Gold Medal Schools

TARGET AUDIENCE

This program is for elementary school staff and administrators in Utah and is intended to impact elementary school students and staff.

SUMMARY

The Gold Medal Schools program supports elementary school administrators as they develop policy and modify the school environment to improve nutrition; increase physical activity; and prevent tobacco use in students, teachers, and staff.

EVIDENCE

The program has been evaluated in two schools that delivered the program compared to two schools that did not deliver the program in Utah. This study found that children's body mass index z-scores increased significantly from baseline to the 1-year follow-up in the comparison schools but not in the intervention schools. Children in the intervention schools also reported drinking significantly fewer soft drinks per day and walking or biking to school significantly more often when compared to the control schools. Caution is warranted when interpreting these findings as this study lacked methodological rigor, which makes determining the true effectiveness of this program unclear.

COMPONENTS

Elementary schools that sign up to participate in the Gold Medal Schools program are paired with mentors. Mentors provide information, guidance, and support as participants develop policies and modify their school environments to support healthy eating, physical activity, and tobacco prevention.

Schools work through five levels of criteria over time (i.e., Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum, and Platinum Focus). Each level requires a larger number of policy and environmental supports as established by the Utah Department of Health. For more details, please visit the website listed in the Contact section.

Examples of provisions include establishing a Gold Medal Mile™, a walking trail on or near school grounds; mandating 90 minutes per week of structured physical activity for students; offering lunch periods between 11:00 am and 1:00 pm that are at least 20 minutes long from the time students are seated; requiring fundraisers to sell non-food items; mandating tobacco-free schools; and implementing a wellness program for faculty and staff.

PREVIOUS USE

This program was developed in 2001 to coincide with the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, Utah. Since its development, the program has reached more than 140,000 students and 6,000 teachers in 331 elementary schools.
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TRAINING
Free training is offered to participating schools from the Gold Medal Schools program.

CONSIDERATIONS
Considerations for implementing this program include acquiring buy-in from school administrators and teachers and understanding that participation may require substantial commitments of time and significant alterations to schools' schedules, infrastructures, and organization.

The Clearinghouse can help address these considerations. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

IMPLEMENTATION
If you are interested in implementing the Gold Medal Schools program, the Clearinghouse is interested in helping you! Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

TIME
Schools implement Bronze through Gold criteria within 3 years. Platinum and Platinum Focus criteria must each be completed within 1 year.

COST
Implementation costs could include some program activities, such as staff wellness activities and health events; however, there are no fees associated with this program. In addition, schools can receive monetary incentives (i.e., up to $1,500) for participating in the program.

EVALUATION PLAN
To move the Gold Medal Schools program to the Promising category on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence, at least one evaluation should be performed demonstrating positive effects lasting at least six months from program completion.

The Clearinghouse can help you develop an evaluation plan to ensure the program components are meeting your goals. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

CONTACT
Contact the Clearinghouse with any questions regarding this program.
Phone: 1-877-382-9185 Email: Clearinghouse@psu.edu

You may also contact the Utah Department of Health by mail P.O. Box 141010, Salt Lake City, UT 84114-1010, phone 1-888-222-2542, or visit http://health.utah.gov/ahy/School/School_home.htm

SOURCE
http://health.utah.gov/ahy/School/School_home.htm

www.militaryfamilies.psu.edu