



Campaign Synopsis 2008-2010

In an effort to reduce childhood obesity and increase the overall fitness of Stanislaus County youth in grades K-12, at the beginning of the 2008-09 school year the Stanislaus County Office of Education, in partnership with school districts throughout the county, embarked on a campaign called “*Fit for the Future.*”

The campaign included an *Education/Awareness* component and a *Call to Action*. The *Education/Awareness* component focused on increasing awareness of the issues through a multi-media campaign that included: a comprehensive website dedicated to the campaign, factoid messages in the regional newspaper, messages in district/school newsletters and electronic newsletters, posters, flyers, TV commercials, radio commercials, ads in theaters and expert speakers to targeted audiences. The *Call to Action* focused on motivating children and their families to be more physically active and to make healthier food choices. Students were encouraged to participate in the Governor’s Fitness Challenge, which required them to log active days (30 – 60 minutes of physical activity) three days a week for a minimum of 28 days to complete a challenge.

At the end of the 2008-09 school year campaign results were extremely positive. **Stanislaus County students logged over 1 million active days and were ranked number one in the state!** SCOE received special recognition at the *Governor’s Spotlight Awards* ceremony and was named, “**County of the Year**” for supporting children’s fitness. **This year the Governor’s Council is using SCOE’s campaign as a model across the state!**

In addition, students in Stanislaus County’s top performing schools in the Governor’s Challenge had more than twice the rate of improvement in English and Math than the rest of the state on California’s assessment tests!

“Fit for the Future” Campaign 2008-2010

Assessment:

Studies show that childhood obesity is at an all-time high. Since 1963, the prevalence of obese children in the U.S. has tripled. Obesity-related chronic diseases such as Type II diabetes and hypertension, previously only prevalent among adults, are now common among children. And sadly, eight out of 10 overweight teens will continue to be overweight as adults (*Kaiser Permanente*). Dr. Francine Kaufman of Children’s Hospital Los Angeles has said, “I think we’re looking at a first generation of children who may live less long than their parents as a result of the consequences of overweight and Type 2 diabetes.”

Stanislaus County has a high percentage of overweight children. In 2006, Stanislaus county ranked 34th (1 being the best) out of California’s 58 counties and 8 health jurisdictions for overweight children ages five and under. One in four children in Stanislaus County (ages 5-19) is overweight! According to the Center for Research Strategies, LLC, physical activity is positively associated with academic performance because healthy, active, well-nourished students are more likely to attend school and are more prepared and motivated to learn.

In an effort to reduce childhood obesity and increase the overall fitness of Stanislaus County youth in grades K-12, at the beginning of the 2008-09 school year, Stanislaus County Office of Education, in partnership with school districts throughout the county, embarked on a campaign called “*Fit for the Future.*”

The **overarching goal** of the campaign was to reduce childhood obesity and increase the overall fitness of youth in Stanislaus County. The effort was two-pronged and called for an Education/Awareness Campaign and a Call to Action!

Measurable goal included:

- Increasing student participation in the Governor’s Fitness Challenge, which requires students to log active days (30 – 60 minutes of physical activity) 3days week for a minimum of 28 days to complete a challenge. SCOE estimated the average completion rate in Stanislaus County schools would increase from less than 1% to 20%.

Planning:

SCOE staff participated in planning meetings with school district contacts throughout the county. These contacts were instrumental in getting information out to students and parents in their schools. With the support of district coordinators, SCOE emphasized and promoted healthy, active lifestyles for students. In addition, staff met with key staff from Kaiser Permanente (the major health care sponsor of the campaign – Kaiser donated \$75,000 the first year and \$100,000 the second year). Goals were established and a timeline was implemented. **Target audiences included: 521,000 Stanislaus County Residents (included 106,000 students, 5,300 teachers.)**

Communication channels included: developing a comprehensive website, radio messages, television commercial, ad in theaters, information in district/school newsletters, posters, large banners displayed at schools, flyers, newspaper articles, opinion editorials, decals, Frisbees, buttons, t-shirts, and expert speakers to targeted audiences. Regular SCOE communication channels were used to highlight the program: SCOE Community Reports and Annual Report (dist. 65,000), First Hour Newsletter (55,000), Key Communicator Electronic Newsletter (3,000), and various Parent Newsletters (106,000).

Execution and Communication:

SCOE communications staff established a timeline and launched the campaign in August 2008 starting with all 26 school districts and 180 schools in Stanislaus County, then got the information out to the community. In September 2008, principal/teacher packets were sent to each school. Contents included a letter from the County Superintendent, overview and FAQ's of the campaign, along with information promoting the *Fit for the Future* website (www.stancoe.org/fitforthefuture/), posters and decals to hang at schools. A key component in the packet was the branded pedometers and information about the Prize Trooper visits (student incentive). Each teacher in the county received a pedometer to wear to model healthy behavior to students.

From October 2008 through May 2009, the Superintendent and communications staff made FFF presentations to business and community leaders and to local civic groups, utilizing a comprehensive Power Point presentation, which showed progress students were making in becoming more physically active. Updates were provided to SCOE board members and cabinet level management during regular meetings throughout the year. News releases were prepared and disseminated to print and electronic media as appropriate. The regional newspaper ran Factoid messages weekly throughout the campaign. A final written report with outcome data was prepared and shared with all stakeholders (Kaiser, other partners, participants, board members, media) along with a short video showcasing the first-year campaign and results.

SCOE communications staff stayed in constant contact via email with school site coordinators - providing them with incentive grant information, resources and Prize Trooper visit information (see binder for specific details).

Evaluation:

At the end of the 2008-09 school year, campaign results were extremely positive:

- **Stanislaus County ranked number one in the state last year for its efforts to get students “Fit for the Future!”** At the *Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Spotlight Awards* ceremony on September 16, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and Council Chairman Jake Steinfeld gave special recognition to the **Stanislaus County Office of Education** for supporting children’s fitness and named Stanislaus County “*County of the Year!*”
- 84 schools signed-up for the Governor’s Challenge (45% of the schools in the county – 25% above the campaign’s goal!)
- Stanislaus County students logged 1,080,738 active days, more than any other county in the state! This represented **65%** of the total active days for the region and **19%** of the entire state’s active days!
- The community got involved! 33,042 bonus active days were logged by 1,280 teachers, parents and community members that signed-up for the Governor’s Challenge. (This represented **20%** of the entire state’s bonus active days!)
- In addition to the “*County of the Year*” award, two schools received awards from the state! Tuolumne Elementary School received a **\$100,000 fitness center** and Hickman Elementary School was selected as the *Gold Country Regional Award* winner and received a **\$6,000 prize!**
- **KEY FINDING - Students in Stanislaus County’s top performing schools in the Governor’s Challenge had more than twice the rate of improvement in English and Math than the rest of the state on California’s assessment tests!**