



NJDOE News

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[HEALTHY KIDS SUMMIT](#)

Department of Education Launches *Fitness for Life* Video at Health Summit

The New Jersey Department of Education today helped launch a campaign to inspire public school students to adopt healthier and more active lifestyles. The campaign is targeting students ages 9-13 (grades 4-8).

Called Fitness for Life, the campaign was announced today at a state-level summit sponsored by New Jersey Action for Healthy Kids. A coalition of state agencies will carry out a variety of initiatives under the theme "Healthy Choices, Healthy Kids."

"Schools have enormous potential as well as an important stake in helping students develop the knowledge and skills they need to be healthy and to achieve academically," said Commissioner of Education William L. Librera. "The connection between physical health and nutrition and academic success is well-documented, and educators are in an ideal position to promote healthy habits of eating and exercise."

The DOE today debuted a nine-minute, Fitness for Life video developed in collaboration with the New Jersey Council for Physical Fitness and Sports and New Jersey Network. The video showcases physical education classes in Paterson, Ridgewood, Mount Laurel and West Deptford.

These districts were selected as examples of an updated and more effective approach to teaching health and physical education, said Richard Ten Eyck, assistant commissioner for the DOE's Division of Educational Programs and Assessment. Ten Eyck, who represented Commissioner Librera at today's summit, explained how educators throughout New Jersey working to help their students gain the knowledge and skills necessary to adopt healthy lifestyles by the time they graduate from high school.

Ten Eyck noted that New Jersey has a long history of promoting fitness, beginning with a 1917 state law that requires the public schools to teach health, safety and physical education. Nearly 80 years after the original mandate, the State Board of Education adopted the Core Curriculum Content Standards, a series of statements of expectation about what all students should know and be able to do by the time they graduate from high school in a variety of content areas. The standards for comprehensive health and physical education are designed to teach students how to create their own plans for health and wellness.

"By the time they graduate from high school, New Jersey students should be able to design and evaluate a nutrition plan for a healthy, young adult," Ten Eyck said. "They should also be able to develop and implement a training and fitness plan that considers their health status, interests, and skill levels."

In addition to the video, the Fitness for Life theme will feature five public service announcements and a Web page to promote health and physical fitness.

"We are all part of the problem — we all eat too much and ride when we should walk," Ten Eyck said. "But we have the power to change our own behavior and in the bargain improve our own health and fitness, as well as our children's and grandchildren."

"Healthy Choices, Healthy Kids" is an interdepartmental initiative led by the Department of Agriculture. Partner departments are Education and Health and Senior Services. In addition to revising the state's academic standards for comprehensive health and physical education, the Department of Education is planning to work with the Department of Health and Senior Services to collect information on height and body mass of students. They are also collaborating on a pilot initiative called 10,000 Steps. Through this initiative, children and teachers will be equipped with pedometers and encouraged to walk 10,000 steps each day.

The New Jersey Department of Education is also a member of New Jersey Action for Healthy Kids, the state chapter of a national organization dedicated to improving children's health through improved nutrition and

exercise.