

East St. Louis District 189 schools focus on importance of healthy eating, exercise

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EAST ST. LOUIS - East St. Louis School District 189 promoted healthy lifestyles and wellness by taking part in the “Every Kid Healthy Week” national program from April 23-27.

“This special week shines a spotlight on the great efforts schools nationwide are doing to improve the health and wellness of their students and the link between nutrition, physical activity and learning,” said District 189 Superintendent Arthur Culver. “Healthy kids are better prepared to learn.”

Every Kid Healthy Week was created by Action for Healthy Kids which is a nationwide grassroots network mobilizing school professionals, families and communities to take actions that improve school foods, nutrition education and physical education for all students.

"The need to support health and wellness programs in schools remains a critical health and education issue," said Rob Bisceglie, CEO of Action for Healthy Kids. "Working with thousands of schools and school districts and dozens of other organizations nationwide, we are collectively trying to help put kids on a healthy path so they can succeed academically and develop habits that will keep them healthy for a lifetime."

Here are some of the things planned for East St. Louis schools:

Vivian Adams Early Childhood Center provided fresh fruit and vegetable taste testing on Tuesday. Throughout the week, students will learn about and discuss healthy eating choices.

Avant Elementary School on Tuesday, a Zumba fitness class was held and students will discuss healthy eating choices. The healthy food choices conversation continued Wednesday and on Friday students put what they've learned into action with taste testing. On Thursday, the school will hold a walk to eradicate childhood obesity.

Bush Elementary School students jumped rope in PE all week to focus on fitness, healthy activity and motor skill development.

Dunbar Elementary School on Friday hosted an obesity awareness walk. Dunbar also focused on Obesity Awareness Month with the motto of “Soar Above Obesity” and celebrated week-long activities April 16-20. These included STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) activities in classrooms to highlight the impact that sugar has on our bodies, an Iron Chef competition to see which class could come up with the healthiest, best-tasting snack and a school-wide Wobble (line dance) to wobble away the pounds. Many students also pledged to give up fast food for at least a month.

Officer Elementary School hosted an obesity awareness walk on Friday. Parents are invited to attend the walk, which will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Wright Elementary School on Monday hosted healthy food taste testing. On Tuesday kids participated in dancing and Zumba during recess time, with prizes distributed to those most active. Friday the school will hold a Flash Dance event, including the Black Panther Challenge dance for both students and staff.

Lincoln Middle School held a wellness event called “Tiger Pride in Healthy Habits.” Fifth graders will work on fitness activities, sixth graders will create obesity posters, seventh graders will work on an My Plate project and will watch the documentary “Supersize Me.” Eighth graders will hold a track event with obesity stats given every half and full lap.

Mason-Clark Middle School hosted “Cardinals Fit For Life” that will include a Play 60 program in physical education classes, a walk to end childhood obesity, exercise charting by students, a nutrition program organized by the University of Illinois Extension, aerobic activities in band class, meditation and stretching and line dancing at the end of lunch period.

East St. Louis Senior High School held fresh fruit and vegetable taste testing on Thursday.

Younge Alternative School hosted an Hour of Power and taste testing. On Thursday, students took a spin on the Blender Bike and exercise their right to a delicious and nutritious smoothie!