

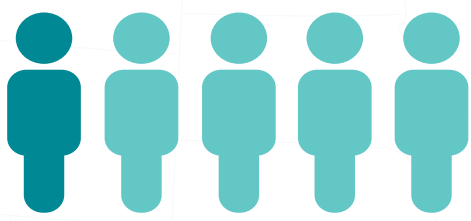


HEALTH AND EDUCATION INITIATIVE

American University's Department of Health Studies strives to address the devastating effects of childhood obesity by better understanding the relation between policy, health, and education.

TODAY'S CHALLENGES

Childhood Obesity



1 out of 5 children aged 6-17 are defined as obese*

*Based on data from 2014.



\$177 billion per year is spent by the US in direct medical expenses and indirect costs such as lost productivity*

21.4% of youth aged 10-17 in Washington, DC are obese* (3rd highest pediatric obesity rate in the country)

Teacher Preparedness



94% believe teaching health education in schools is important



94% believe a student's health status can impact academic achievement

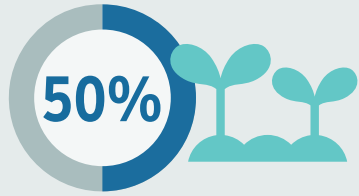


only 35% reported feeling prepared, empowered, or able to integrate health education into their current curricula

**Based on a 2012 survey of a sample of middle school teachers in Washington, DC.

WHAT WE'VE FOUND

Through a five-year study of school-based wellness legislation, we found **The Healthy Schools Act (HSA) of 2010** has had a positive impact on the school environment.



of schools in DC have a **school garden**



The overall number of minutes of **physical education** has increased for many DC students



Enhanced meal standards have led to schools serving **more healthful food**, including fruits, vegetables, and whole grains



Schools with higher HSA compliance report **higher standardized test scores in math**

WHAT WE'VE DONE

Engaging Elementary Students with Taste Tests to Promote Vegetable Consumption

We sought to increase consumption of select vegetables through a taste-test competition, which resulted in:

- Increased consumption of **broccoli, sweet potatoes, and spinach**
- After a taste test, students were **2 to 7.2 times** more likely to consume target vegetables

USDA-TEAM Nutrition, *Community Voices for Health Education* (2011-2013)

We implemented the *Community Voices for Health* curriculum in 15 middle schools, which resulted in:

- **Increased vegetable consumption**, increased breakfast consumption, and lower soda consumption among students
- **Increased self-efficacy** among teachers for integrating health information into the curriculum

WHAT'S NEXT

Healthy Schoolhouse 2.0

We seek to help improve health literacy and reduce existing health and academic disparities in elementary school students. By designing, implementing, and evaluating a set of research, education, and extension activities in six elementary schools throughout Washington, DC, our program will:

- **Establish a professional development program** for teachers that will teach them how to integrate nutrition concepts into their classrooms
- **Identify an individual's spheres of influence** – personal, school, community – to establish a knowledgeable support system that fosters healthy habits in and out of the classroom

