



Health Coach Program: Q and A for Administrators

Q: What is *Healthy Kids, Healthy Schools*?

A: *Healthy Kids, Healthy Schools* (HKHS) is a partnership between the school and the community intended to spur innovative wellness improvements in HISD. HKHS engages in an innovative whole-system change process, called “Appreciative Inquiry,” to promote nutrition and physical activity. HKHS was launched in February 2009 with the support and leadership of National Dairy Council and Dairy MAX, and with the support of over 80 local and national organizations including the City of Houston, Houston Wellness Association and the Houston Texans, among others. *Healthy Kids, Healthy Schools* is HISD’s overarching platform for wellness. HKHS activities, tools and resources support HISD’s Coordinated School Health Program, which is mandated by Texas law.

Q: What is the Health Coach program?

A: Conceived by members of the HISD/Houston community, the HKHS Health Coach program is an effort to recruit and equip inspired school leaders, PE/health teachers, nurses and other school faculty and staff to lead small but important wellness improvements in their schools. Health Coaches work with their local school to make the healthy choice the easy choice for HISD students and staff.

Q: How does the program work?

A: Health Coaches make and monitor nutrition and physical activity improvements at the school building level, supported with tools, training and incentives from local businesses and other organizations. The program is not intended to create “more work,” rather to provide tools and resources to supplement existing wellness efforts and possibly stimulate new and exciting approaches.

Q: What exactly will Health Coaches do?

A: There are a range of fun and easy activities available this spring (see [Health Coach “Blueprint”](#)), such as displaying student-created wellness promotion posters, conducting a pedometer contest and participating in the *Fuel Up to Play 60* competition. Activities were developed with input from HISD staff and students, drawing inspiration and ideas from the 2009 Houston *Healthy Kids, Healthy Schools* Summit.

Q: Why is the Health Coach program important to my school?

A: Wellness is vital to HISD’s mission of creating high-performing students and schools – and the *Healthy Kids, Healthy Schools* Health Coaches are helping the district fulfill this mission and meet our wellness policy goals. A growing body of evidence shows that good nutrition and adequate physical activity improve students’ cognitive function, attention, memory and self-esteem, and can reduce behavior problems and improve attendance. In short, *healthy students are better students*. And, sound nutrition and physical activity also can help kids maintain a healthy weight – a critical consideration given the alarming epidemic of childhood obesity. Healthy schools require the involvement and support of the whole school community – especially the leadership of committed individuals in each school.

Q: Who is eligible to serve as a Health Coach?

A: Health Coaches are volunteers who serve as “wellness champions” in their school building – people with a passion for creating healthy kids and healthy schools. Over 50 HISD schools already have Health Coaches, who include P.E./health teachers as well as classroom teachers, parent leaders and other educators and school staff members. Interested educators and members of the school community may [sign up](#) to participate.

Q: What support and resources do Health Coaches receive?

A: Health Coaches receive the HKHS “[Blueprint](#)” and “[Planner](#)” with easy-to-implement ideas and resources designed to improve nutrition and physical activity opportunities at their school. They also receive posters to display in school, a “goodie bag” with resources and rewards to share with students and staff (donated by local organizations and businesses), and other tools and guides to use in your school.

Q: How will program impact be tracked?

A: With input from HISD’s research department, data collection activities will include student mini-surveys, a parent survey and a end-of-semester Health Coach survey – which will help to track progress and impact.

Q: What are examples of rewards and incentives that participating Health Coaches, students and schools might receive?

A: Health Coaches and students who complete the recommended activities are eligible for various items, ranging from free meal coupons at area restaurants to a one-year YMCA family membership to a \$150 grocery shopping spree to a \$500 VISA certificate, and more. Participating schools are eligible to receive a school banner demonstrating your commitment to and leadership in promoting healthy kids and a healthy school. Partners providing incentives include: Dairy MAX, Houston Texans, Kroger, Memorial Hermann, Jason’s Deli, YMCA of Greater Houston and the National Dairy Council. See the [Rewards](#) listing for more details.

Q: Where can I get more information?

A: More resources and tools are available at www.healthykidshealthyschools.org.

