BRIEF DESCRIPTION:
Not every student is interested in playing competitive sports. Most students would like non-competitive options that allow them to explore their interests, challenge themselves, hang out with friends, and be healthy every day. Why not energize your after-school program by adding hiking, yoga, dance, and martial arts activities to the mix? By offering popular physical activity options after-school, your school can make getting an hour of physical activity each day easy, fun, and convenient.

Does your school have an active after-school program? Investigate if your school is meeting the needs of all of its students.

- Do you have an existing after-school program that’s totally focused on sedentary activities (e.g. chess club, business club, or study groups)?

- Do you have resources, like an after-school activity bus, that are only being used by student athletes?

- Do at least 50% of students, both boys and girls, take part in school-sponsored programs like interscholastic sports, intramural sports, or physical activity clubs?

High school students can play a big role in changing the culture of their school so that ALL students can be physically active. Think beyond the varsity team to come up with activities that will bring a variety of students together. Consider local organizations that can bring their programs into your high school. Work with the PE teacher, coaches, school staff, and community members to identify people to teach fun activities, from American Indian dancing to zumba! You may find that administrators are more willing to add programs after the school day, especially if your school has already committed to keeping its doors open for other after-school opportunities.
HOW TO GET STARTED…

1. Talk to your teacher, advisor, or administrator about energizing your after-school program to make getting an hour of physical activity each day easy, fun, and convenient.

2. Investigate your school. Using your Students Taking Charge tools, come up with your investigation approach. Survey the student body to see what they’re interested in doing. Hold a focus group of school staff, including the PE teacher, coaches, and the after-school coordinator to see what they think about adding new physical activity options after-school. Research local park districts, recreation and fitness centers, gyms, and other organizations that offer physical activity opportunities.

3. Brainstorm short, mid, and long-term goals for your group. Work with school administrators to talk through the logistics, from permission forms to supervision requirements. Have a physical activity demonstration day where students can try out different options and vote for their favorites. Start a “Movin’ Mondays” weekly program to offer non-competitive physical activity once a week.

4. Reach out to other student groups, school staff, and parents to see how they can support the new after-school program.

5. Present your findings, your successes, and your policy proposals to the principal, PE department, and school board to make after-school physical activity programming a permanent part of your school.
WHAT’S YOUR ULTIMATE GOAL?

The goal of the project is to increase non-competitive after-school physical activity options that will allow students to get one hour of physical activity every day. The after-school programs will improve choices for physical activity and engage more students in extracurricular programs.

- For the principal: Meets national recommendations for providing after-school physical activity programs; increases choices for students with different interests and abilities; maximizes use of after-school resources; helps the PE Teacher create new lesson plans; healthy students who get 60 minutes of physical activity do better in school; students who participate in extracurricular activities have a significantly higher GPA than their non-participant peers.

- For the PE teacher: Gives students a place to explore lifelong activities introduced in physical education; helps you create and pilot appealing lesson plans; allows you to reach students who have completed their PE requirement.

- For other students: Increases physical activity options for those who do not play sports; provides physical activity for student athletes in the off-season; offers safe and healthy ways to spend time with friends after-school; allows you to explore your interests and challenge yourself; offers free or low-cost opportunities to try out fun activities.

- For the community: Provides a safe and positive environment for students to be after-school; gives students lifelong skills to stay healthy; connects school with the community by engaging parent and community volunteers as teachers; maximizes use of after-school resources so that all students can benefit.
HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO MAKE THIS PROJECT HAPPEN?

4-6 weeks
- First conversation with school leaders
- Investigation (e.g. student survey on physical activity preferences)

6-8 weeks
- Summarize results of investigation
- Action planning to set short, mid, and long-term goals
- Outreach to community-based organizations
- Logistics (e.g. permission forms, contracts, and fees)

8-12 weeks
- Hold Physical Activity Demo Day
- Kick off 4-week trial of after-school physical activity program
- Present results to principal and school leaders
- Request to speak at a school board meeting

12-16 weeks
- Prepare for school board meeting
- Continue work on short and mid-term goals
- Continue school and community outreach
- Launch physical activity program

16-20 weeks
- Prepare for school board meeting
- Request a school policy to support after-school physical activity

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

For an after-school program, you need space, a promotion plan, someone to coordinate registrations, and people to lead the new physical activities opportunities. If your school already has an after-school program, you may be able to tap into some of those resources for free. The school can help you promote your program by including it on its website, in the morning announcements, or as part of the monthly newsletter. Your Students Taking Charge group can also do “viral” marketing by talking to students, creating a social networking page, or handing out postcards. What about finding people to lead the new physical activity opportunities? That may be your biggest cost. If you can’t find teachers, parents, and community members to donate their time to teach classes, you will need to charge students a cost to participate. On your survey, ask students what they would pay to come to your school’s “fitness center?” Set a fee that encourages students to commit to come but is not too high, like $20 a month. Work with local businesses and hold physical activity fundraisers to offset costs.
KEY SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY ALLIES

- **Administrators** – Leadership, approval to conduct planning activities and offer after-school programs, local community contacts, support for policy changes
- **Physical Education Teacher and Coaches** – Ideas for popular activities, help with survey development, equipment, space, advice for working with administrators, volunteer time to teach classes
- **After-School Coordinator** – Help with logistics and promotion, can coordinate registration and payments, community contacts, volunteer management
- **Student Clubs** – Resources (people, money, and time) to plan the after-school program, help with student survey, promotion and support for the after-school program, fundraisers to off-set costs
- **Local Recreation Centers, Parks, Fitness Centers, and Businesses** – Ideas for activities, instructors for after-school programs, equipment donations or loans, money to sponsor after school activities

MODEL SCHOOL POLICY TO SUPPORT YOUR CHANGES

All elementary, middle, and high schools in the district will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs. Schools will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs. After-school enrichment programs will provide and encourage – verbally and through the provision of space, equipment, and activities – daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.

HELPFUL LINKS

- [http://naaweb.yourmembership.com/](http://naaweb.yourmembership.com/)
- [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/researchIssueBriefs.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/researchIssueBriefs.cfm)