

the GAHPERD JOURNAL

**Georgia Association for Health, Physical
Education, Recreation and Dance
Volume 43 Number 1 Spring 2010**

NEW HEALTH & PE PROGRAM SPECIALIST



Therese McGuire is the new Health and Physical Education Specialist for the Georgia Department of Education. Therese will oversee health education and physical education at the Georgia Department of Education. She served as a health and physical education teacher, school administrator and school district curriculum coordinator.

She is a strong advocate for quality health education and physical education curriculum and programs for children. Therese participated as an invited attendee at both the National Urban Health Leaders Institute and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation training sessions. Therese has a B.S. in Health and Physical Education from Niagara University as well as a M.S. and Ed. S. in Health and Physical Education from Georgia State

University. With over 30 years experience her career continues to be devoted to providing children with the highest quality health and physical education experience.

The mission of the Health and Physical Education Program within the Division of Standards, Instruction, and Assessment in the Georgia Department of Education is to lead the nation in improving student achievement by providing performance standards, professional in-service programs, assessment tools, and guidance to all public schools (K-12) in the state to provide a high quality Health and Physical Education program for every student.

GAHPERD Membership Form

Please print clearly and provide all information requested. This will help us serve you better. Make check payable to GAHPERD and send this form with payment to: Dr. Jacqueline T. Harbison, GAHPERD Executive Director, 731 Oak Mountain Road, NW, Kennesaw, GA, 30152. **You may also join or renew and pay online at www.gahperd.org.**

New: _____ Renewal: _____ Female: _____ Male: _____

Title: _____ Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

(please circle)

| Classification and Membership Dues (check one) | 1-year | 2-year | 3-year |
|--|--------|--------|--------|
| _____ Professional (includes full time grad student) | \$25 | \$45 | \$65 |
| _____ Retired | \$12 | n/a | n/a |
| _____ Future Professional (undergraduate student) | \$8 | n/a | n/a |

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| _____ Elementary | _____ Two-Year College |
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- _____ Dance
_____ General
_____ Health
_____ Physical Education

Sections (check two)

- _____ College/University
_____ NAGWS/Men's Athletics
_____ Recreation
_____ Future Professional (Student)
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_____ Middle School
_____ Secondary
_____ Exercise Science

Have Fun...Teach Healthy Habits... Benefit Your Community

Students love the excitement of Jump Rope For Heart and Hoops For Heart events, and schools love knowing that students are learning healthy habits and community values. The benefits of physical activity, healthy eating, and staying away from tobacco are just a few topics that these educational programs cover, all while raising funds to fight heart disease and stroke. Students learn about heart health while learning to jump rope or play basketball, satisfying the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) Standards of Physical Education.



**Learn how your school can support
cardiovascular research and save lives.**

Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 or visit americanheart.org.



DID YOU KNOW?

- Obesity among our nation's youth has tripled in the last two decades.
- On average, American children and adolescents spend nearly 4 hours watching television every day.
- Obesity and physical inactivity are major risk factors for cardiovascular disease.
- Overweight adolescents have a 70 percent chance of becoming overweight adults.
- Some experts predict that, for the first time in history, because of inactivity and obesity-related illnesses, children's life spans will be shorter than their parents'.
- A number of studies have demonstrated that increased physical activity is linked to better school performance.



GAHPERD

Georgia Association for Health, Physical Education
Recreation and Dance
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Kennesaw, GA 30150

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GAHPERD Vision Statement

The Georgia Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance envisions a society in which an active, healthy lifestyle is valued and practiced by all Georgians. GAHPERD takes a leadership role in promoting the professions it represents by broadening public perceptions and values, through dynamic services, creative products, innovative programs and on-going research. As a leader in the state, GAHPERD seeks to unite with professional and community organizations to achieve the vision of a healthy Georgia.

GAHPERD Mission Statement

GAHPERD is a nonprofit organization for professionals and students in related fields of health, physical education, recreation and dance. GAHPERD is dedicated to improving the quality of life for all Georgians by supporting and promoting effective educational practices, quality curriculum, instruction and assessment in the areas of health, physical education, recreation, dance and related fields.

Contents

Volume 43 Number 1 Spring 2010

Columns, News, & Departments

- 2 President's Corner
- 3 Calendar of Events
- 6 Bob Moore Workshop
Registration

Features

INNOVATION STATION

- 8 CLIMB ON - Traverse
Climbing Activities

Refereed Articles

- 9 **Perceptions of Concern
for Misconduct in
Youth Sport**
John David Johnson, Ph.D.
Linda M. Johnston, Ph.D.

- 15 **A Shared Leadership
Approach to Promoting
School Wellness Policy
and Program Change**
Brend D. Heidorn, Ph.D.
Tina J. Hall, Ph.D.

- 18 **Addressing the Childhood
Obesity Epidemic in
Southeastern Georgia
Through a Community
Coalition - An Applied
Approach**
Bridget Melton
Daniel R. Czech
Amy Jo Riggs
Starla McCollum
Marlo Rouse
Barry Joyner
Elaine Marshall
Melinda L. Czech

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The GAHPERD Journal

The GAHPERD Journal is published three times per year (Winter, Spring/Summer, and Fall) by the Georgia Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, a non-profit organization. Membership in the Association entitles one to receive all journals and newsletters for that year. Subscriptions of \$30 per year are available to libraries and institutions. Single issues are \$12 each. Requests for missed issues will be honored for eight weeks following the publication date. The GAHPERD Journal is listed in the Physical Education Index.

Views and opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of GAHPERD. GAHPERD assumes no responsibility for and will not be held liable for any claims made in advertisements. Guidelines and prices for advertising are available from the Editor.

GAHPERD prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or veteran status in the treatment of participants in access to, or content of its program and activities.

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Editor

Mike Tenoschok
Mt. Paran Christian School

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Stephanye Peek
GAHPERD President



Congratulations to Dr. Jacque Harbison, Georgia AHPERD Executive Director and President of Southern District of AHPERD for an awesome SDAHPERD Convention in Myrtle Beach, SC on February 10-14, 2010.

Spring is here! Hopefully your getting outside and absorbing some Vitamin D whether it be teaching physical education outside, taking walks, hiking, biking, swimming or just sitting on your back deck. May is a busy month Physical Education Week May 1- 7; Field Days, and preparation for our Fall convention in Savannah.

I hope you are making plans to attend the Robert W. Moore Summer Institute at Campbell Middle School in Cobb County on June 8, 9, and 10 from 8 - 4:30 while earning 1 or 2 PLU's. What a great way to earn credits and gain new ideas for health, physical education, recreation, and dance. Special thanks to Susan Whitlock, director of SI and Metro District Representative, and Mark Anderson, Supervisor of Health and Physical Education for Cobb County and contact person for SI (678-842-6873 mark.

anderson@cobbk12.org). Go to www.gahperd.org for an online application. And thanks to Pam Powers of School Specialty and Jacque Harbison for working out all the logistics. It is going to be a great three days!

In addition to attending Summer Institute please make plans to attend the GAHPERD Convention in Savannah on October 31 - November 2, 2010 at the Hilton DeSoto Hotel where the theme is "Fitness is IN, 2010". I know you will join me in striving to help kids and adults to get fit and stay fit for life!

I am looking forward to representing GAHPERD in Washington, DC at the Leadership Development Conference on June 17, 18, and 19 as an "ELF", (Emerging Leadership Forum) along with Jacque Harbison (GAHPERD Executive Director), Gina Zuganelis (VP-Health), and David Worrall (President-Elect). I am honored to represent Georgia on the "Hill" with Gina and David. We will continue to promote the importance of health, physical education, recreation, and dance throughout our great state of Georgia and our grand United States of America.

Enjoy your spring, stay active this summer, and see you in Savannah on October 31-November 2!

Get Fit and Stay Fit for Life - "Fitness is IN"!

Blessings to you!
Stephanye Peek, GAHPERD President



Georgia Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, & Dance *Calendar of Events*

IMPORTANT DATES

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| <i>June 8-10, 2010</i> | GAHPERD "Bob Moore" Summer Teacher's Institute Campbell MS, Smyrna GA, Cobb County |
| <i>Oct. 30- Nov. 2, 2010</i> | GAHPERD Convention, Desoto Hilton Savannah |
| <i>February 16-20, 2011</i> | SDAAHPERD Convention, Greensboro, NC |
| <i>March 15-19, 2011</i> | AAHPERD Convention, San Diego, CA |
| <i>October 22-25, 2011</i> | GAHPERD Convention, Atlanta Marriot NW (Cobb) |
| <i>February 8-11, 2012</i> | SDAAHPERD Convention, Orlando, FL |
| <i>March 13-17, 2012</i> | AAHPERD Convention, Boston, MA |
| <i>November 10-13, 2012</i> | GAHPERD Convention, Desoto Hilton Savannah |
| <i>April 23-27, 2013</i> | AAHPERD/SDAAHPERD, Charlotte, NC |
| <i>October 26-29, 2013</i> | GAHPERD Convention, Marietta Hilton |
| <i>March 18-22, 2014</i> | AAHPERD Convention, St. Louis, MO |
| <i>November 1-4, 2014</i> | GAHPERD Convention, Savannah Hilton |
| <i>March 17-21, 2015</i> | AAHPERD Convention, Seattle, WA |
| <i>October 23-26, 2015</i> | GAHPERD Convention, Marietta Hilton |

GAHPERD Publication Information

General Information

When submitting information for publication in the GAHPERD Journal or GAME Newsletter:

- Send information to Mike Tenoschok
mtenoschok@mtparanschool.com
- Submit electronically as an attachment to e-mail
- Information should be word-processed (Microsoft Word, size 12 Times font preferred)
- Any photographs submitted should be an actual photograph, not a photo cut from another publication. Electronic transmissions are encouraged.

Due Dates for Materials and Publication Dates:

| <u>Due Date</u> | <u>Publ. Date</u> | <u>Publ.</u> | <u>Season</u> |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Jan. 1 | Feb. 15 | GAME | Winter |
| Feb. 1 | March 15 | Journal | Spring |
| April 1 | May 15 (Conv. info) | GAME | Spring |
| June 1 | July/August | GAME | Summer |
| Aug. 1 | Sept. 15 (Pre-Con) * | Journal | Fall |
| Sept. 1 | October 15 | GAME | Fall |
| Nov. 15 | Dec. 15 (Post-Con) * | Journal | Winter |



National Association for
Sport and Physical Education

an association of the American Alliance for Health,
Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

NASPE Sets the Standard

PRESS RELEASE

For more information, contact:

Paula Keyes Kun (703) 476-3461/pkun@aahperd.org

NEW *LET'S MOVE IN SCHOOL* INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT GOAL OF PHYSICALLY ACTIVE YOUTH BEING HEALTHY AND READY TO LEARN

WASHINGTON, DC, April 14, 2010 – In support of First Lady Michelle Obama’s *Let’s Move* Campaign to solve the epidemic of childhood obesity within a generation, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) today announced its new *Let’s Move In School* Initiative, and in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Division of Adolescent and School Health, presented the findings of a new comprehensive CDC report on physical activity, physical education and academic performance.

According to NASPE President Lynn Couturier, chair of the Physical Education Department, State University of New York at Cortland, “The purpose of *Let’s Move In School* is to educate youth about the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and ensure that every school provides opportunities for quality physical education and physical activity. *Let’s Move In School* urges parents, school administrators, policymakers and concerned citizens to take three action steps to help schools implement a **comprehensive school-based physical activity program** which includes 1) quality physical education, 2) physical activity integrated into classroom learning; 3) physical activity breaks, 4) recess, 5) before-and-after school programs, 6) intramural sport, 7) interscholastic sports; 8) walk- and bike-to-school programs.”

The *Let’s Move In School* Web site (www.LetsMoveInSchool.org) provides tools to support quality, school-based physical education and physical activity programs, such as sources of funding, recognition for outstanding physical education teachers and programs and information on federal, state and local policy efforts. In addition, NASPE has produced a new brochure for parents, school administrators and policymakers called *Active Kids and Academic Performance: The Positive Impact of School-Based Physical Education and Physical Activity*. The brochure is funded by GeoMotion Group.

NASPE hopes that the *Let’s Move In School* Initiative will serve as a platform to bring together organizations committed to increasing physical education and physical activity in schools and supporting the First Lady’s *Let’s Move* Campaign. As such, we are pleased to announce our first *Let’s Move In School* partner, Cartoon Network, demonstrating their continued commitment to promoting physical activity among young people.

“This new CDC report documents that school-based physical activity programs may help improve academic achievement, as well as other factors that can positively influence academic achievement in children,” said Dr. Howell Wechsler, division director of CDC’s Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH). Among the findings:

- Increasing or maintaining time dedicated to physical activity does not adversely impact academic performance. Studies suggest there may be a range of possible benefits for some students, including developing a stronger sense of

self, fostering educational aspirations, maintaining interest in class, encouraging homework completion, and reducing dropout rates.

- There is evidence that school-based physical activity may help improve academic achievement (such as grades and standardized test scores) and factors that can positively influence academic achievement (such as concentration, attention, and improved classroom behavior).

Collectively, the findings from this review support the *Healthy People 2010* Objective that calls upon the Nation's schools to require daily physical education for all students and NASPE's recommendations for a comprehensive school-based physical activity program.

Taking all of the evidence into account, schools should strive to provide students with a well-rounded education that includes quality physical education and comprehensive physical activity programs as defined by national recommendations.

CDC's full report can be found at www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth. Through *Let's Move In School*, NASPE is committed to translating those findings into action steps for improving comprehensive school physical activity programs for every child in America.

"One of the longtime barriers to student success has been the separation of health from the education process," said ASCD Executive Director Gene R. Carter. "We must recognize that physical, social, emotional, and mental health are inextricably linked to student growth and improved academic performance. Let's support the development of the whole child by transforming our educational system to one that is committed to ensuring that children are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged."

Loudoun County (VA) Schools Superintendent Edgar B. Hatrick, Ed.D., who is currently president-elect of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), said "Superintendents across America applaud NASPE for shining a light on the importance of physical activity in young people's lives. First Lady Obama's efforts to address childhood obesity and the efforts of NASPE will work together to bring action to what we have known for at least a hundred years: young people who are physically active learn better; a healthy body and a healthy mind really do go together to enable young people to learn their best, perform their best, and live their best."

Councilmember Mary M. Cheh of the Council of the District of Columbia is putting the research findings into action with her introduction of the Healthy Schools Act which includes targets relative to increasing time in physical education class each week from 30 minutes in 2010 to 150 minutes per week for students in kindergarten through grade 5 by 2015. It is also the goal for all District of Columbia children to engage in physical activity for 60 minutes every day. "One of the primary causes for the District's drastically high obesity rate is the simple fact that our students have little physical activity. My bill seeks to change that. In addition to improving the nutritional value of food in schools and providing health and wellness education, my bill will substantially increase physical education—the key to ending the obesity epidemic in the District of Columbia."

"We know that kids need at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day," said NASPE Executive Director Charlene R. Burgeson. "That is why we should design the school day to include all of the components of a comprehensive school-based physical activity program. Sometimes it doesn't take more money as much as more creativity and imagination. NASPE is very appreciative to First Lady Michelle Obama for beginning this important national conversation. Now it is time to set in place ways to utilize all of the resources in a school community to truly eradicate childhood obesity in a generation."

NASPE

The preeminent national authority on physical education and a recognized leader in sport and physical activity, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) is a non-profit professional membership association that sets the standard for practice in physical education and sport. NASPE's 15,000 members include: K-12 physical education teachers, coaches, athletic directors, sport management professionals, researchers, and college/university faculty who prepare professionals in all of these areas. NASPE seeks to enhance knowledge, improve professional practice, and increase support for high-quality physical education, sport and physical activity programs. It is the largest of the five national associations that make up the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance (AAHPERD). For more information, visit www.naspeinfo.org.

**2010 ROBERT W. MOORE SUMMER TEACHERS' INSTITUTE
 IN HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION, Sponsored by
 School Specialty Physical Education and GAHPERD, Inc.
 Hosted by Campbell Middle School, Cobb County, GA
Pre-registration Deadline is May 15, 2010**

Session leaders will include NASPE Teacher's of the Year and other Master Teachers. The workshop will include programs such as Standards-based instruction in Health & Physical Education, the implications of the new law passed in 2009 for Assessment in Physical Education, training information for both and current health related topics, fitness oriented rhythms and games, inclusion activities, outdoor recreation activities, and much more! Attendees may receive 1 or 2 SDU/PLU's in **either health or physical education**. One must attend 2 full days to receive 1 SDU/PLU, and all 3 days to receive 2 SDU/PLU's. **Lunch is not provided.** Attendees will have a break for lunch.

Name _____

Home Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

School _____ County of Employment _____

Work phone _____ Home phone _____

Location of Summer Institute:

Campbell Middle School
 3295 Atlanta Road, SE
 Smyrna, GA 30080
 Mark Anderson, contact person, 678-842-6873
 Dr. Susan Whitlock, Director

Dates and Times:

Tuesday, June 8, 8:30-11:30, 12:30-4:30 pm
 Wednesday, June 9, 8:30-11:30, 12:30-4:30 pm
 Thursday, June 10, 8:30-11:30, 12:30-3:30 pm
 mark.anderson@cobbk12.org
 suwhitlo@kennesaw.edu

| Check area of interest | | | | GAHPERD MEMBER | NON MEMBER |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EL PE | <input type="checkbox"/> MS PE | <input type="checkbox"/> HS PE | Professional Pre-Registration | \$70.00 | \$90.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EL HEALTH | <input type="checkbox"/> MS HEALTH | <input type="checkbox"/> HS HEALTH | Professional On-site Registration | \$85.00 | \$105.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DANCE | <input type="checkbox"/> ADAPTED | <input type="checkbox"/> COACHING | Undergrad Student | \$25.00 | \$35.00 |

Pre-registration deadline: Postmarked on or before May 15, 2010 (after this date attendees must register on-site and pay on-site fees). School Systems: Please send a completed form for **each** attendee with a school system check. Two (2) staff development units (PLU's) will be available to attendees. All attendees should check with their school system staff development coordinator for prior approval and needed documentation.

Make checks payable to GAHPERD and mail with this form to: Dr. Jacqueline T. Harbison, Executive Director, 731 OAK Mountain Road, NW, Kennesaw, GA 30152

Directions: From I-75: Exit on Windy Hill Road and drive West to Atlanta Road. Turn South on Atlanta Road to 3295 S. Atlanta Road, Smyrna, GA 30080. School on the left. Go to www.mapquest.com for more directions.

Dear GAHPERD Members and Friends,

Information has just been received from the President of the National Consortium for Physical Education and Recreation for Individuals with Disabilities (NCPERID). We think it is very helpful and would encourage you all to contribute and share with other GAHPERD members and non-members.

However, given that the language in the NCLB is light concerning students with disabilities, we would encourage you to modify the first bullet point to include the statement "which should include those students with disabilities."

The U. S. House Education and Labor Committee is collecting comments regarding the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (formally No Child Left Behind) reauthorization. In an effort to have Physical Education and Health Education addressed and included in the reauthorization, your participation is extremely necessary. This is crucial as our country is at a very critical point and we can NOT miss this opportunity.

Please take a few moments to send the following points to the email address below. Now is the chance many of you have been waiting for and it is a small window of opportunity. Please let our Federal Leaders know how important physical education and health education is to our students and the future of our country.

eseacomments@mail.house.gov<<mailto:eseacomments@mail.house.gov>>

* Please identify your group or identify yourself as a supporter of quality physical education.

* Please request that the new Elementary and Secondary Education Act should:

1. Include the text of the FIT Kids Act, requiring schools to report on the quality and quantity of physical education, physical education facilities, teacher accreditation, and physical education curriculum (which should include students with disabilities);
2. Require all physical education teachers to be licensed in physical education;
3. Include physical education standards as part of the core curricula all students need especially when developing assessments for student growth; and,
4. Maintain the Carol M. White Physical Education Program as a stand-alone grant program, with minimum funding of \$100 million.

INNOVATION STATION

CLIMB ON – Traverse Climbing Activities

By Mike Tenoschok, Ed.D., NASPE National Middle School Teacher of the Year 2005

Mt. Paran Christian School

CLIMBING WALL SKILL LEVEL PROGRESSION

Level 1: Novice: The student must climb the length of the wall without falling off using any handholds. Feet must remain below the red line.

Level 2: Up and across: The student must climb to the top of the wall and traverse the wall without falling, then climb down.

Level 3: Up and down: The student must climb to the top of the wall and touch the gym wall with one hand. He/she then must climb down and touch one foot to the mark on the floor without falling off. The student then continues climbing up and down the length of the wall for the entire length of the wall,

Level 4: Three Holds: Students traverse the wall using only 3 of the 4 colors of holds.

Level 5: Two Holds: Students traverse the wall using only 2 of the 4 colors of holds

Level 6: One Hold: Students traverse the wall using only 1 of the 4 colors of holds

Level 7: Partner Climb: Two students must climb the length of the wall connected to their partner. A jump rope handle is put in each partner's pocket and must remain there while the students are climbing. If the rope comes out of a pocket, they must start over.

Level 8: Weighted Backpack: The student must climb the length of the wall with a weighted backpack on their back.

Ball Traverse

Students will attempt to traverse the wall using any handholds while holding a tennis ball in one hand. Switching the ball from hand to hand is permissible.

Double Ball Traverse

Students will attempt to traverse the wall while holding a tennis ball in each hand. The ultimate goal is to teach students to place more weight on their feet and legs and rely less on their hands and arms.

Blindfold Traverse

Blindfold the climber. Students work with a partner. One partner guides the other across the wall.

Pick-up

Small objects such as bean bags/fluff balls are on the top of a boundary cone at 4-5 ft. intervals. Students should climb to a point above the bean-bag and reach down with one hand, pick it up and carry it with them to the end of the climb.

Avalanche Coming

Begin with a fifteen second time limit. The first climber begins when the timer says go. The climber tries to get as many holds as he/she can before time is up (i.e., trying to avoid the avalanche which is coming). The second climber tries to beat that number.

Follow the Leader

A student begins climbing and once he/she reaches a certain point the next begins, using the same holds as the first. If the leader falls, he/she goes back to the beginning of line. Whoever was the second climber then becomes the leader.

Musical Rocks

Similar to musical chairs. Climbers start on a mat facing the wall (lying down, push up position, back to the wall, etc) in the middle of the floor. When the instructor blows the whistle they must get onto the wall as quickly as possible. The last person on the wall is eliminated.

On-Belay

Have partners tie a string around their waists with about 4 feet of slack in-between. The object is to climb the length of the wall without having your partner fall off.

Flag Tag

Have 2 players tuck a scarf in their pocket or waistband. The opponents start climbing toward each other. The object is to steal the flag of the opponent. If a player's flag is stolen or he/she falls, a new player is up.

RESOURCES

High 5 Adventure Learning Center, Brattleboro, VT
www.Indoorclimbing.com
www.traversewall.com
www.passemontagne.com

REFEREED ARTICLE

Perceptions of Concern for Misconduct in Youth Sport

By John David Johnson, Ph.D. and Linda M. Johnston, Ph.D.

Kennesaw State University

ABSTRACT

Misconduct at youth sport events is portrayed by the media as a growing concern in society. The purpose of this study was to describe coaches', referees', and administrators' perceptions of youth soccer misconduct and their personal experiences. This study also examined differences in perceptions of youth sport misconduct between coaches, referees, and administrators.

The statistical population consisted of 75 coaches, 35 game officials, and 68 administrators involved with the Mississippi Youth Soccer Association (MYSA). The average participant age was 36.9 years for coaches, 39.5 years for game officials, and 43.3 years for administrators. The participants in the study were asked to complete the Youth Soccer Misconduct Survey (YSMS) containing several open-ended questions. Means and standard deviations were provided for each position variable. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was used to determine if a significant difference existed between the perceptions of the MYSA administrators, coaches, and game officials. A Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to determine if there was a linear relationship between the respondents' years of experience and their perceptions of misconduct. Within the *Misconduct* section an ANOVA was also used to determine differences between the *Verbal*, *Non-verbal*, and *Physical Misconduct* items. Responses to open-ended questions revealed several themes, including the role of modeling behavior, misunderstanding of game rules by coaches and officials, officials not enforcing existing game rules, and the role of team success.

The study results indicated that overall misconduct was not of great concern to the respondents. *Verbal Misconduct* was the category of most concern with a mean of 2.7 on a five point Likert-type scale. There was no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of misconduct by coaches, game officials, and administrators. The results also demonstrated that no significant relationship exists between years of experience and perception of misconduct.

The study did not expose any significant concerns with misconduct and the MYSA. The results revealed several areas that should be addressed, given the current climate of increasing reports by the media of misconduct in the sports world. Subsequently, the study suggests preventative measures to help combat the perceived growth of unsportsmanlike conduct.

INTRODUCTION

Historical Context

For centuries, children have invented competitive games while playing in empty lots, alleys, and backyards. Playing these games, children similarly created their own rules and, as part of the maturation process, learned how to compromise and arbitrate conflicts. With the advent of organized youth sports, this type of spontaneous interaction is no longer the norm and, as such, modern youth may have lost the social skills learned through playing self-organized games; for example see, Nack, 2000 and Coakley, 2001. Authors state that since the advent of organized sports leagues, children have lost control of their games and "A consequence of adult control and organization was the visible absence of arguments and overt displays of hostility between players from opposing teams" (Coakley, 2001, pg. 121). The noticeable absence of children openly arguing and engaging in forms of misconduct has forced the focus of hostility onto the adults who are supervising the games and the spectators. This is apparent by the number of cases of adult misconduct in youth sport reflected in the media. Modern youth sport is not without occasion for overt misconduct. Although these incidents are generally kept to a minimum, they are still of great concern to coaches and other officials.

As adults become more involved in youth sport, there seems to be a corresponding increase in levels of game misconduct. "Spectators are a mess," states Larry Swertloff a volunteer coach and safety director for the Brooklyn region of American Youth Soccer Organization, "they yell at their kids, other parents, the other kids, coaches and referees" (Parents, 2002, pg. 1). Sport psychologists have coined this phenomena "identification," which describes the emotional feeling and intense love parents have for their children. The identification theory is used to partially explain what may be involved in parents' actions displayed at sporting events (Neary, 2000). Further research is required in this area. If a parent feels their child has been wronged or hurt in some way, they lose their composure instead of acting rationally. Intense feelings cause parents to act in ways they might not ordinarily. For example, Thomas Junta beat his son's coach to death after having a heated discussion concerning the way the coach handled practice. Ironically, Junta felt that the coach was allowing too many "cheap shots" and "rough play" (Parents, 2002). When parents over-react like this,

they forfeit the opportunity to teach the children involved how to properly deal with conflict. Parents appear to forget that they, along with professional sport personnel, are role models and must set an example for the youth involved in sport. In 1995, 5% of parental spectators could be expected to behave inappropriately at youth athletic events, (i.e., to embarrass their children or be abusive toward other children, officials and coaches (Nack, 2000)). Five years it is expected that nearly 15% of the crowd is expected to cross the line (2000).

The Current Situation

Youth sport encompasses not only the direct involvement of children, but the involvement of parents, coaches, administrators, and game officials in organizing the events. Misconduct at youth sport events either appears to be on the rise, or the incidents of misconduct are being reported more frequently by the media. In either case, there is a need to understand the population's perception as related to youth sport events. In order to study the perceptions of misconduct at youth sporting events, a survey and list of open-ended questions focusing on overall misconduct in youth sports were distributed to youth soccer administrators, coaches, and game officials (Johnson, 2004).

In order to fully examine this topic, both the quantitative and qualitative research findings are included. While the quantitative findings provide a basis for the perceived prevalence of youth sports-related violence while the qualitative findings accurately demonstrate how coaches, sport officials, and administrators feel about the current issue. The findings of this study provide the foundation for possible solutions.

Research Findings

Youth Sport Misconduct Surveys (YSMSs) were delivered to 500 potential study participants, with 185 responses received. Potential study participants were identified in several ways: 1) one of the researchers visited two state-wide tournaments to administer and collect surveys at the coaches' meetings prior to competition, 2) the survey was emailed by Mississippi Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) to coaches, administrators, and team officials, and 3) the MYSA posted a link to the survey on their website homepage. Data was collected either through participants returning their completed survey directly to the on-site author, or through email responses collected via the University of Southern Mississippi's library server. Return rates for the on-site survey were 31%, and 45% for the electronic survey. The demographics of the survey respondents are as follows: 1) *Age*: average age was 36.9 years for coaches, 39.5 years for game officials, and 43.3 years for administrators, and 2) *Gender*: 84% males and 16% female for coaches, 91% male and 9% female for game officials, and 68% male and 32% female for administrators. Overall gender was 79% male and 21% female. The survey consisted of 49 questions

formatted for a combination of open-ended questions, yes/no, and Likert-type scaled responses. Quantitative data was analyzed using mean, standard deviation, ANOVA, correlation, frequency, and percentage to determine the degree of perceived misconduct in youth sport. Qualitative data, gathered from participant responses to the open-ended questions, was analyzed using thematic narrative analysis.

Quantitative Research Findings

Analysis of how study participants evaluated the impact of various types of misconduct in the Mississippi Youth Soccer Association produced a mean of 2.72 for *Verbal Misconduct*, 2.12 for *Non-verbal Misconduct* and 1.89 for *Physical Misconduct* on a 5-point Likert-type scale. This suggests that survey participants do not believe the various types of misconduct are particularly problematic. There were no significant differences between coaches, game officials, or administrators in their perceptions of perceived misconduct. Data analysis indicated no correlation exists between years of experience in coaching, being an official, or as an administrator and the perception of misconduct.

Even though misconduct was not perceived as "out of control" by the survey participants, when asked if misconduct were to worsen, 64% responded they would terminate their participation within the organization. Athlete-on-athlete misconduct was of the most concern to the survey participants.

Over half of the study's survey population of coaches, officials, and administrators reported they had been abused physically, non-verbally, or verbally resulting from an athletic contest they officiated, coached, or administered (Johnson, 2004). The reported abuse occurred away from and after the sporting event. Study results for game officials showed they were abused more often than were administrators and coaches. These findings are, on one hand, quite alarming, but on the other hand, not surprising. This research finding requires further examination to study the possible connection between current challenges facing one who coaches, officiates, or administers, and his/her perceptions of misconduct. As such, we feel it is relevant to note that the findings herein are similar to those of Hughes (2001) in that people holding the positions in question do mention various types of abuse as a result of working with youth sports programs.

Adults volunteering their time exhibited a high likelihood of being mistreated away from, and as a result of, the youth sport events (Johnson, 2004). If participants are abused often enough they will no longer participate in youth sports, causing retention problems for the particular sport. Retention is a problem for most youth sport organizations, but especially problematic regarding game officials. The sport climate was examined and the following question posed. "If the climate were to worsen during the next few years, would the survey participant consider terminating his/her participation?" Two thirds of the participants said "yes." The participants were

also asked to compare today's sport climate with that of the last two years. 38% of the participants felt the climate was unchanged, 33% felt the climate was worsening, and 29% felt the climate was improving.

Another study finding related to participants terminating their involvement. 42% reported they had considered terminating their position due to sport climate deterioration. Game officials were most likely to be lost with 37% reporting they perceived the sport climate worsening.

Qualitative Research Findings

In analyzing the narratives collected during the investigation, several themes arose that may shed light on both the problem of perceived misconduct and methods of eradication. The following passages were taken from the open-ended questions on the survey. For example, there appears to be agreement among study participants regarding youth players who model the behavior exhibited by coaches, officials, administrators, and parents. While the focus of this article is not on modeling, there is general agreement among survey participants that youths demonstrate modeled behaviors they observe from parents, coaches, officials, and administrators. Research on modeling will be explored in future research. However, within this study, no direct correlation between the respondent's identity and who that respondent thought was responsible for the negative modeling behavior was substantiated (i.e., the respondent's group was often included in the implication). For example, one coach stated, "Some coaches and parents are horrible role models." An official expressed, "...skills and abilities of athletes, coaches, and officials are improving, but misconduct is proliferating." However, participants commenting on youth modeling behaviors expressed concern about the potential impact these behaviors have on both the quality of the sporting event and the youths themselves. One coach stated, "The kids will only mimic what they observe in their parents and coaches."

Another theme which emerged suggested participant concern that coaches, officials, and parents probably do not understand game rules. As one administrator expressed, "Sadly, the large majority of the parents have no idea what they are talking about most of the time. And they can't differentiate between screaming at a college football game and screaming at a U8 soccer game." A coach stated, "The misconduct is normally assisted by the attitude of the parents and/or the coaches. It would help if more parents took a more active role learning the rules. Also consider having the coaches attend an annual refresher meeting." Another coach said, "Frustration with poor referees is a major source. Everyone on the sideline is angered with a referee who doesn't know what he is doing and there is no higher power to rule and terminate the participation of this particular referee. You are helpless to do anything." Finally, an official added, "It is my opinion that many problems in youth soccer begin with the parents as spectators. Few have a good understanding of the game and

even fewer realize they don't know the game. Their whining on the sidelines easily causes problems with the players' perceptions of what is going on with the game."

A third theme elicited by the data suggested inconsistent enforcement of existing rules. One coach stated, "As long as the officials and governing bodies do not enforce the rules, the parameters of misbehavior will be pushed." Another coach said, "I think part of the problem is when there is a very specific behavior that is inappropriate towards children by a coach, and it is brought to the attention of the organization, the coaches are not removed from their position, thereby condoning the behavior." Another coach added, "I think that yellow cards and red cards should be introduced at the earliest of the ages and, early on, super-aggressive play should be terminated with stronger disciplinary action on the field. Kids need to understand that competitive play does not entitle them to "bully" other players. So by age 12-16, where it will make a big difference, they will conduct themselves in a proper manner." Yet another coach expressed concern that even stricter rules governing verbal and physical abuse by players, officials, and spectators should be enforced. He said, "It gets worse every year. There should be some severe penalties for abuse in these areas." Additionally, an official suggested that, "...there should be mandatory conduct classes for parents."

The last prevalent theme involved coaches and their views of the team's success. One administrator stated, "Some coaches put themselves and their record above the children and the team success. In other words, some coaches seem to take it too serious." A coach offered, "The problem of over-zealous coaches trying to gain an advantage by recruiting in select leagues is the biggest problem...It's out of control." Another coach expressed concern on the other side of the spectrum (i.e., parents comparing coaches and the comparison's relationship to sportsmanship), "...their coach is not as good."

DISCUSSION

These reported findings agree with other research findings wherein three other variables of concern included spectator-on-game official, coach-on-game official, and spectator-on-athlete misconduct (Johnson, 2004). Hughes (2001) found similar supporting results in a 2001 study of New Mexico High School Officials where officials were most concerned with athlete-on-athlete misconduct; however, the most disturbing finding concerned spectator-on-athlete misconduct. Other reports confirm various aspects of the problem. For example, according to U.S. News & World Report, a survey in South Florida of 500 adults found that 82% of respondents indicated parents were too aggressive in youth sports (Cary, 2004). This perception may be a leading cause of young athletes rejecting organized sport participation. Cary (2004) also reported that in 2002, 13 million children, ages 6-17, stopped participating in soccer. Although current study participants did not express

an immediate concern about players dropping out of sports, steps should be taken to lower incidents of misconduct, prevent their reoccurrence, and encourage players to remain in sports. Taking into account the number of survey participants who considered terminating their participation and the high number of survey participants who would terminate their participation if the sport climate worsened, a future decline in coach, administrator, and game official retention may be avoided if steps are taken to create a more positive sports environment.

Most spectators at youth sports events are parents. Kaners & Tebbutt (2001) discuss the way parents handle comments made by their children early in their athletic careers and how this could affect the way the youth views athletics. The focus should be on fun and skill acquisition, not on the outcome. Even John Wooden, collegiate basketball coach, focused purely on preparation and the process, not on the outcome (i.e., wins or losses). Coach Wooden's focus was on the development of players (Wooden & Jamison, 1997).

The overall concern for sport misconduct by survey participants of the MYSA appears very low. The participants did, however, identify some areas that should be addressed. Verbal misconduct at MYSA events is one of the main issues identified as requiring improvement. Although this form of misconduct was perceived as an "average" problem, lack of preventative measures may result in problem escalation. The analysis of the themes made evident that both the blame and responsibility, if any, are shared by all groups concerned.

Recommendations

Facilitation of effective communication may, logically, prevent problems with parents, coaches, or administrators. The coaches and administrators must attempt to include parents in team and organizational activities through sharing critical information. This information may include establishing goals, philosophies, and any other information that parents require concerning their child and his/her participation within the youth sport organization. Survey participants emphasized that reinforcing existing game rules, ensuring all involved understand the rules, purposefully modeling good behavior, and openly discussing everyone's view of team success would be beneficial.

The youth sport organization should make information concerning the entirety of the organization available to parents, either in pamphlet or online form. Examples of information that may be included are, 1) the philosophy of the organization, 2) the mission of the organization, 3) the organizational structure (i.e., flow chart or organizational chart), 4) bylaws, 5) rules of the game, 6) history of the organization, and 7) any other information the parents feel they require or request. Concise in-class or online courses should be developed to help parents understand their expected behavior/roles, rules of the game, and their interpretation. This is crucial in minimizing misunderstandings. Parents and coaches should be encouraged to review these materials to

help them focus on the agreed upon goals throughout their youths' sport experiences.

Coaches need to share their personal coaching philosophy and team goals with the parents. This information should, at a minimum, be written and distributed to ensure that all parties involved have every opportunity to review the goals and behaviors expected by the coach. The initial communication allows parents to understand the expectations the coach has for the team. The coach must communicate specific goals, expected behavior, and performance levels for individual players, as well as enforcement procedures to be utilized in the event that rules are not followed. Setting individual goals for each athlete should help parents focus on the improvement of their son's or daughter's play, and allow them to better understand how their child contributes to the team's success. This communication may best be facilitated by documenting expected behaviors and having both the player and his/her parents sign a contract stating their understanding of the document. If this process is deemed too intensive for some situations, an informal handout may suffice.

Learning and periodic reinforcement of the rules should be the focus of referees, coaches, parents, and players. Classes may be offered to parents regarding game and league rules prior to the start of each season, specifically while players are engaging in their initial practices. Referees, coaches, and players should attend a review course prior to each year's play as offered to them and supported by league administration. On the contrary, referees or coaches who do not follow stated rules should be suspended from game play, and all those associated with the game assessed penalties for unsportsmanlike behavior.

Coaches should serve as role models throughout the season. Leagues and their administrators should stress this to incoming and returning coaches as part of their acceptance as coaches and subsequent training. Because these coaches are involved with young people, they must be able to distinguish between what is appropriate for professional sports teams and the behavioral norms concerning young people. Coaches exhibiting unprofessional conduct should be removed from the league.

Programs such as "Character Counts" may be useful in developing good sportsmanship; for examples, refer to Charactercounts.org. The Character Counts program focuses on the "Six Pillars of Character:" 1) trustworthiness, 2) responsibility, 3) respect, 4) fairness, 5) citizenship, and 6) caring. Character Counts offers numerous free teaching tools along with some paid programs (Character, 2010). The Character Counts program offers educational opportunities for children ages 6-19. This program has a comprehensive approach focused not only on sport, but on school and family (2010). Other groups providing resources include American Sport Education Program, National Alliance for Youth Sport, and National Association for Sport and Physical Education.

Each of these organizations provide a wide variety of resources for parents, coaches, and youth sport administrators.

Future Research

Several areas related to this study's results require additional research. Some of the issues revealed through this research would provide tangential information that may assist those involved in sports to deal with misconduct issues. For example, research should be conducted to determine if existence of pay, and its level, is an issue affecting the performance of coaches, officials, and/or administrators. It should also be determined whether or not the compatibility of values and goals between individual players and coaches fuels conflict during practice or games. Lastly, an examination of what is gained and lost by parents becoming more involved in the foundation of youth sports and their children's activities, while taking a lesser role in the planning and execution of their games.

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Table 1. Means and standard deviation scores for various types of misconduct

| Type | Position | Mean | Standard Deviation | n |
|--------------------------|---------------|------|--------------------|-----|
| Verbal Misconduct | Coach | 2.70 | .885 | 76 |
| | Game Official | 2.87 | .805 | 35 |
| | Administrator | 2.67 | .787 | 70 |
| | Total | 2.72 | .832 | 181 |
| Non-verbal Misconduct | Coach | 2.15 | 1.09 | 76 |
| | Game Official | 2.31 | .959 | 35 |
| | Administrator | 2.00 | .911 | 70 |
| | Total | 2.12 | 1.00 | 181 |
| Physical Misconduct | Coach | 1.89 | 1.07 | 76 |
| | Game Official | 2.05 | 1.03 | 35 |
| | Administrator | 1.82 | .918 | 70 |
| | Total | 1.89 | 1.01 | 181 |

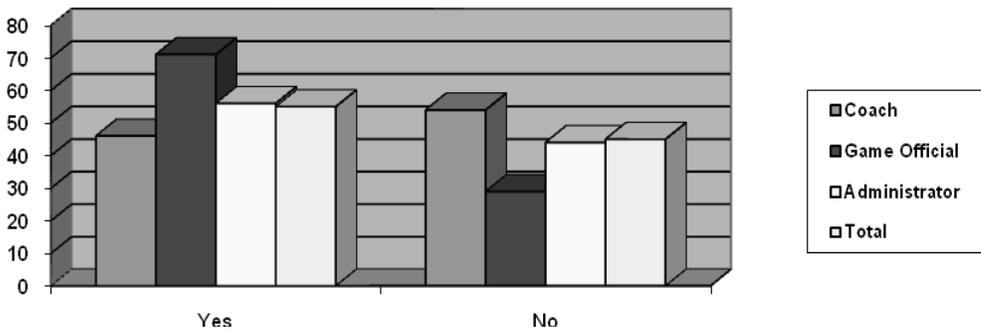


Figure 1. Percentage of participants reporting verbal abuse

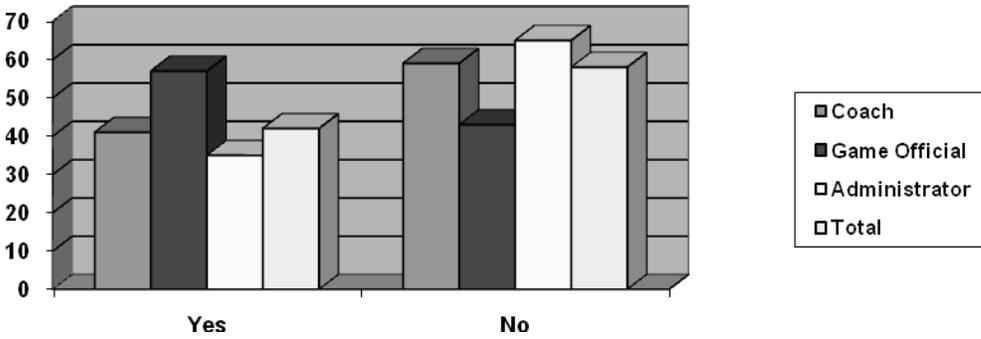


Figure 2. Percentage of participants reporting consideration of leaving sports

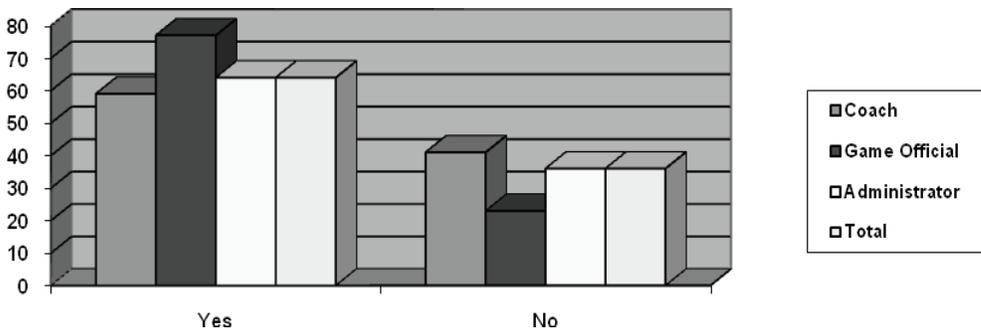


Figure 3. Terminating service of climate worsens

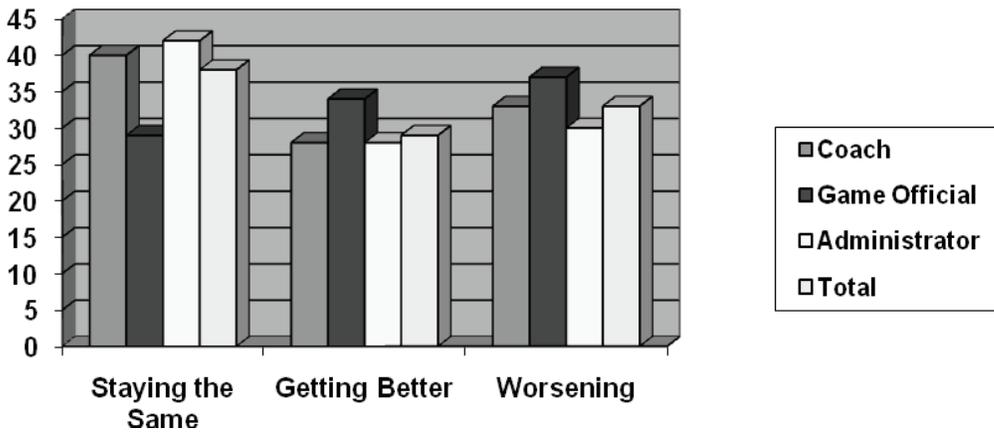


Figure 4. Change in sport climate perceptions

REFEREED ARTICLE

A Shared Leadership Approach to Promoting School Wellness Policy and Program Change

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One of the most critical health issues facing students in American schools today is the obesity epidemic. The number of overweight and obese children ages 6 to 11 has more than tripled over the past three decades (Hedley, Ogden, Johnson, Carroll, Curtin, & Flegal, 2004). Health experts predict that children in today's schools will be the first generation expected to live a shorter lifespan than their parents (Olshansky, et al., 2005). The current and future health of our nation is clearly at risk.

Improving the health status of children is a fundamental component of education in the United States. Guiding students toward healthy and active lifestyles is not a new function for schools. However, in many of today's schools students have limited opportunities for physical activity, are exposed to school lunches and snacks with little or no nutritional value, and are rarely exposed to health education. Schools have either minimized or ignored health issues and responsibilities to focus on other priorities. The intentions to improve test scores, while legitimately motivated, have resulted in children sitting for unrealistic amounts of time with the expectation of staying focused. This decision has proven counterproductive. When children do not engage in the recommended amount of physical activity, and do not receive proper nutrition, it is likely they will be absent from school more often, have less energy, low self-esteem, and have difficulty concentrating (Grissom, 2005). Research continues to provide strong evidence that academic performance actually decreases with less physical activity (Grissom, 2005; Etnier & Sibley, 2003; Pate, Davis, Robins, Stone, McKenzie, & Young, 2006; Pelligrini & Bohn, 2005; Sibley & Etnier, 2003; Tremblay, Inman, & Willms, 2000). In addition, a study by the California Department of Education (2002) documented that when a substantial amount of school time is dedicated to physical activity, academic performance meets and may exceed that of students not receiving additional physical activity.

Schools alone cannot solve the obesity epidemic. However, it is reasonable to assume that without school policy and program change this present trend will continue. Stakeholders initiating systemic change in our nation's health status support the belief that schools can and must promote healthy eating habits, quality physical education, and multiple opportunities for physical activity. The purpose of this paper is to suggest strategies of shared leadership between administrators and physical educators along with empowerment of classroom

teachers as avenues to promote school level wellness policy and program change.

School Administrator Leadership

Recent federal legislation supports the promotion of healthier lifestyles, including physical activity and proper nutrition among school students (i.e., The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004). Members of local school communities (administrators, teachers, parents, students, community leaders, etc.) were urged to serve on school wellness committees to set goals for nutrition, physical activity, physical education, and health education. School administrators are the most influential in establishing school wellness committees and supporting the implementation of the committee goals. Without their support, policy and program change rarely happens. A few examples of how school administrators can be highly instrumental in the overall health and wellness of their school include:

- Requiring and supporting quality teaching in physical education (as is currently expected in core subject areas);
- Increasing physical activity time requirements while taking steps toward incorporating daily physical education;
- Encouraging teachers to provide opportunities for physical activity throughout the school day;
- Promoting and funding before and after school physical activity programs;
- Promoting nutritional lunch and snack programs; and
- Implementing health education as part of the school curriculum.

Contradictory to the need for administrative leadership in the success of school wellness programs, the Action for Healthy Kids report (2008) revealed that school leaders are perceived as being the least supportive. Possible reasons for this include the top-down demands from the district and state levels of meeting the No Child Left Behind legislation, budget concerns, and perceived lack of time in the school day. Following are strategies to aid school administrators in overcoming these barriers:

- Educate district and state officials on the relationship of nutrition and physical activity to school attendance

and academic success;

- Encourage the school wellness committee to set simple and realistic, short term, low- or no cost goals that can be easily obtained;
- Encourage and enforce policies that promote increased physical activity (e.g. teachers must include a daily recess period and may not use the elimination of recess for punishment); and
- Celebrate the successes within the school and publicize to the district, parents, and community.

Physical Education Teachers in a Shared Leadership Role

The physical education teacher is the ideal “go to” person to take on a shared leadership role with school administrators for the promotion of a school wellness program. It has been argued that the physical education teacher is the best person to take on this role because the physical education teacher is the most qualified to work with students and physical activity, and in many instances has been prepared for similar roles from his/her previous physical education teacher education (PETE) coursework (Beighle, Erwin, Castelli, & Ernst, 2009; Castelli & Beighle, 2007). To encourage a shared leadership role, the school administrator should appoint one physical education teacher as the school physical activity director. Just as high schools have athletic directors for the small population of students that participate in athletics, both secondary and elementary schools need physical activity directors to meet the needs of those not involved in interscholastic sports. With release time and support from the school administrator, the physical activity director leadership responsibilities may include the following:

- Be an active member of the school wellness committee;
- Serve as a resource person for classroom teachers;
 - Inform teachers about the benefits of adding short bouts of physical activity in the school day.
 - Assist classroom teachers with information/resources for providing quality physical activity.
- Organize school-wide physical activity experiences (e.g. field days, fun runs, walking programs, morning exercise routines, intramurals, activity-based fund raisers, and before and after school physical activity clubs);
- Collect weekly data on physical education and physical activity time of each class and report to the school administrator and school wellness committee (with a minimum of 30 minutes daily);
- Promote physical activity opportunities in the community;
- Establish a quality physical education program that provides students with the skills, knowledge and

dispositions to be physically active; and

- Provide opportunities for faculty and staff to engage in before or after school physical activity.

Empowering Teachers

Establishing and reaching school wellness program goals will involve teacher “buy in” and the promotion of collective responsibility. Evidence supports the idea that teachers positively respond to initiatives where they feel a sense of ownership, support from peer teachers, compatibility of the initiative integrating with their current values and goals, and administrative support (Parks & Lee, 2007). School administrators must empower and support teachers to work collaboratively in establishing a healthy and active school.

The challenge, as in any school initiative, is how to gain the support and involvement of the teachers. One strategic approach is to strive for collective efficacy. Teachers must believe that their involvement can have a positive effect. Some teachers may be motivated by the idea that they can contribute to the overall health status of children. Others will be more motivated by the potential for academic success that may be generated by improved nutrition and increased physical activity. Many teachers will support policy or program change only if they are verbally supported in the process by the school administrator. Regardless of each individual teacher’s motivation, the bottom line is that with collective efficacy, individuals and groups of people are more willing to work toward a common goal. The challenge for the shared leadership of school administrator and the physical activity director is to discover and address the motivation and level of engagement of the teachers.

With classroom teacher “buy in” comes successful implementation of health education and increased opportunities for physical activity. Although there are many ways to promote physical activity during the school day, school administrators should first encourage classroom teachers to play an active role by providing their students opportunities for physical activity outside of physical education class. While classroom teachers should be concerned about providing their students with rigor in the core subjects, they must also recognize that children need integrated bouts of physical activity for continued success in the classroom. There are multiple ways teachers can provide short bouts of physical activity including:

- Starting the day with activity;
- Including a daily recess period;
- Transitioning from classroom tasks with 3-5 minute physical activity breaks (e.g., Energizers found at www.ncpe4me.com);
- Going for a daily walk;
- Organizing and playing active games;
- Teaching simple dances; and
- Integrating physical activity into academics.

While providing additional opportunities for students to be physically active during the school day is a worthy goal, research indicates that outside-of-school physical activity also must be promoted (McKenzie, 2001; Sallis et al, 1997; Tappe & Burgeson, 2004). Examples of ways teachers and administrators can promote physical activity after school include establishing an intramural sports program, providing students with physical activity prompts (i.e., school announcements, email reminders, monthly calendars, posters and bulletin boards in the school, marquees in front of the school), establishing a school health club, and promoting activity at local facilities (Hastie, 2007). Administrators can provide leadership in this promotion process by supporting the physical activity director and empowering teachers to be involved.

One leader cannot be successful in such a large endeavor by working alone. Support is needed from members within the school and school district (i.e., faculty and staff, administrators, district office, school boards, etc.), and stakeholders outside of the school must be encouraged to take an active role in promoting healthy lifestyles among students (i.e., parents, community members, etc.). “Comprehensive approaches that integrate school-based health programs with familial and community efforts are more successful in promoting health than if schools try to do it alone” (Bandura, 1998, p. 20). The small steps discussed in this paper about effective leadership and collaboration may lead to a more comprehensive approach and begin to reverse the trend of overweight and obesity among children and adolescents.

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REFEREED ARTICLE

Addressing the Childhood Obesity Epidemic in Southeastern Georgia Through a Community Coalition - An Applied Approach

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ABSTRACT

Childhood obesity is growing at an alarming rate in the state of Georgia. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported that 15% of children in Georgia are classified as obese. Research suggests that communities play a critical role in addressing the overweight and obesity crisis. Recently, the Bulloch County Health Department received funding for a Nutrition and Physical Activity Demonstration Project from the Georgia Division of Public Health. The aim of the project is to strengthen the Children's Health Improvement and Lifestyle Development (C.H.I.L.D.) Coalition, whose goal is to help increase childhood physical fitness and healthy eating habits in the Bulloch County area. The purpose of this paper is to discuss steps taken that helped this organization develop the C.H.I.L.D. Coalition. Information from this paper may help other communities begin childhood health initiatives.

Background

Childhood obesity is a growing problem that threatens the health of children throughout the entire United States. Sadly, certain states and counties are experiencing rates of childhood obesity that are alarmingly high. Specifically, children in Georgia are more overweight than their counterparts in other states. Childhood obesity proportions for many counties in Georgia exceed 20% while mostly all exceed 15% (CDCa). Obesity in children and youth is a significant public health problem in Georgia due to the increased risk for many chronic diseases and the associated increase in health care costs. Surveillance of obese children as they age confirms evidence that they will likely remain obese upon entering adolescence and adulthood (GDHRa; Serdula et al., 1993). Furthermore, the percentage of obese adults has increased rapidly in all regions of the state. According to the Georgia Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, more than 30% of adults in Southeast Georgia (including Bulloch County) are obese (GDHRb).

The percentage of obese children and youth in Georgia exceeds the Healthy People 2010 national goal of 5% or less

(regardless of age, sex, race or ethnicity). According to data from the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Program, the percentage of obese children and youth in GA is 15% for children aged 2-4 years, 24% of third grade children, 15% of middle school and 14% of high school students (GDHRa). Poor food choices and physical inactivity are major reasons for the rise in childhood obesity. In Georgia, only 55% of middle school and 44% of high school students meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended requirement for physical activity each day according to the 2007 Georgia Youth Risk Behavior Survey (GDHRc). Only 1 in 5 (19%) high school students consumes the minimum recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables per day. The percentage of high school students who consume the minimum recommended servings of fruits and vegetables are consistently low across all sex, race, ethnic and age groups (GDHRd).

Percentage of Obese Youth in Georgia (2007)

Figures 1 and 2 show the proportion of obese youth in Georgia.

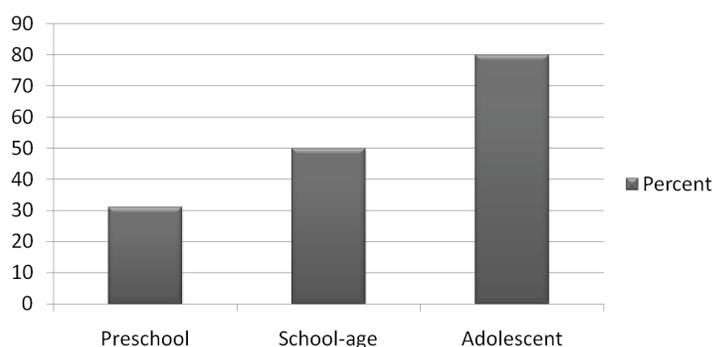


Figure 1. Percentage of overweight youth who become obese adults

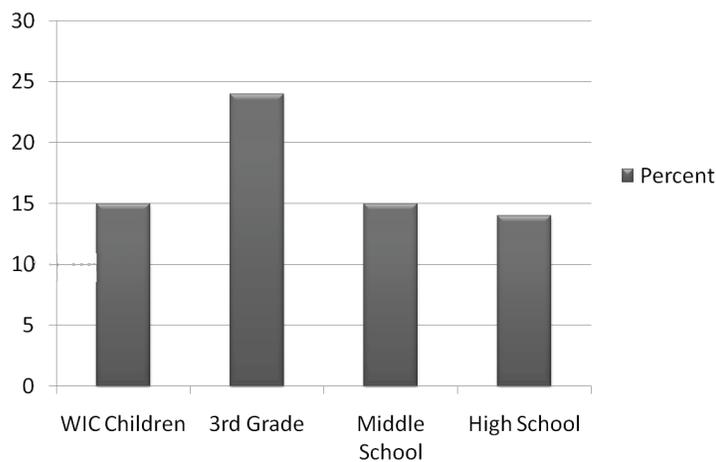


Figure 2. Percentage of Obese Youth in Georgia (2007)

Research indicates that communities have a critical role to play in addressing the overweight and obesity crisis (Khan, et al. 2009). Four characteristics of communities that are associated with successful efforts to promote physical activity and a healthy weight include: *accessibility* to sites that support being physically active and provide choices of healthy foods, *community coalitions and partnerships* that foster and sustain participation by a wide array of members inclusive of disparate populations, *awareness* of the health risks of obesity and the benefits of healthier lifestyle choices, and *accountability* to effectively use evidence-based programs and resources (HP2010).

C.H.I.L.D. Coalition

In 2007, the C.H.I.L.D. Coalition (Children’s Health Improvement and Lifestyle Development) with representatives from Georgia Southern University’s College of Health and Human Sciences, Bulloch County Health Department and several concerned residents congregated, organized, and began to address the Georgia obesity epidemic in their own community.

In April 2009, the Bulloch County Health Department received funding for a Nutrition and Physical Activity Demonstration Project from the Georgia Division of Public Health. The aim of the project was to strengthen the C.H.I.L.D. Coalition. Funds from the seed grants will support community based participatory research, health promotional materials, creation of the web site, and a program coordinator. In addition, the C.H.I.L.D. Coalition has received funding to conduct health fairs at the local middle and high schools.

The C.H.I.L.D. Coalition has developed a preliminary *vision statement* and *goals* to help Bulloch County become a community that promotes and supports healthy and active lifestyles. Its *mission* and *objectives* are to improve the health of children by reducing obesity rates in Bulloch County. The

following four main objectives were developed in order to address the problem with obesity: 1) Improving healthy eating by increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables, 2) Increasing physical activity, 3) Decreasing sedentary activities, and 4) Increasing breastfeeding initiation, duration and exclusivity.

The Bulloch C.H.I.L.D. Coalition is still in its early stages of development. Efforts are underway to strengthen the coalition in order to develop a more comprehensive approach, increase a sense of shared responsibility, and promote long term community commitment toward ameliorating childhood obesity in the Bulloch community. At this point, the C.H.I.L.D. Coalition advisory board held a Kickoff Breakfast to actively recruit other community members. The guest list included key community leaders: representatives from the health care field, Board of Education, Statesboro City Council, Bulloch County Commission, Recreation Department, numerous religious leaders, restaurant owners, and others. Additionally, a needs assessment was completed to evaluate the general knowledge and understanding of childhood obesity within the community. The preliminary results indicate that the community is aware of childhood obesity as a problem.

From the Kickoff Breakfast a group of 15 participants volunteered to serve on a 2-3 year rotating Steering Committee, which represents the community at large. The C.H.I.L.D. Steering committee has had its first quarterly meeting in November 2009 and is in the process of completing a “refining” of its strategic issues. Goals and objectives addressing these strategies will be refined by the Steering Committee. It is anticipated that by early spring 2010, the C.H.I.L.D. Coalition will be ready to commence its plan of action implementing and evaluating various interventions for the community.

More recently, two members of the advisory board traveled to the University System of Georgia’s Child Obesity Summit in Atlanta, Georgia, where they networked with other professionals in the State and learned a great deal about funding sources and evidence-based interventions to combat childhood obesity. Current members are committed to taking the next steps in collaboration and community action to select appropriate interventions. This involves identifying additional stakeholders who share a common passion for this project and commitment to investing in environmental changes, new policies, and resources for a healthier community.

For further information about the C.H.I.L.D. Coalition please visit their website at www.bullochcountychild.com .

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