



# ANCHOR

ACCELERATING NATIONAL COMMUNITY HEALTH OUTCOMES THROUGH REINFORCING PARTNERSHIPS

## PROVIDENCE TEACHERS LEARN HOW TO GET KIDS MOVING



The obesity rate among children has more than tripled since 1980, contributing to a rise in the risk for developing diabetes, heart disease and other debilitating health problems. Like many other states, Rhode Island's childhood obesity rate climbed as physical activity among youth dropped. Physical education teachers from the Providence Public School District recently attended an American Heart Association-sponsored training on improving the health of students by increasing opportunities for them to be more physically active before, during and after school. Research shows that physical activity is a key to decreasing the risks of heart disease, stroke and other chronic illnesses. Physically active children also tend to focus and behave better at school.

### The Challenge

Like the rest of the nation, Rhode Island has a childhood obesity problem. The state ranks second highest in the country for obesity among low-income children ages 2- to 4-years-old. Recent statistics report that 11% of Rhode Island high school students are obese, with an additional 16% reported as being overweight. Part of the blame goes to the steep decline over the past few decades in physical activity among children. The American Heart Association recommends children get at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day, yet few meet that challenge. Among Rhode Island high school students, only 44 percent reported in 2015 that they were physically active five or more days per week.



**“Good nutrition is certainly important, but increasing physical activity minutes and ensuring quality physical education classes for all students are just as vital to improved student health and academic success.”**

- Jennifer Quigley-Harris, Providence Public School District wellness coordinator and the mother of two

