



Pedometers:

Leaders of the Physical Activity Action Councils (PAAC)

Physical educators are using technology more than ever to help meet the national standards in physical education (Mohnsen, 1997). The need to use technology in physical education combined with the national ground swell for promoting physical activity for children and youth helps set the stage for creating Physical Activity Action Councils (PAAC). The focus of this article is to show how pedometers can be the “tipping point” for changing the culture of a school to make it more activity friendly. This article describes how one school utilizes the Walk4Life pedometer to bring together the principal, physical therapists, parents, physical educators, health educators/wellness specialists, school nurses, volunteers/taxpayers, corporate/business, and students in a unique partnership that increases physical activity among students.





The Power of the P's

Pedometer: Digital pedometers detect movement through a spring-loaded, counterbalanced mechanism that records vertical acceleration of the hip (Pangrazi 2004). Research shows that pedometers can accurately measure physical activity, thus making the pedometer a cost-effective, accurate, and objective measurement device. A two-function pedometer measures both steps and activity time. The two-function pedometer is an ideal way for physical educators and students to monitor the 50 percent activity time recommendation during physical education class. In addition, pedometer instruction that students receive in physical education carries over to out-of-class activities. In turn, students can teach parents and family members that movement works.

PAAC: PAAC is the name given to a group of people who come together whose focus is physical activity and the actions needed to provide school-age children with more physical activity both during and before/after school. In the initial stage, PAAC members can include the principal, physical educator, wellness specialist, school nurse, parent, student, and possible funding partners. The expansion of the number of PAAC members is unlimited, but starting with a smaller number may prove successful for the initial activities sponsored by the group.

Principal: All major new initiatives in a school require the approval and tacit participation of the principal. Site-based management is very advantageous to the

formation and subsequent activities of a PAAC. A principal with the vision that youths need more physical activity is *priceless*. That vision and attitude combined with the willingness to take risks, apply funding discretion, and support physical education is invaluable.

Parents and family: Parents and family are constantly influencing their child's relationship with food and activity. Activities sponsored by the PAAC afford parents the opportunity to encourage their children to become physically active outside the school day. PAAC-sponsored activities often encourage family and extended family participation. The Pumpkin Stroll and Walk to School Day (see pg. **XX**) are examples of PAAC participation with family and parents). As parents realize the value of physical activity for their children, they also become aware of their value as role models.

Partnerships and Philanthropy: There is power in numbers. Those numbers can apply to the number of people willing to support the PAAC activities, the expertise brought to the activities, as well as funding and person power to complete the tasks. Linking community support as well as community foundations and businesses to school activities for physical activity promotes other school programs in addition to the physical education program. A brainstorming session about contacts in the corporate setting should produce enough leads to begin the "asks." Promoting programs with purpose, passion, and a clear mission of healthier and more active children and school success is a great way to bring sponsors to the school. This engenders even more support from the principal.

Physical Therapists: Some physical therapists have physical education and exercise science backgrounds. They understand the obstacles of physical educators and the need for a "social marketing" perspective to increase awareness about the physical inactivity of youths. Inviting a local physical therapist to be a PAAC member also brings additional potential for external funding and action solutions. The physical therapist may be willing to spend a portion of his or her marketing dollars to help meet the financial needs of physical education programs.

A logo on a "Walk to School" banner or placement of a health message on the inside of a pedometer provides for "lasting branding."



Letter to parents and patrons

2005 Roper Pumpkin Stroll

Come join the fun of the Roper School Pumpkin Stroll Activities on Tuesday, October 4th anytime between 5:30 and 7 p.m. Those who walk to school the night of the Pumpkin Stroll will receive extra credit. You may also walk from Russ's Market to Roper School (about 1/2 mile).



1. When you arrive at Roper, come to the front entryway of the school and register for the stroll, walk toward the south and around Roper School as many times as you would like. When you have finished go back to the front of Roper pick up your pumpkin stroll orange shoe token and a health screening card.
2. Take your health screening card to the gym and participate in some health screenings. (*blue Shoe Token*) Nurses will be available to tell you your blood pressure and Jayne Snyder, Snyder Physical Therapy and her assistants will be available to check your balance and flexibility. Let's all show these guests how much we appreciate them coming to Roper.
3. Check out the nutrition section of your health card. Work together as a family or group and figure out how much activity time is needed to use up the calories that you have eaten. (*green shoe token*) Your pedometer has an activity time display. Remember "It's All About Balance" - there aren't any bad foods, just "sometime foods" and "anytime foods."

Roper students who complete the Pumpkin Stroll Activities will receive tokens for their tennis shoes from Dr. JoAnne Owens-Nauslar (PAAC founder/member), representing Walk 4 Life, Inc. The tokens may be picked up at the token table in the main hallway in front of the main office when you are all finished. Twist ties will be available for the shoe token collection.

These are the shoe tokens that can be earned at the Pumpkin Stroll:

1. Orange shoe token—Walking in the Pumpkin Stroll
2. Blue shoe token—Participating in the Health Screenings
3. Green shoe token—Completing the "Nutrition Game" on the health screening card.

We have new Pumpkin Stroll trophies. The class that brings the most participants (students, parents, family, friends, neighbors, etc.) to the stroll wins a trophy.

Participants: PAAC activities that are designed, organized, and orchestrated by youths have a great chance of being well attended. If we want youths to understand empowerment, we must be willing to risk and allow them to “take charge” of physical activity options outside of the school day. We must also be willing to “trust them” with pedometers for a check out period of eight weeks or longer. Teachers are working towards NASPE standards 2, 3, and 6, which measure how well youths are understand movement concepts, as they apply to learning and performance of physical activity; participate regularly in physical activity; and value physical activity for health, enjoyment, and/or social interaction.

Policy: The Federal Government enacted the Child Nutrition WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. This reauthorization requires that all schools participating in School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs establish Wellness Policies.

A majority of schools participate in the School Lunch and Breakfast programs, therefore this is a great opportunity to play a leadership role in improving children’s nutrition and physical activity. The PAAC can play a major leadership role in the development and implementation of the required wellness policy. By the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year, all covered districts must have a Wellness Policy in place. The law requires the following:

- Appropriate goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities designed to promoted student wellness.
- Nutrition guidelines for all foods available during the school day, with the objective of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity.
- Plans for measuring the implementation of the school wellness policy.

Stakeholders and policy makers have a vested interest in making sure the Wellness Policies are properly developed and given adequate resources for implementation. Parents are a critical group of stakeholders and traditionally have the greatest impact on changing school practices. Parents can be leaders of the PAAC while becoming more aware of their central role in policy development and implementation to increase physical activity and physical education. Involvement in the PAAC is a great way to get parents fully engaged in the effort to ensure their school is taking full advantage of “school improvement” opportunities

(i.e., the Wellness Policy). Additional physical activities for faculty and staff are win/win. They have opportunities to understand the benefits of movement and be supportive of physical education.

Places and spaces: Some of the motive for support and involvement at Roper School is about trying to get sidewalks from the development sites to the school. In the last three years, one thousand new homes have been built within one mile of school, yet there is no safe way for children to access school. Before and after school times pose additional safety time and safety issues because of the traffic congestion. The largest elementary school in the city is also less the one half mile from the largest public park. Again, there is no safe access to the public park from the school.

The Pumpkin Stroll and International Walk to School Day are great activities for the students and their families, but they are also a great way to get decision makers to understand the safe place and space issues. The mayor, city and county council representatives, and the media representatives may need to “walk in your shoes” to actually experience the safety, or lack thereof, issues.

After the events have taken place, it is vital that parents and patrons continue to email, fax, and call the mayor, city council and county council representatives, and the media so the issue stays at the forefront of problems that need to be solved. Working with parents to provide testimony can be valuable as you rally other voices to physical education and physical activity opportunity problems and solutions.

Publicity and Public Relations: The media has raised nationwide awareness about childhood obesity. It is vital that we invite them to help raise the awareness about physical inactivity and nutrition disparities. The PAAC members can invite decision makers and stakeholders to events in an effort to highlight issues about accessibility, sidewalks, safe paths, bike paths and opportunities for children to have access to activity areas. Additionally, parents must be made aware of school nutrition practices as well as the amount of time dedicated to physical education during school time. Pumpkin Strolls, Turkey Trots, National Physical Education Week, and Walk to School Days are great opportunities to provide local media outlets with (1) what needs to be done, (2) what can be done, (3) action solutions or how things get done to increase children’s physical activity and physical education.

Performance Measure: We test what we value and we value what we test. We do the physical education

Letter to parents and patrons

International Walk to School Day

Wednesday, October 5th is International Walk to School Day and any student who walks to school from home or from Russ's Market (about 1/2 mile from the school) will earn a Walk to School Sticker and a red shoe token. Mr. Navratil (the principal) will be all dressed up in his fancy new shoes and leading the group walk from Russ's Market to Roper School. You won't want to miss the fun so be sure to plan to be "Steppin" it up with Mr. Navratil as we all walk to school on October 5th.



Mrs. Brandt, P. E. Specialist

Mrs. Jambor, Wellness Specialist

profession a great service when we provide valuable information about our students' growth and development and their views about physical education and physical activity. The Children's Attraction to Physical Activity (CAPA) scale is a unique questionnaire. The questionnaire "What I Am Like" contains the CAPA scale items. The recommended age range is from eight to 12 years of age. If students take the CAPA before and after any unique school physical activity project, this might yield additional information as to how we promote physical activity and physical education. For further information, details, and questions about the CAPA and scoring, contact Dr. Brustad at bob.brustad@unco.edu.

Paper to Practice: Form a PAAC, solicit the principal's cooperation, involve the parents, remember that partners are essential and students are our target audience, and then make it happen. Taking the concepts from paper to practice is exactly what is happening at Lincoln, Nebraska's largest elementary school. The Roper Rockets will kick off a year of physical activities beginning with the 11th annual Pumpkin Stroll. The evening activities include the walk, pedometer activity time, nutrition awareness, and health screenings including blood pressure, flexibility, and balance. The

next day students will participate in "The International Walk to School Day" lead by the principal.

Roper Romps PAAC Project

Fifth graders at Roper School participate in physical education once weekly and wellness/health class once weekly. PAAC members are determined to provide opportunities for more out-of-school physical activity time. An additional motive is to gain support for additional physical education opportunities within the critical core day.

Upon completion of the forms, clearances, and sign-offs from School District Administration, the Roper Romps project will ensue. Through the philanthropy of Snyder Physical Therapy and Principal Dan's discretionary funds, a pedometer will be checked out to every fifth grader at Roper School. Roper School is participating in the WalkSmartActiveSchools™. Students will log in daily and record their activity time. About 70 percent of students have home computer capabilities. Provisions for log in times during the school day ensure opportunity for participation from all fifth grade students.

Principal Dan insisted that Walk4Life, Inc. Family Pedometer Packs are available for check out. Five family

What I am Like

Please look at the sample question first. Please choose only one answer to each question. There are no right or wrong answers. Simply choose the statement you think is most true for you.

Really true for me Sort of true for me

A	B
---	---

Some kids have more fun playing games and sports than anything else

SAMPLE QUESTION

BUT Other kids like doing other things

Really true for me Sort of true for me

C	D
---	---

Really true for me Sort of true for me

1	A	B
2	A	B
3	A	B
4	A	B
5	A	B
6	A	B
7	A	B
8	A	B
9	A	B
10	A	B
11	A	B
12	A	B
13	A	B
14	A	B
15	A	B

Some kids have more fun playing games and sports than anything else

Some kids don't like to exercise very much

Some kids get told by other kids that they are not very good at games and sports

Some kids get teased by other kids when they play games and sports

Some kids think that the more exercise they get the better

Some kids don't enjoy exercise very much

Some kids try hard to stay in good shape

Some kids don't like getting out of breath when they play hard

Some kids think it is very important to always be in good shape

For some kids, games and sports is their favorite thing

Some kids are popular with other kids when they play games and sports

Some kids look forward to playing games and sports'

Some kids really don't like to exercise

Some kids feel bad when they run hard

Some kids don't like to run very much

SAMPLE QUESTION

BUT Other kids like doing other things

BUT Other kids like to exercise a whole lot

BUT Other kids are told that they are good at games and sports

BUT Other kids don't get teased when they play games and sports

BUT Other kids think that it is not good to get too much exercise

BUT Other kids don't try hard to stay in good shape

BUT Other kids don't try hard to stay in good shape

BUT Other kids don't mind getting out of breath when they play hard

BUT Other kids don't think it is so important to always be in good shape

BUT Other kids like other things more than games and sports

BUT Other kids are not very popular with others when they play games and sports

BUT Other kids don't look forward to playing games and sports

BUT Other kids do like to exercise

BUT Other kids feel good when they run hard

BUT Other kids do like to run a whole lot

Really true for me Sort of true for me

C	D
C	D
C	D
C	D
C	D
C	D
C	D
C	D
C	D
C	D
C	D
C	D
C	D
C	D
C	D

packs with up to six pedometers in each are currently available for check out. Family members are encouraged to understand their child's WalkSmartActiveSchools™ log in process while becoming aware of their own physical activity. The principal has pledged to meet the supply/demand concept. If more family pedometer packs are needed, they will be purchased.

ROPE is the Roper Organization for Parents and Educators. As a group that meets monthly, their involvement in planning and conducting activities is vital to success.

The following is an example of a fun activity that could include pedometers.

Roper Razzle Dazzle Football

Grades 3-5

Skills prior to playing: overhand throw, flag pulling and wearing, pitch, and passing to a moving receiver.

Assessment: Cooperative play, overhand throw, catching, concepts of overhand throw and agility.

- 3-4 Students are assigned to each team
- Team 1 has red flags and team 2 has yellow flags; team 3 - red and team 4 - yellow etc.
- The team with the yellow flags goes north and red flags plays south, don't switch ends.
- In a class of 24, 4 games are being played at the same time on the same big, wide field.
- Play starts at the center of the field with the yellow team passing to a teammate or receiver, when the ball is caught the receiver begins running for their end zone.
- * The opposite team may intercept at any time or pull the flags of the receiver who catches the ball and is running. When a flag is pulled on a player with the ball, the down is over.
- * When a student begins to run and sees a team mate who is open they may pass at any time, in any direction, and as many times as they like to avoid having their flag pulled when the football is in their possession, this is the razzle dazzle!!
- * After an incomplete pass, dropped ball or runner who falls down, the opposite team takes immediate possession of the ball at the spot and begins passing the opposite direction. Offense and defense can change very quickly.

- * Touchdown is scored when they successfully run or pass into the end zone.
- * Encourage students to take turn picking up the ball after the down is over so all students get to play QB. This is a very aerobic activity and students of all abilities seem to enjoy it.
- Pedometers are great for student awareness about the amount of time they were moving during the activity.

A final point here was to see how much impact the PAAC might have on how children perceive physical activity. As an action research project, we decided to check Children's Attraction to Physical Activity (Brustad, 1993) before the project was implemented and after it was finished. If all the efforts of the PAAC lead to a school full of children who are highly attracted to physical activity, we will see that as the icing on the cake.

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As Director of Corporate and Community Relations, Dr. JoAnne Owens-Nauslar is available to speak on issues related to public health, physical education/activity, the U.S. inactivity epidemic, employee wellness, health and humor, as well as staff development. For more information on Dr. Jo or to see if she's making a "house call" near you, please contact Jamie 888-422-1806 or jvanbyssum@walk4life.com.

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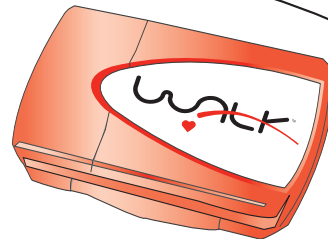
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