



# **SPARK and the 2016 Carol M. White PEP Grant:**

## **A Resource Guide for PEP Awardees**

### **SPARK: The World’s Most Researched and Field-Tested Physical Education Program**

SPARK is a research-based program dedicated to creating, implementing, and evaluating programs that promote lifelong wellness.

SPARK strives to improve the health of children, adolescents, and adults by disseminating evidence-based Physical Education, After School, Early Childhood, and Coordinated School Health programs to teachers and out of school time leaders serving Pre-K through 12th grade students.

#### **This document includes information that shows:**

- I. Why PEP recipients have chosen SPARK..... [pg. 2](#)**
- II. What previous PEP winners have said about SPARK ..... [pg. 3](#)**
- III. How SPARK aligns with 2016 PEP priorities and requirements ..... [pg. 6](#)**
- IV. Important links to additional PEP resources ..... [pg. 18](#)**
  - a. SPARK Sample Text for PEP Grant Writers
  - b. PECAT Reports for SPARK K-12 PE
  - c. HECAT Reports for our Health & Nutrition Partners
  - d. SPARK Assessment Tools
  - e. SPARK alignment with national & state standards
  - f. SPARK alignment with the Presidential Youth Fitness Program
  - g. SPARK Character Matters social skills development program
  - h. Denver Public Schools PEP Grant success story

# Congratulations 2016 PEP Grant Recipients!

The purpose of this document is to introduce you to SPARK and offer resources to help you achieve your vision of a model physical education/activity or nutrition education program that meets national and state standards.

To date, SPARK has worked with over **150 PEP grant recipients** nationwide, from Alaska to New York City, and all points in-between. Please see the enclosed for what past PEP grant recipients say about SPARK.

## **SPARK: Evidence-Based Physical Education Since 1989**

Since 1989, SPARK has provided evidence-based curriculum, training, and consultation to over 100,000 teachers and youth leaders, representing many thousands of schools, organizations, and agencies worldwide. Today, over 50 publications have documented positive SPARK effects such as:

- Increased MVPA (moderate to vigorous physical activity)
- Physical fitness achievement
- Sport skills development
- Lesson context and teacher behavior
- Enjoyment of PE
- Academic achievement
- Improved teacher instruction
- Adiposity
- Process measures (parent behavior, teacher acceptance of program)
- Sustainability and institutionalization -- SPARK effects are lasting

## **SPARK offers evidence-based programs in the following areas:**

- Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programming
  - Physical Education (grades K-12)
  - After School (ages 5-14)
  - Early Childhood (physical activity for ages 3-5)
  - Classroom Activities & Recess (grades K-6)
- Nutrition Education (grades K-8)
- Health Education (grades K-12)
- Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Resources

## **Each SPARK program provides a coordinated package of:**

- Research-based curriculum (the “what to teach”)
- On-site teacher training (the “how to teach it”)
- Content-matched equipment (the “tools you need to teach”)
- Extensive follow up support (because programs must institutionalize to be successful).

## I. Why PEP Recipients Have Chosen SPARK

- **SPARK WORKS.** Over 50 publications demonstrate significant outcomes on students and teachers – including physical fitness, motor skill development, academic achievement, student enjoyment of the program, and moderate to vigorous physical activity - many of which are identified as key outcomes specified in the 2016 PEP Grant application.
- **SPARK LASTS.** A 2005 paper in Research Quarterly proved SPARK sustainability/ institutionalization.
- SPARK physical education is the **only nationally disseminated program** that positively affects ALL of these student outcomes: Activity levels, fitness, sport skills, enjoyment, and academic achievement. SPARK is also the **only NIH-researched program** available providing coordinated curriculum, training, follow up support, and equipment for Pre-K through 12th grade teachers.
- SPARK has successful experiences working with over 150 PEP Grant winners to date- big and small districts, urban and rural settings.
- SPARK has been honored as an Exemplary Program of the U.S. Dept. of Education; cited in the Surgeon General’s Report as a “School-based solution to our nation’s healthcare crisis;” earned a “Governor’s Commendation;” and was awarded “Gold” by the Cooper Institute. *SPARK is the only program to earn “PE Gold” grades K-8.*
- SPARK offers programs that extend beyond their award-winning K-12 PE Programs, including Early Childhood, After School, Classroom Activity & Recess, and Coordinated School Health. SPARK’s nutrition education program, Healthy Kids Challenge (HKC), has earned impressive accolades for their work as well, including:
  - American Dietetic Association’s “Award of Excellence for Community Dietetics”
  - National Advertising Council “CAN (Community Action Network) Award”
  - Cooking Light named HKC one of the “Top 12 Change Makers in Nutrition” over the past 25 years
  - National Dairy Council honored HKC as “Most Sustainable Grant Project”

## II. What Previous PEP Winners Have Said

***“SPARK exemplifies a high quality physical education program. The curriculum is as good as any that I have come across in 20+ years, the training is phenomenal. The training changes practice. Teachers who have burned out have been re-energized by participating in the SPARK trainings we have offered. If you want to see a change in your physical education program, choose SPARK.”***

-Brett Fuller (2012 PEP Winner) Curriculum Specialist  
Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee, WI

***“SPARK is EVERYTHING a Physical Educator needs. The lessons are sequenced perfectly with activities that keep the students engaged and excited about each unit. It is all there and developmentally appropriate. Most importantly our students are moving more and learning more.”***

-Dana Chambers (2012 PEP Winner) PE Teacher and PEP Grant Manager  
Newcastle Public Schools, Newcastle, OK

***“When looking for a curriculum that was evidence-based and met the standards for physical education, the SPARK curriculum soon distanced itself from the others. We looked at the ease of implementation and staff development for proper implementation. We have been very satisfied with the SPARK program.”***

-Julie Graber (2010 PEP Winner) PEP Program Manager & High School PE Teacher  
Ellsworth Community School District, Ellsworth, WI

***“Recently, my middle school teachers participated in the SPARK training and found it incredibly rewarding. Right away, teachers are encouraged that they can make changes in the classroom that will make significant differences for kids. Thank you SPARK, for bringing solid activities and easy to use assessments to my teachers. SPARK is now both my elementary and middle school curriculum of choice.”***

-Judy Lobianco (2009 & 2013 PEP Winner) Supervisor of HPE  
South Orange-Maplewood, Maplewood, NJ

***“I am not a P.E. person by any means. I am, however, a curriculum person. Systematic, sequential, data driven is what I look for in a quality program. Your successful reading and math programs have these elements. You have these elements in the SPARK program as well. From the very first minute, you have engaged students, following a plan that builds on skills intended to help students reach their “healthy zone.” Teachers have gone through SPARK training and that follow the SPARK curriculum appreciate the ease they have setting up and following their lesson plans.”***

-Hector Baeza (2014 PEP Winner) Assistant Director, 21st Century Program Community Education Coordinator  
Gadsden City Schools, Gadsden, AL

***“The implementation of the SPARK Curriculum and resources has enhanced our elementary physical education programs through quality professional teacher development and student engagement.”***

-Eric Stern (2011 PEP Winner) Past President- FAHPERDS  
Palm Beach County School District, West Palm Beach, FL

***“I would like to share some of the comments the middle school teachers made about the curriculum: -‘We no longer have students standing around. Students are actively engaged and actually tired when they leave my class.’ ‘Every kid participates and they don’t even realize they are exercising.’ ‘The kids love the warm-up activities and our activity time has increased.’”***

-Judy Vanderford (2008 PEP Winner) Health and Physical Education Teacher  
Kenosha School District, Kenosha, WI

***“The SPARK PE Curriculum has become an essential piece of Northside ISD’s elementary physical education programs. The research-based SPARK concepts and lessons have proven to be an invaluable resource in our quest to revamp our K-2 and 3-6 Scope and Sequence. In addition, access to SPARKfamily.org has empowered our teachers to become better educators.”***

-Danielle Housley (2012 PEP Winner) MPH Healthy Start Project Facilitator/PEP Grant Manager  
Northside ISD, San Antonio, TX

***“Our elementary district has been fortunate to participate in SPARK trainings this year. It has been a wonderful opportunity. As a Curriculum Director I was also able to observe the sessions. I cannot say enough about the process and procedures that were taught. It is a great update for all Physical Education educators. In our district we are really trying to get all kids active and moving, the SPARK program is a hands-on approach that the teachers enjoyed and felt was beneficial. Lake Geneva Schools Highly recommends the program. The trainers were exceptional.”***

-Jan Eckola (2014 PEP Winner) Director of Instruction/PEP Grant Director Lake Geneva Joint 1 District, Lake Geneva, WI

***“SPARK it is an excellent tool and resource for a trained Physical Education Teacher. For the untrained teacher SPARK offers a plethora of knowledge to begin a successful program. I am very happy to continue working with (SPARK) to build our program.”***

-Marc Vachon (2011 PEP Winner) PEP Grant Manager  
Mohonasen CSD, Schenectady, NY

***“I chose SPARK After School Program for our organization because of their research base and years of field testing. My staff loves the SPARK curriculum because it’s so easy to learn and use. I strongly recommend their after school program to any organization looking for excellent physical activity content, training, age-appropriate equipment, and consultation. SPARK does it all, and they do it very well.”***

-Mandee Polonsky (2005 & 2007 PEP Winner) Chicago Public Schools  
Chicago, IL

***“SPARK makes a difference! The School District of Beloit went all in on SPARK hoping to move from good to great. And that we did! SPARK goes beyond solid curriculum; it gets to the heart of what teachers need in their tool boxes to teach like champions. Staff performance definitely stepped it up a notch following the training. Staff reported that student activity time increased and actual skill levels improved upon implementation of SPARK. The support staff at SPARK has been easy to work with and pays attention to detail.”***

-Shawn Fredricks (2010 PEP Winner) PEP Grant Director  
School District of Beloit, Beloit, WI

***“I first learned of SPARK at Nike, when I participated in a workshop there. I was so impressed with their after school program that I insisted we write it into our PEP Bill grant. Now, everyone in the Atlanta Boys and Girls Clubs knows how great the SPARK curriculum, training, and equipment is. Together, this is an unbeatable team and I highly recommend them to all PEP Bill winners.”***

-Matt Ryan (2005 PEP Winner) Executive Director  
Atlanta Boys and Girls Club, Atlanta, GA

## III. How SPARK aligns with 2016 PEP priorities and requirements

### Priorities

**Absolute Priority:** Under an absolute priority, we consider only applications that meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(3)). The absolute priorities for this program require that an applicant propose a program that will address its State's physical education standards and develop, expand, or improve its physical education program for students' kindergarten through grade 12 by undertaking the following activities:

SPARK content and instruction can be used to help a district align to their K-12 Physical Education District, State & National Standards:

[National Physical Education Standards](#) and [State Physical Education Standards](#)

#### (1) instruction in healthy eating habits and good nutrition

SPARK provides instructional materials and teacher training programs to support healthy eating, nutrition education, and health education for grades K-12, in and out of school settings.

[Healthy Kids Challenge](#) (HKC), SPARK's Nutrition Services program for grades K-8, utilizes evidence-based content and instructional strategies that are aligned with the recommendations of CDC, NIH, American Academy of Pediatrics and USDA to provide effective nutrition education materials and services to schools and staff.

SPARK's Health Education partner for grades 9-12, ETR High School *HealthSmart* is a comprehensive health education program that meets the National Health Education Standards, reflects the characteristics of effective health education curricula, and incorporates key knowledge and skill expectations detailed in the CDC's Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (HECAT) for each grade level.

In addition, SPARK provides supplemental nutrition education content on the password-protected website that houses the SPARK digital instructional content, [SPARKfamily.org](#). SPARKfit includes 10 mini-lessons, one for each month of the year; perfect for middle and high school physical education specialists. The SPARKg.y.m. (Great Young Minds) units within the K-2 and 3-6 PE programs provide a variety of activities that integrate nutrition and healthy eating concepts into physical education classes. They also provide a link to core subjects such as Language Arts, STEM, and Social Studies.

The SPARK [Classroom Activity and Recess](#) program is a complete solution for providing enjoyable and engaging physical activity opportunities in the classroom and recess. Content includes physical activities that support learning standards including Nutrition Education as well as other core subjects. Students participate in movement designed for the classroom setting – engaging their minds and bodies in rich learning activities.

## (2) physical fitness activities that must include at least one of the following:

(a) fitness education and assessment to help students understand, improve, or maintain their physical well-being;

SPARK elementary physical education is the **ONLY nationally disseminated program** that positively affects ALL of these critical student outcomes:

- Activity levels (moderate to vigorous surpasses 50% of class time),
- Physical fitness
- Sport skills
- Enjoyment
- Academic achievement
- Activity levels away from school
- Sustainability

And **SPARK positively effects teachers' quantity and quality of instruction** and surveys show they rate SPARK's easy to use curricular materials and teacher training programs very highly.

[Click here](#) for SPARK research publications.

SPARK has both instructor and student assessments to help understand, improve and maintain physical well-being. Each SPARK Physical Education curriculum set includes student assessments that may be used to guide learning, authentically assess student progress, and provide criteria for grading.

[Click here](#) to read more about SPARK student and teacher assessment.

SPARK was identified as a successful model for combating childhood obesity in the report, "*Fighting Obesity: What Works, What's Promising*" by the HSC Foundation. The report speaks of SPARK's history, practice, and methods. **SPARK was the ONLY program recommended for both physical education AND physical activity.** [Click Here](#) for the full report.

(b) instruction in a variety of motor skills and physical activities designed to enhance the physical, mental, and social or emotional development of every student

**SPARK is the only elementary physical education program that showed a significant increase in children's manipulative skills** (throwing, catching, and kicking). Motor skills are not only instructed, but they are instructed effectively as to produce real student outcomes.

A key to improving a student's physical and mental development is to affect what a PE teacher does every day to increase student MVPA (moderate to vigorous physical activity). SPARK Middle School PE is the **only** program that has shown significant gains in MVPA with both elementary and middle school students. [Click Here](#)

Each SPARK program has a section dedicated to the **instruction and assessment of social skills**. There are two different social skills for each grade level, K-8. In addition, the SPARK K-12, Classroom Activity and Recess (Elementary), and After School programs include [Character Matters](#), a social skills

development program designed to identify, reinforce, and assess character education concepts in physical education and physical activity settings. These concepts are introduced at the beginning of the school year in all SPARK PE programs (grades K-12), Classroom Activity and Recess (Elementary), and SPARK After School. This is an important time to develop an emotionally safe learning environment -- one that is inclusive, respectful, appreciative, trusting, all the while being active. Character Matters initiates personal growth and exploration, fosters cooperative relationships, and encourages positive academic behaviors. The application of these social skills directly and positively affects a child's social and emotional development.

Additionally, every aspect of SPARK focuses on inclusion. This promotes fairness and equity whenever youth participate in individual, partner, or group activities.

**(c) development of, and instruction in, cognitive concepts about motor skills and physical fitness that support a lifelong healthy lifestyle;**

SPARK provides lessons for instruction in cognitive concepts about motor skills and physical fitness that support a lifelong healthy lifestyle.

SPARK programs have **knowledge based information** woven throughout each curriculum binder and on SPARKfamily.org. For example, in the middle and high school programs the historical and social implications of each sport instructed are explained in the introduction section and in greater detail in the SPARK Event that culminates each unit.

SPARK 3-6, Middle School, and High School PE programs also provide written Unit Tests to give you an opportunity to see what your students need to learn or have learned during the unit. Unit Tests are short and can be given quickly at the beginning, middle or end of a unit, during class or given to students to complete at home and return.

In addition, SPARK technology (featured prominently on SPARKfamily.org) prompts use of Google Earth to view countries and initiate discussion around the significance of their location in the world and their contribution to sport. Entire sections in SPARK manuals and on their website are devoted to fitness development (including SPARKfit) and these contain (for example) exercise physiology knowledge pertaining to the recommended use of pedometers and heart rate monitors.

A key to SPARK is promoting the maintenance of physical activity outside of the PE class itself and then again off school campuses. Two sections address this, one is the SPARK Personal Best Day which promotes student goal setting to be active and improve their fitness scores away from PE class and monitor their progress over time; the other is the Personally Fit section (middle and high school) which incorporates proven behavior change concepts and integrates them into SPARK content throughout the school year.

Increasing physical activity during class and teaching students the skills they need to be consistently active away from class is one of SPARK's strongest attributes.

**(d) opportunities to develop positive social and cooperative skills through physical activity participation; or**

Each SPARK program has a section dedicated to the instruction and assessment of social skills. There are two different social skills for each grade level, K-8. In addition, the SPARK K-12, Classroom Activity and Recess (Elementary), and After School programs include [Character Matters](#), a social skills

development program designed to identify, reinforce, and assess character education concepts in physical education and physical activity settings. The application of these social skills directly and positively affects a child's social and emotional development.

Additionally, every aspect of SPARK focuses on inclusion. This promotes fairness and equity whenever youth participate in individual, partner, or group activities.

SPARK content includes complete units that promote student cooperation and trust through active games that teach and reinforce organization and management, how to work and play with others in activity environments, and even games that foster students' problem solving abilities.

Many SPARK lessons provide ample opportunities to develop positive social and cooperative skills through physical activity participation.

**(e) opportunities for professional development for teachers of physical education to stay abreast of the latest research, issues, and trends in the field of physical education.**

SPARK is proud to offer a wide selection of [on-site, off-site, and online teacher training programs](#) and topics to meet the professional development needs of your school, district or agency.

SPARK has the BEST presenters ready to lead the most effective and enjoyable professional growth day ever! Presenters include past SHAPE America Teachers of the Year, SPARK trainers and program authors, and product experts. Visit [www.sparkpe.org/training](http://www.sparkpe.org/training) to view the full menu of training and professional development options.

SPARK provides online training through the new website [SPARKeacademy.org](http://SPARKeacademy.org). Teachers can view free recorded webinars, complete an assessment, and earn a certificate of completion. In addition, educators can purchase online training modules in the SPARK research-based programs and earn a graduate unit of credit for completing all 16 courses in a SPARK program. Once you create a free account on SPARKeacademy.org, you can track all of your professional development hours earned at SPARK workshops, conference presentations, and webinars in one place.

Additionally, SPARK provides a [free webinar series](#) to support those already trained and encourage their professional growth path via new and relevant information. SPARK webinars are free, frequent, and feature leading experts in the field of physical education, activity, nutrition, and health.

SPARK also provides a free content-rich monthly eNewsletter that offers teaching tips, awareness of new tools and resources on SPARKfamily.org, and a schedule of conferences, workshops and classes available for teachers. SPARK's hope is that every physical educator continues to seek new opportunities to learn and grow professionally.

Additionally, SPARK staff are longtime members of SHAPE America (formerly AAHPERD) and their state organizations, and as such, often serve on committees and as consultants to special projects. SPARK Principals and trainers are frequent recipients of awards from national and state SHAPE America associations.

## Competitive Preference Priorities:

**Priority 1:** Partnerships Between Awardee and Supporting Community Entities. *We will give a competitive preference priority to an applicant that includes in its application an agreement that details the participation of required partners, as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications published in the Federal Register on March 21, 2016.*

- SPARK has extensive experience working with PEP Grant recipients and their partner organizations, and strongly encourages partner and community involvement to create a healthy and active environment.
- SPARK offers programs that extend beyond their award-winning K-12 PE Programs, including Classroom Activity and Recess (Elementary), Early Childhood, After School and Coordinated School Health Initiative. These programs engage community entities that provide support both inside and outside of the regular school day, including early childhood education and before/after school sites, as well as food service providers, nutrition programs and staff/workplace wellness.
- In addition, SPARK is actively engaged with several national, state, and local associations and community partners to provide resources that support physical activity and healthy eating.

**Priority 2:** Development of Non-Cognitive Factors. *We will give a competitive preference priority to an applicant that includes in its application projects that are designed to improve students' mastery of non-cognitive skills and behaviors (such as academic behaviors, academic mindset, perseverance, self-regulation, social and emotional skills, and approaches toward learning strategies) and enhance student motivation and engagement in learning.*

Since 1989, SPARK has provided evidence-based curriculum, training, and consultation to over 100,000 teachers and youth leaders, representing many thousands of schools, organizations, and agencies worldwide. Today, over 50 publications have documented positive SPARK effects such as:

- Lesson Context and teacher behavior
- Enjoyment (social and emotional skills)
- Academic achievement
- Improved teacher instruction (approaches toward learning strategies)
- Process measures (parent behavior, teacher acceptance of program)
- Sustainability and institutionalization -- SPARK effects are lasting

SPARK provides a number of resources to support academic learning through physical education, physical activity, and nutrition education. For example, SPARK provides resources for integrating academics within the printed and digital instructional materials, on the SPARK blog, through SPARK webinars, and in onsite professional development workshops.

In addition, each SPARK program has a section dedicated to the instruction and assessment of social skills. There are two different social skills for each grade level, K-8. In addition, the SPARK K-12, Classroom Activity and Recess (Elementary), and After School programs include Character Matters, a social skills development program designed to identify, reinforce, and assess character education concepts in physical education and physical activity settings. The application of these social skills directly and positively affects a child's social and emotional development.

SPARK content includes complete units that promote student cooperation and trust through active games that teach and reinforce organization and management, how to work and play with others in activity environments, and even games that foster students' problem solving abilities.

Many SPARK lessons provide ample opportunities to develop positive social and cooperative skills through physical activity participation.

**Priority 3:** Supporting High-Need Students. *We will give a competitive preference priority to an applicant that includes in its application projects designed to improve academic outcomes; learning environments; or both for students in lowest-performing schools.*

- Since 1989, the SPARK team of researchers and educators has been deeply involved in all aspects of grants and special projects. The vast majority of these targeted low-socioeconomic status student populations. Typically, a qualifier for low SES was percentage of free and reduced lunch students, with a benchmark of 70%. In both research and dissemination, SPARK has worked with dozens of low performing schools scattered across the U.S.
- Additionally, many SPARK studies and projects were intended to examine the effects of a SPARK program on a particular culture (e.g., Latino, African American, Asian and Pacific Islander). [Click Here](#) for more information on SPARK research among various cultures/populations.

### Invitational Priority:

**Priority 1:** Evidence of Promise. *We are inviting awardees to propose projects in which physical education or nutrition education programs and practices are supported by research studies that demonstrate evidence of promise as defined in 34 CFR 77.1c.*

The original SPARK study (supported by the Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health) was designed to create a new Physical Education program that was more inclusive and engaging than traditional PE classes. SPARK has built from this foundation and continues to stay true to this original objective. All SPARK activities are designed to incorporate challenges and adaptations to meet the needs of students with different skill and ability levels. SPARK activities have “Extensions” which are used to foster differentiated learning and grade level variations. Currently, over 50 publications demonstrate significant outcomes on students and teachers – including academic achievement, skill development and moderate to vigorous physical activity.

- SPARK Programs are supported by 4 NIH studies specific to SPARK and 3 others where SPARK was utilized as the activity intervention.
- The SPARK NIH studies, plus over 50 other studies currently published peer review journals, make SPARK the most evidence based program on the market today.
- Project SPARK (Sports, Play, and Active Recreation for Kids): Funded by NIH-NHLBI (National Institutes of Health and National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute) 1989-1996. Nationally funded study of the development and implementation of a health-related physical education and behavior change program for elementary schools (14 schools, 2 districts)

- Project M-SPAN (Middle School Physical Activity and Nutrition): Funded by NIH-NHLBI, 1996-2000. Benchmark study (24 schools, 9 districts) designed to increase physical activity opportunities throughout the school day, increase MVPA in PE classes, and decrease the consumption of fat on middle school campuses.
- TAAG (Trial of Activity for Adolescent Girls): Funded by NHLBI, 2000-2006. Six site national study examining ways to provide more physical activity opportunities for girls of middle school age. Hoping to reverse the downward activity trend that begins at this age and continues through adulthood.
- OPprA (Obesity Prevention in Pre-Adolescents): Funded by NHLBI, 1996-2001. Development of a social cognitive theory-based, 3-year multiple-component intervention (classroom curricula, school lunch, physical education, family education, and treatment) for primary and secondary prevention of obesity among children, and evaluation in a 13-school randomized controlled trial, with an additional one-year follow-up (N~1000 children).
- Pathways: Funded by NHLBI, 1994-2000. Provided modified SPARK curricula and staff development for a national study targeting Native American elementary school children on numerous reservations in 4 geographical locations. Over 20 schools participating in various aspects of the project.
- Aventuras Para Ninos: Funded by NIH-NHLBI, 2002-2007. Study of obesity prevention in Latino communities. Provided SPARK K-2 curricula and staff development for teachers of grades k-3; 12 elementary schools.
- The HEALTHY Study (2003-2010): This N.I.H. funded study examined the effects of a multi-component, middle school school-based PE and PA program addressing risk factors for diabetes among children. A multi-site (N=7) national study, 42 middle schools participated with 21 randomly assigned to intervention. Intervention consisted of providing MS PE teachers with curriculum, professional development, follow up support, and supplemental equipment. One of the SPARK MS PE trainers identified earlier (Mr. Steve Bruecker) was one of the primary authors of the curriculum used and led the development of both the teacher training program and the coaching/mentoring support model. SPARK aided this study by giving granting permission to incorporate SPARK and M-SPAN content and instruction.

To view additional research in a specific population or program, please visit:

[www.sparkpe.org/physical-education-resources/publications/](http://www.sparkpe.org/physical-education-resources/publications/)

As the conduit to moving research to practice, the SPARK programs:

1. Include a range of age appropriate activities
  - All SPARK programs are designed for specific age ranges and provide age- appropriate activities. Each program is supported by research projects related to that particular age range.
2. Aim to reach the recommended guidelines on dosage and duration
  - SPARK has proven to increase the quantity and quality of physical activity instruction. SPARK increases MVPA (moderate to vigorous physical activity) to over 50% of class-time (reporting requirement) whether instructed by PE specialists or classroom teachers - and SPARK will consult with you on how to measure it.

3. Are engaging and fun for kids
  - SPARK has proven to increase enjoyment of physical education. In fact, SPARK elementary physical education is the only nationally-disseminated program that positively affects ALL of these student outcomes:
    - Enjoyment of PE
    - Academic Achievement
    - Activity levels (moderate to vigorous surpasses 50% of class time)
    - Fitness achievement
    - Sport Skills development
  
4. Are led by well-trained coaches and mentors
  - Over 45 publications demonstrate significant outcomes on students and teachers- including the quality of instruction. SPARK PE has been proven to work with both elementary physical education specialists and classroom teachers
  
  - SPARK professional development workshops are designed to address the professional needs of a particular audience (based on SPARK conducted formative assessment) and to provide each attendee with a practical knowledge of SPARK's unique content and instructional strategies. In addition, SPARK provides an extensive followup/support system for educators including lifetime support and consultation for each attendee via 800 number and e-mail, monthly webinars and e-newsletters, social media opportunities, and Institutes (in-depth, subject matter projects) to further foster professional growth.
  
5. Track progress, both individually and for the group
  - SPARK Standard and Premium programs include program evaluation tools and student assessments, and FREE consultation on their use: [Click Here](#).
  
6. Provide consistent motivation and incentives.
  - SPARK activities are more inclusive, active, and fun than activities taught in traditional PE classes. SPARK activities are engaging and foster success for all students, regardless of skill or ability. The environment that SPARK-trained educators create enables students to remain engaged and motivated to embrace lifelong activity.

## Requirements

### Requirement 1—Align Project Goals with Identified Needs Using the School Health Index.

#### (1) Aligning Project Goals with Identified Needs Using the School Health Index

Awardees are required to complete the physical activity and nutrition questions in Modules 1-4 of the CDC's School Health Index (SHI) self-assessment tool or use an alternative needs assessment tool to develop project goals and plans that address the identified needs.

Module 1: School Health and Safety Policies and Environment;

Module 2: Health Education;

Module 3: Physical Education and Other Physical Activity Programs;

Module 4: Nutrition Services

SPARK offers the Ignite a Healthy Environment Program, which can assist your School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) in completing Modules 1-4 of the CDC's School Health Index (SHI). If you have already completed the SHI, the Ignite a Healthy Environment Program can help your SHAC create an action plan to address your needs. SPARK has extensive experience in customizing FEASIBLE plans based on existing resources and needs to create environmental change that lasts.

### Requirement 2--Nutrition- and Physical Activity-Related Policies.

Grantees must develop, update, or enhance physical activity policies and food and nutrition-related policies that promote healthy eating and physical activity throughout students' everyday lives, as part of their PEP projects.

With the SPARK [Nutrition Education/HKC program](#), incorporating these goals and creating an action plan and evaluation is a workshop and or distance assistance option. The Balance My Day Curriculum and HKC Wellness Solutions Toolkit provide action ideas to meet this requirement. HKC can also provide training for food service directors and staff, supported by the Explore MyPlate with School Nutrition guidebook. The guidebooks is a fun, easy-to-use guide with tips and tools for school nutrition services managers and teams. Action ideas are designed to increase participation through marketing and promotion and help meet the HealthierUS School Challenge. Content includes MyPlate, trivia, bulletin boards, food science experiments to link with curriculum standards, menu planning tips, and fun ideas for youth advisory councils.

"The Recess" component of the Classroom Activity and Recess program provides planning, implementation, evaluation resources, and equipment for recess staff looking to improve activity opportunities for all students. As a critical component of Comprehensive School Physical Activity, recess contributes greatly to youth physical activity levels at school. Students must be provided opportunities to be active during well-organized and developmentally appropriate recess programs. Further, recess has a well-documented positive relationship to improved academic behaviors and supports teacher efforts in the classroom.

The [ETR High School HealthSmart](#) program is a comprehensive health education program that meets the National Health Education Standards, reflects the characteristics of effective health education curricula, and incorporates key knowledge and skill expectations detailed in the CDC's Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (HECAT) for each grade level.

### Requirement 3--Linkage with Local Wellness Policies.

Awardees that are participating in a program authorized by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 must describe in their applications their school district's established local wellness policy and how the proposed PEP project will align with, support, complement, and enhance the implementation of the applicant's local wellness policy. The LEA's local wellness policy should address all requirements in the Child Nutrition Act of 1966.

With SPARK's Ignite a Healthy Environment Program, our nutrition training will help establish wellness councils at the school building level and/or to expand and enhance actions taken by existing wellness councils. Distance assistance (ongoing professional support) is highly recommended for support these policies.

## Requirement 4-- Equipment Purchases.

Purchases of equipment with PEP funds or with funds used to meet the program's matching requirement must be aligned with the curricular components of the proposed physical education and nutrition program. Awardees must commit to aligning the students' use of the equipment with PEP elements applicable to their projects, identified in the absolute priority in this notice, and any applicable curricula by signing a Program-Specific Assurance. Awardees that do not submit a Program-Specific Assurance signed by the applicant's Authorized Representative are ineligible for the competition.

**SPARK's Content-Matched Equipment** (the "tools you need to teach"). SPARK aligns the equipment (tools) to the curriculum. SPARK has taken the guess work out of the equation. Please [click here](#) for SPARK content matched equipment lists.

SPARK's curriculum has been reviewed through the PECAT for you to assure the accuracy of curriculum products. [Click here](#) to view SPARK's report and scorecard for the PECAT.

The Healthy Kids Challenge (HKC) nutrition education program and our health education partner programs Healthy Lifestyle Choices (HLC) and ETR High School *HealthSmart* are aligned with and identified HECAT standards. With the HKC Balance My Day curricula you have the option of a comprehensive or select your own nutrition education plan.

[Click here](#) to view HKC's report and scorecard for the HECAT. [Click here](#) to learn more about our health education partners and to view the HLC and ETR *HealthSmart* HECAT alignment.

## Requirement 5-- Increasing Transparency and Accountability.

Grantees must create or use existing reporting mechanisms to provide information on students' progress, in the aggregate, on the key program indicators, as described in this notice and required under the Government Performance and Results Act, as well as on any unique project-level measures proposed in the application. Grantees that are educational agencies or institutions are subject to applicable Federal, State, and local privacy provisions, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act-- a law that generally prohibits the non-consensual disclosure of personally identifiable information in a student's education record. All grantees must comply with applicable Federal, State, and local privacy provisions. The aggregate-level information should be easily accessible by the public, such as posted on the grantee's or a partner's Web site. Awardees must describe in their application the planned method for reporting.

Awardees must commit to reporting information to the public by signing a Program-Specific Assurance. Awardees that do not submit a Program-Specific Assurance signed by the applicant's Authorized Representative are ineligible for the competition.

Each SPARK Physical Education and After School curriculum set includes student assessments that may be used to guide learning and authentically assess student progress. SPARK aligns their quality assessment tools with the equipment that you need (e.g., pedometers, heart rate monitors, etc.) with professional consultation and ongoing support.

SPARK student assessments include performance rubrics student self-check assessments and written unit tests. The SPARK manuals also include a special Personal Best Day section to track fitness progress over time (included in 3-6 PE, Middle School PE, High School PE, and After School). This is an individualized program designed to allow students to monitor their aerobic capacity, abdominal and upper body strength and endurance, and set goals for individual improvement. The Personal Best Day activities align perfectly with the Presidential Youth Fitness Program.

## Performance Measures

There are three Performance Measures required for this program:

**Measure One:** The percentage of students who engage in 60 minutes of daily physical activity. Grantees must use pedometers for students in grades K-12 and an additional 3-Day Physical Activity Recall (3DPAR) instrument to collect data on students in grades 5-12.

SPARK Physical Education has been **PROVEN** to increase MVPA (moderate to vigorous physical activity) to over 50% of class-time (PEP reporting requirement) whether instructed by PE specialists or classroom teachers - and SPARK will consult with you on how to measure it. Over 45 publications demonstrate these outcomes on students and teachers: [\(Click here for a list of publications\)](#)

SPARK Classroom Activity and Recess helps provide 30 minutes of the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity (5 minute physical activity break, 10 minute academically-focused physical activity and 15 minutes of activity at recess.

**SPARK LASTS.** A 2005 paper in Research Quarterly proved SPARK sustainability and ability to institutionalize [\(Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 2005\)](#)

SPARK provides and recommends pedometers for many activities in grades K-12. SPARK has specific pedometer lessons and myriad pedometer assessment tools to support PEP evaluation requirements. Additionally, SPARK introduces heart rate monitors in middle school and numerous lessons and assessment tools are provided to teachers to support their effective use.

**Measure Two:** The percentage of students served by the grant who meet the standards of a healthy fitness zone as established by the assessments for the Presidential Youth Fitness Program (PYFP) In at least five of the six fitness areas of that assessment.

SPARK is the **only** nationally-disseminated Physical Education program that has data to show students statistically significantly increase their fitness scores. [Click Here](#)

A key to improving cardio-fitness scores is to affect what a PE teacher does every day to increase MVPA (moderate to vigorous physical activity). SPARK Middle School PE is the only nationally-disseminated Physical Education program that has shown significant gains in MVPA with both elementary and middle school students. [Click Here](#)

In addition, the SPARK manuals include a special **Personal Best Day** section to track fitness progress over time (included in 3-6 PE, Middle School PE, High School PE, and After School). This is an individualized program designed to allow students to monitor their aerobic capacity, abdominal and upper body strength and endurance, and set goals for individual improvement. The Personal Best Day activities align perfectly with the Presidential Youth Fitness Program.

**Measure Three:** The percentage of students served by the grant who consumed fruit two or more times per day and vegetables three or more times per day. Programs serving high school students are required to use the nutrition-related questions from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey to determine the number of students who meet these goals. Programs serving elementary and middle school students should use an appropriate assessment tool for their populations.

SPARK's Ignite a Healthy Environment Program, helps establish wellness councils at the school building level or to expand and/or enhance actions taken by existing wellness councils. HKC's Balance My Day Curricula has learning activities, tracking logs and other evaluation measures that simplify this requirement. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Guidelines for School Health Programs to Promote Lifelong Healthy Eating](#) stress the importance of providing students with knowledge, attitudes, and skills required to make positive health decisions. HKC curriculum uses social learning theory recognized by CDC and other leading experts to develop behavior change. HKC measures, aligned with HECAT identified outcomes (knowledge, skills, and behavior), are directly linked to the learning activities for the most effective outcomes. HKC can also provide training for food service directors and staff, supported by the Explore MyPlate with School Nutrition guidebook. Content includes MyPlate, trivia, bulletin boards, food science experiments to link with curriculum standards, menu planning tips, and fun ideas for youth advisory councils.

**Measure 4:** The cost (based on the amount of the grant award) per student who achieves the level of physical activity required to meet the physical activity measure above (i.e., 60 minutes of daily physical activity).

SPARK is cost effective and proven to work and last. Contact us at [spark@sparkpe.org](mailto:spark@sparkpe.org) or 1-800-SPARK PE to speak with a Sportime & SPARK Program Representative for specific pricing for your proposal. We will ask you a few questions, learn about your current program, and listen to your vision for creating a healthy and active community. Together, we'll create a program that will work and be sustainable.

## IV. Important links to additional PEP resources

1. SPARK Sample Text for PEP Grant Writers [Click Here](#)  
Or visit: <http://www.sparkpe.org/grants/pep-grant-info/> to access the full hyperlink
2. PECAT Reports for SPARK K-12 PE [Click Here](#)  
Or visit: <http://www.sparkpe.org/grants/pep-grant-info/> to access the full hyperlink
3. HECAT Reports for our Health & Nutrition Partners [Click Here](#)  
Or visit: <http://www.sparkpe.org/grants/pep-grant-info/> to access the full hyperlink
4. SPARK Assessment Tools [Click Here](#)  
Or visit: <http://www.sparkpe.org/grants/pep-grant-info/> to access the full hyperlink
5. SPARK alignment with national & state standards [Click Here](#)  
Or visit: <http://www.sparkpe.org/grants/pep-grant-info/> to access the full hyperlink
6. SPARK alignment with the Presidential Youth Fitness Program [Click Here](#)  
Or visit: <http://www.sparkpe.org/grants/pep-grant-info/presidential-youth-fitness-program-alignment/>
7. SPARK Character Matters social skills development program [Click Here](#)  
Or visit: [http://www.sparkpe.org/wp-content/uploads/CHARACTER\\_MATTERS-InformationalSheet.pdf](http://www.sparkpe.org/wp-content/uploads/CHARACTER_MATTERS-InformationalSheet.pdf)
8. Denver Public Schools PEP Grant success story [Click Here](#)  
Or visit: <http://www.sparkpe.org/grants/pep-grant-info/> to access the full hyperlink