

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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Contact: Dale Ertzinger at (231) 767-7268 or Kristin Tank at (231) 767-7263

### **New nutrition & physical education program begins; local students benefit**

A new nutrition and physical education program is now unfolding in Michigan schools where the free/reduced price lunch count is higher than 50 percent. The program is called **Bringing Quality Health and Physical Education to Michigan's Low-Income Schools**. It is funded through the Federal Farm Bill and directs the USDA to provide nutrition education to those who qualify for and/or receive food stamps. The schools are required to use local and state matching funds for a portion of the project.

To qualify, schools sent a letter of interest to the **Michigan Nutrition Network** back in April 2007. These schools have the opportunity to receive reimbursements through their local ISD for program expenditures between October 2007 and September 2008. The MAISD Prevention and Health Education Consultant, Dale Ertzinger, is coordinating the program for Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana counties. These schools collectively have the potential for **\$342,400** reimbursement for health education and physical education curriculum training, supporting materials, technical assistance and substitute teacher reimbursement. Included in this amount is reimbursement for up to \$2 per student if a school chooses to participate in an optional school-wide event focused on nutrition and physical activity, and \$1,000 to pay for additional after-school curricula. The entire program is based on the use of the Michigan Model for Health and the Exemplary Physical Education Curriculum (EPEC), two research-based curricula developed in Michigan.

Ultimately the goals of the project are to encourage students to: (1) eat fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and nonfat or low-fat milk or milk products every day; (2) be physically active every day as part of a healthy lifestyle; and (3) balance caloric intake from foods and beverages with calories expended.

Ertzinger said the participating schools are at different stages of implementing the program. Many have completed the necessary training and are using the new curricula and materials in their classrooms. "This is a tremendous opportunity for schools to provide students with quality health education and physical education lessons to teach the importance of healthy eating and being physically active as part of a healthy lifestyle. They will be learning good health habits that will be used for the rest of their lives."

#### **Participating Schools in Muskegon County**

Holton Elementary & Middle Schools, Bluffton, Marquette, McLaughlin, Moon, Nelson, Nims, Oakview, Edgewood (MHPS), E. Grace Loftis, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Theodore Roosevelt, Muskegon Middle and High Schools, Oakridge (All), Orchard View (All)

#### **Participating Schools in Other Counties**

Shelby (All), Walkerville Middle and High Schools, Hesperia Elementary & High School, White Cloud Middle and High Schools

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