

Murphy K-8 School
Principal: Karen Cahill

The Richard J. Murphy K-8 School has addressed improving health in the school by focusing on student fitness and the promotion of healthy behaviors.



A recess period has been added before lunch, and “I can really see a difference,” reports Principal Karen Cahill. “We feed the students breakfast after exercising, and their focus is much improved after participating in this physical activity.”

Extended physical activity periods have been scheduled before and after school hours as well. With the support of BOKS, a program funded by the Reebok Foundation, an hour of physical activity is offered to students and their parents before the school day begins. “We see about 100 children and their parents each morning participating in this program,” reports Principal Cahill. Physical Education classes now track student fitness levels with *FitnessGram*, a tool to assess aerobic capacity, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, and body composition.

Efforts to improve health and fitness are not limited to the students; faculty is participating as well. Both groups are achieving their fitness goals with the help of after school and lunch walking clubs. Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center sponsors the club by supplying pedometers to each of the participants. Student and faculty basketball games, volleyball games and all school wellness breakfasts are additional ways the school promotes health and wellness to both the staff and students at the Murphy School. The importance of physical fitness and healthy behaviors is a value shared by everyone at the school, and promoted with posters, fliers, public service announcements and celebrations.



A recent faculty oriented tobacco campaign has successfully helped staff to quit smoking. The campaign paid for medicated patches, and provided a lot of moral support to the participants.