

PE Works

Initiative Keep Kids Active

Nyree Dixon, principal at K012 Dr. Jacqueline PeekDavis School in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, practices distributed leadership. “I want all my teachers to understand that they are leaders in some way,” she said. “I can’t do this work alone.”

Dixon’s involvement in [PE Works](#) has reinforced that core value in unexpected ways. PE Works is a mayoral initiative to ensure that all students citywide receive high-quality physical education that meets New York State requirements and builds a foundation for lifelong learning. As part of PE Works, schools at all grade levels receive support, training, and resources through the Office of School Wellness Programs. In addition, elementary schools without a certified PE teacher receive funding to help hire one.

K012 did not have a certified PE teacher, so Dixon attended a PE teacher job fair, and with the help of PE Works, hired Eric Neufeld, now in his second year. “There’s a new direction in PE,” Neufeld said. “Students explore many types of physical activity. Units like basketball still have a place in my class, but I follow that with jump rope or other aerobic activities. Everyone must find something to keep them moving for the rest of their life.”

Previously, this school shared a PE teacher with a middle school in the building. Now the students at K012 have a dedicated PE teacher, and the two PE teachers collaborate to share space and schedule efficiently. Neufeld also added other programs to get students, staff,

and families moving: Mighty Milers, a free New York Road Runners program that takes place before school; a golf outing for students and families, some of whom had never left the neighborhood; and an ice-skating event that attracted 150 of the small school’s families.

“Not only did everyone get exercise and have a good time, but children saw that it was okay to fall down, get up, and learn to do better next time,” Neufeld said. He is becoming a [Move-to-Improve](#) trainer to help the classroom teachers at his school incorporate 10-minute physical activity sessions into instruction. Short bursts of activity can help keep students focused, and enable the school to meet State time requirements for PE.

In July, Neufeld took on an additional role. The principal pulled him into her data analysis team focused on core academics, which recently presented at a district principals’ conference. Neufeld views this leadership opportunity as a bonus. “This infuses me into work that our students need and our teachers want,” he said.

Thanks to a \$2,500 School Wellness Council grant, this year Dixon will be able to implement Move-to-Improve schoolwide, create an indoor vertical garden where students can grow and harvest greens to eat, and develop health education lessons that will be posted on the school’s website for families to share. The principal and PE teacher are also training together for the 2017 New York City marathon.

Now, this is teamwork!

For more information about PE Works, please email Peworks@schools.nyc.gov.

Manuscript Writing Guide

Current research supports the value of teaching handwriting. To deepen our work in this area, the Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Learning has produced the [Teaching Cursive Writing](#) and [Teaching Manuscript Writing](#) handbooks for the 2016–17 school year. The two online resources present best practices and strategies in cursive and manuscript writing

instruction (focusing on grades pre-k–12), as well as research on the topic, and links to additional research. The cursive handbook was distributed in the September edition of Principal Notes.

School leaders and staff members decide how to incorporate cursive and manuscript instruction, and these handbooks can guide and support that work.