

Way to Go!

Energize your intelligence with a little activity....

Have you ever noticed how good you feel after you've jogged, biked, walked, or participated in a sporting activity??? We all know that physical activity gets the blood pumping which is the best and most effective way to get our brains to function. Many schools across the district have adopted this philosophy by using research from John Ratey M.D.'s book called 'Spark' and Joseph Welsh Elementary is seeing improvement in achievement and behavior when students are physically active throughout the day.

As you walk through the halls of Joseph Welsh you'll notice multiple exercise stations that consist of steppers, mini trampolines, as well as a chin up bar. This equipment is used as needed by all students in the school. If a student is particularly fidgety or distracted in class, the teacher may ask them to step out into the hall to use the equipment for a short period of time or the student may also request to use the equipment when needed. Other techniques used in classrooms are foot bands on the bottom of desks and other fidget toys. Teachers encourage classes to get up and move together within the rooms and sing songs.

A student who was disruptive in class was sent to the office. "When I asked if he would rather sit in the office alone, or complete steps on the stepper, the student chose the stepper because it made him feel better" says principal Mike Fritz. Afterward the student was allowed back into the class where he felt happier and was able to focus better.

Educational Assistant Neil Julian also instructs a wrestling program where students are lead through a more structured and disciplined approach. The students start by kneeling on mats and bowing in as a sign of respect for the sport, the instructor and each other. The students are then guided through a series of warm up and stretching routines following with standard holds. Supervised, the student is put into a hold by another student, then tries to maneuver out the hold. This co-ed program provides confidence, trust, communication, boundary setting, and inclusion. There is no anxiety about "being picked last."

During observation of students using the equipment, there was a sense of accomplishment, acceptance, self-assurance and happiness. To Joseph Welsh Elementary, for keeping our students active and focused, we say...



We salute
students and
staff for
outstanding
accomplishments
and
achievements
in our schools!

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