

# Training Others *to Lead*

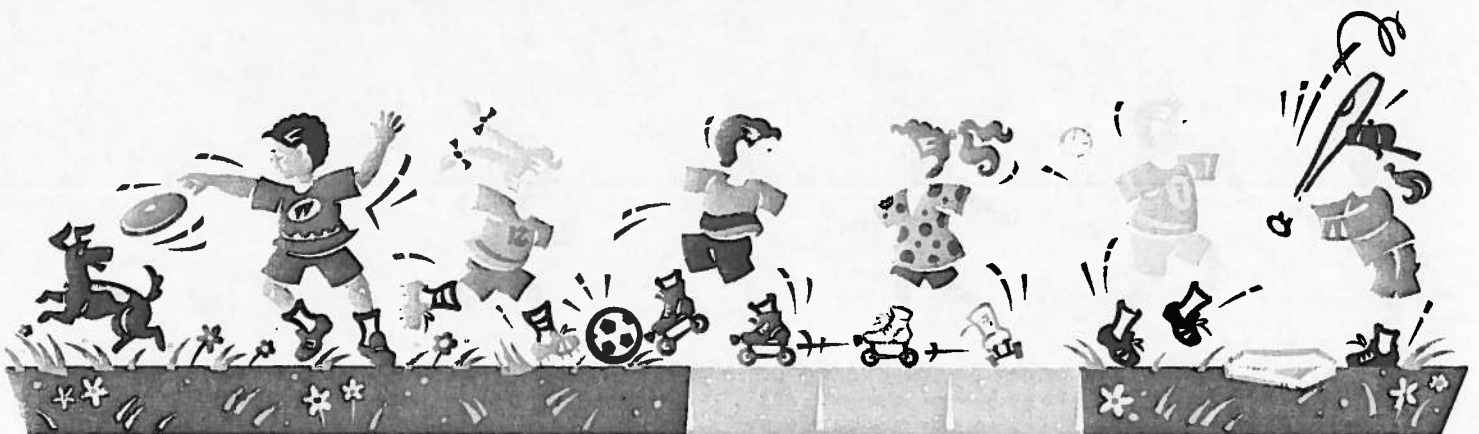
## Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs

By Brian Mosier and Brent Heidorn

### What Is a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program?

For the past several years, the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD) has highlighted a tremendous amount of information related to comprehensive school physical activity programs (CSPAPs). From the recently approved position statement on CSPAPs, a CSPAP is "a systemic approach by which schools use all opportunities for school-based physical activity (PA) to develop physically educated students who participate in the nationally recommended 60+ minutes of PA each day and develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to be physically active for a lifetime" (AAHPERD, in press). The goals of a CSPAP are to:

- provide a variety of physical activity opportunities throughout the school day, including before and after school, with a quality physical education program as the foundation;
- provide physical activity opportunities so that all students can participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily;
- incorporate physical activity opportunities for faculty and staff members and for families;
- encourage and reinforce physical activity opportunities in the community; and
- coordinate among the CSPAP components to maximize understanding, application, and practice of the knowledge and skills learned in physical education so that all students will be physically educated and motivated for a lifetime of physical activity.



The purpose of this article is to describe two unique approaches to implementing specific components of a CSPAP in local K–12 schools. The information is presented from the lens of two physical education teacher education (PETE) faculty members who were not the individuals implementing the CSPAP, but who spent a significant amount of time guiding others in how to implement a program, with hopes that they in turn would be the physical activity “champions” in their specific school site.



### Training Others to Lead a District-Wide CSPAP

The first example described is related to the implementation of a CSPAP in a small, rural K–12 school district in the Southeastern United States. The following story is illustrated by the acronym ACTION.

#### *A: Administration*

Time was spent with all of the administrators of the school district. Advocating for increased physical activity and attempting to get all administrators “on board” was a focal point. I clearly described each of the four components of a CSPAP in addition to quality physical education. To me, the

key element of implementing a CSPAP in the school district was the full support of the superintendent.

#### *C: Collaboration*

Meeting with all of the teachers in the school district for a brief period of on-site physical activity promotion time was important. It was essential to emphasize the need for collaboration as the school district aims to increase health and physical activity among all members. During this time, I presented basic physical activity research; addressed the need for increasing physical activity among students, faculty, staff, parents, and community members; and provided specific examples of how physical activity may be integrated in that school district in a variety of ways. The teachers recognized the specific needs in the district and brainstormed ways to increase physical activity.

#### *T: Teaching*

With each opportunity to visit the school district, I continued meeting with different groups of teachers on various occasions (e.g., physical education teachers, elementary classroom teachers, etc.). We focused on physical education instructional time, integrating physical activity with academics, schoolwide physical activity functions, promoting physical activity in the home and in the community, and simple movement activities during transitional periods. Each visit to the school district focused on one or two components of a CSPAP.

#### *I: Initiation*

The school district needed physical activity leaders (PALs) to “jump start” the program. Two individuals were identified as PALs in the school district and would be the ones to facilitate, coordinate, and promote various components of the program. The

PALs do not implement all components but train and work with others to promote physical activity. The PALs are simply the designated “go-to individuals” for suggestions and accountability of the program.

#### *O: Observation*

Upon each subsequent visit, I observed and reflected upon the activities that took place in the school district. This included meeting with teachers, walking the hallways and activity spaces, reviewing opportunities with the administration, collecting data, and monitoring progress. Specific feedback was provided to the PALs who directed the district-wide program.

#### *N: New*

Perhaps the most significant aspect of training others to implement a CSPAP is to regularly provide new concepts and offer fresh ideas for the PALs. This includes different activities, innovative web sites, exploratory programs, and specific things that are working in other schools/districts. The creativity and novel ideas presented and later shared by the PALs often springboard others to increase their level of physical activity.

The school district does not have a “perfect” CSPAP at this time, but small improvements are regularly made. The administration has seen a difference among students, faculty, staff, parents, and the community. Participants are regularly incorporating physical activity in their lives and are promoting physical activity through activity prompts, school functions, and community events.

### Training Others to Implement CSPAP Components in Different K–12 School Programs

The second example described is related to how one author taught others to be PALs during their student-teaching internships at the conclusion of their undergraduate health and PETE program.

In the beginning of the culminating semester for health and PETE candidates, students were assigned an “action research” project. Three cohorts of teacher candidates were required to implement at least one component of the CSPAP model. The overall goal was to ensure that every school provides students and/or faculty/staff with opportunities to be physically active outside of physical education class and during other times on the school grounds. This assignment consisted of four parts, described in the following paragraphs.

#### *Part I: Needs assessment*

Each teacher candidate in the program completed a CSPAP Inventory. The CSPAP Inventory is a “yes” or “no” checklist that highlights a school’s strengths and areas for improvement based on the CSPAP model (physical education, physical activity during the school day, physical activity before and after school, staff involvement, and family and community engagement). Once completed, the teacher candidate (in conjunction with his/her cooperating teacher and university supervisor) chose an “area of focus” based on the results of the inventory. The “area of focus” specifically targets a single component of the CSPAP for implementation, modification, or maintenance of an already-existing program.

### Part II: Plan of action

Once consensus was reached related to the area of focus, the teacher candidate developed a plan of action. This began with the teacher candidate accessing the following web site: <http://www.aahperd.org/letsmoveinschool/about/overview.cfm>, which offers information and multiple resources for each CSPAP component. The teacher candidate then identified and referenced three resources he/she found most helpful and described in detail how the information would be used at the school. This plan of action was reviewed by the university supervisor and cooperating teacher for approval.

### Part III: Action research

The project was "initiated" and students went through the action research cycle (i.e., identify the problem, gather data, interpret the data, act on evidence, and evaluate the results and next steps). Teacher candidates provided a description of all constituents of the action research cycle with respect to their "area of focus." Teacher candidates included any data collected (e.g., pedometer steps, surveys, interviews of students/teachers, schedules, pictures, videos, etc.) that were aligned with the "area of focus" but that also support the implementation strategies developed in Part II.



### Part IV: Present results

After completing the project, teacher candidates reflected upon their experiences. They were given the option to present their results in one of the following ways: a) at a professional conference, b) to the K-12 school administration faculty, or c) to their peers in a structured seminar. Program faculty emphasized that the presentations are a way to advocate and promote physical activity in K-12 programs.

The project has been very successful since being implemented in 2011. Teacher candidates continue taking a lead role as PALs during their culminating semester. They gain confidence through the experience and they leave the program with the ability and

experience to implement similar initiatives in the future. For additional information or sample CSPAP projects, contact the authors at [bmosier@westga.edu](mailto:bmosier@westga.edu).

### Conclusion

The CSPAP model has been prominent in the literature for the past three years. Initiatives focusing on the CSPAP model (e.g., Let's Move, Director of Physical Activity, Let's Move Active Schools, PALs, and Health Optimizing Physical Education, etc.) continue to evolve. This article described two unique approaches for impacting a large number of K-12 students by training and guiding others to incorporate specific components of the CSPAP model in their respective schools in hopes of motivating others to promote physical activity in a similar way.

### References

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For a more complete understanding of each of the five components of a CSPAP, review the following recently published feature articles:

- "Physical Activity during the School Day" (Castelli & Ward, 2012)
- "Physical Activity before and after School" (Beighle & Moore, 2012)
- "The Director of Physical Activity and Staff Involvement" (Heidorn & Centeio, 2012)
- "Family and Community Involvement in the Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program" (Cipriani, Richardson, & Roberts, 2012)

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