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News

Anchor Bay schools recognized for healthy school environments

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By Nicole Tuttle, Voice Reporter

Four Anchor Bay elementary schools recently earned first place honors for their work to create healthier school environments, achieving recognition from Michigan Surgeon General Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom and Michigan Action for Healthy Kids.

Ashley, Dean A. Naldrett, Great Oaks and Sugarbush elementary schools were recognized at the "Eat Healthy + Play Hard = Smart Student" statewide conference on April 29 in Dearborn. Seventy-seven schools across the state were recognized for fostering students healthy eating and physical activity habits, as well as tobacco-free lifestyles. Schools are eligible for one of four recognition levels, and the Anchor Bay schools earned top recognition.

"We are tremendously excited that our educators and their community partners are taking the lead in improving the health of our most treasured resource - our children," Wisdom said. "A healthy school environment gives students clear and consistent health messages and ample opportunity to practice what they've learned. Research shows healthy students do better academically, have better attendance, and have fewer behavioral problems."

To apply for the recognition program, schools are required to provide information about programs such as nutrition, physical education and tobacco-free practices and submit one success story.

Angela Paddock, a parent of students at Ashley Elementary who is part of the school's adult health team, said that the school submitted a success story about the creation of a student health team this year.

The team consists for about seven fourth and fifth grade students, according to Paddock. It has fostered healthy attitudes in school by asking students to pledge to remain drug and tobacco free, as well as other awareness programs.

"I think we have done a good job on awareness," Paddock said. "We did a week on food allergy awareness ... Next year we want to do more activities that get the kids involved, that get them moving."

Ashley received a banner to hang in the school gym for its first place win, according to Paddock.

Matt Pollock, a physical education teacher at Sugarbush Elementary, said that Sugarbush submitted its anti-bullying program as a success story.

The school has both a student and an adult health team, according to Pollock. The two groups collaborated to create anti-bullying posters and videos, Pollock said. The school also offers a "bully box" into which students can put notes about their problems with others, which adults can help address, according to Pollock.

"Next year one of our ideas is to maybe have a lunch detective who seeks others in the building that have healthy lunches and reward them," Pollock said.

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