student engagement. We will share ideas for activities that can tie into these weeks on our social media platforms. You can learn more about the 2023 Indiana Farm to School Month by visiting this [link](#).

School Lunch Heroes Week Oct. 16-20

Highlight the importance of local foods in school meals and the people who provide them.

Farm to ECE Week Oct. 23-27

Celebrate early childhood education as an ideal stage to introduce children to farm to school.

Contact Brianna Goode, Farm to School Coordinator, IDOH, DNPA at bgoode@health.in.gov for Indiana Farm to School information.



School Spotlight

15 Indiana Schools Make America's Healthiest Schools List

The **2023 America's Healthiest Schools list** by Healthier Generation's prestigious annual recognition program was released in late September. This program celebrates schools for implementing best practices to support the physical, mental, and social-emotional health needs of the learning community. Of the schools chosen nationwide, 15 Indiana Schools were selected: Northside Middle School (Bartholomew Consolidated School Corp.), Corpus Christi School (Diocese of Evansville Catholic Schools), George W. Julian Elementary School #57 (IPS), Sunnyside Intermediate School (Lafayette School Corp.), Central Elementary School, Eagle Creek Elementary School, Eastbrook Elementary School, Fishback Creek Public Academy, Guion Creek Elementary, Guion Creek Middle School, Lincoln Middle School, New Augusta South Public Academy, Snacks Crossing Elementary School (all Pike Township), Slate Run Elementary School (New Albany Floyd County Schools), and East Tipp Middle School (Tippecanoe School Corp.).

Awardees must meet criteria in the **Thriving Schools Integrated Assessment**, an evidence informed tool that helps schools identify strengths and opportunities for improving policies and practices to advance health and learning with an integrated approach. Congratulations to all Indiana schools chosen for this award!

[Click here](#) for the 2024 America's Healthiest Schools Guide.



Webinars and Conferences

Indiana School Mental Health Initiative Webinars

- Oct. 19 from 1-2:30pm ET: School Support for Students with Eating Disorders
- Nov. 15 from 1-2:30pm ET: School Support and Responses to Students Vaping
- [Click here](#) to register for both webinars



School Based Health Center Start-Up Best Practices Webinar

- Oct. 24 at 2 p.m. EDT; [Click this link](#) to register
- [Click here](#) to register



2023 INSHAPE Conference

- Nov. 9-10 at SportZone Indy, Professional development conference for health, physical education, recreation, dance, fitness, and exercise science



2023 Indiana Association of School Nurses Conference

- Professional development conference for school nursing professionals



2023 Indiana Youth Institute Kids Count Conference

- Nov. 14-15 at Indianapolis Downtown Marriott, Annual conference with professional development and resources for youth professionals who support the well-being of children



Wellness Policies

Is it time to review and update your district wellness policy?

All schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program are required to have a district-level school wellness policy to guide school wellness activities and promote student health, wellbeing, and learning ability. Districts are required by the Indiana Department of Education to review the policy at least once every three years. IDOH, DNPA offers free wellness policy reviews using the **WellSAT 3.0** scoring tool and technical assistance with policy updates.

WellSAT: 3.0

Wellness School Assessment Tool

Please email Jenna Sperry at jsperry@health.in.gov or Emma Smythe at esmythe@health.in.gov for more details.

Lights On Afterschool

Celebrate the 24th Annual Event on Oct. 26

Launched in October 2000, **Lights On Afterschool** is the only nationwide event celebrating afterschool programs and their important role in the lives of children, families and communities. The effort has become a hallmark of the afterschool movement and generates media coverage across the country each year. The Afterschool Alliance organizes Lights On Afterschool to draw attention to the many ways afterschool programs support students by offering them opportunities to learn new things, such as science, community service, robotics, physical activity programming, and discover new skills.

The **Afterschool Alliance** salutes the many Lights On Afterschool partners and programs who make this event a success: Healthier Generation, the After-School All-Stars, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, 4-H Afterschool, Junior Achievement, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Young Rembrandts, the YMCA of the USA, and more! These events send a powerful message that millions more kids need quality afterschool programs. Lights On Afterschool is one of the best opportunities to show parents, policymakers, and community leaders the importance of afterschool programming.

Check out these **simple ways** to showcase your program on social media – whether it's posting a collage or video from past work, or sharing the special Lights On Afterschool activity you do with students, or hosting a live or virtual event. Use **#LightsOnAfterschool** in your social media posts.



Autumn Activities

Healthy Tips and Tricks for a Healthy Season

For Educators:

- Halloween/Fall Parties: Instead of passing out candy during before, during, and afterschool school, consider introducing healthy snacks and games. Action for Healthy Kids published this [article](#) with game suggestions, including Halloween charades, a gourd spoon challenge, and an apple eating contest!
- OPEN Physical Education Network has also published free physical activity [Pumpkin Patch activities](#) that can be used in physical education during the fall season.

For Families:

- If your family will be trick-or-treating this year, fill up with dinner before heading out. This can reduce the temptation to snack on candy throughout the evening.
- Select walkable and well-lit neighborhoods for trick-or-treating to avoid driving from house to house.
- Take a trip to the pumpkin patch, go for a family hike, and/or visit an apple orchard to meet the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity a day.
- Create rules around how much candy will be allowed to take home from school and trick-or-treating. Example: Kids may have one piece of candy at lunch and one piece for dessert after dinner. Everything in moderation!
- Check your child's candy and throw out any allergens, choking hazards (for young children), and anything that's not commercially wrapped.



If you would like more information on school health or have content to share, please contact the Indiana Department of Health, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity (IDOH, DNPA).

[Click here](#) to subscribe or unsubscribe to our newsletter.

Visit our [webpage](#) for other resources and archived newsletters.

Emma Smythe, Youth Physical Activity Coordinator Jenna Sperry, School Health Coordinator

esmythe@health.in.gov

jsperry@health.in.gov

To **promote**, **protect**, and **improve** the health and safety of all Hoosiers

Indiana Department of Health

2 North Meridian Street • Indianapolis, Indiana 46204 • 317-233-1325 • health.in.gov

