

**Promoting Physical Activity Breaks in Clairton City School District Sixth Grade  
Classrooms**

by

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## **Promoting Physical Activity Breaks in Clairton City School District Sixth Grade**

### **Classrooms**

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A classroom physical activity break is any physical activity done in the classroom. It can take place at any time and occur in one or several brief periods during the school day. It includes integrating physical activity into academic instruction as well as providing breaks from instruction specifically designed for physical activity. Classroom physical activity can be offered in addition to physical education and recess and at all school levels (elementary, middle, and high school). Classroom physical activity improves students' concentration and ability to stay on-task in the classroom, reduces disruptive behavior, improves students' motivation and engagement in the learning process and increases the number of students' daily physical activity. Although the data supports the worthwhile intervention of the effectiveness of physical activity breaks, the reality is that physical education in general and specifically classroom physical activity breaks are low priorities for school administration and faculty in the face of pressure for academic performance. Furthermore, the need for schools to address students' social, health, family and economic needs may further limit schools' resources and capacity to provide physical education and any additional physical activity throughout the school day. An inquiry of the implementation of classroom physical activity breaks in Clairton City School District sixth grade classrooms to improve classroom physical activity breaks was interrupted and derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Using data collected as part of the inquiry pilot activities as well as surveys and activity logs

identified gaps in the school's ability to support student learning and the lack of capacity at many levels to support students' health, and in particular their physical activity. Recommended are strategies for universal implications, school reentry in Fall 2020 with classroom physical activity breaks across multiple platforms and long-term implementation of physical activity breaks at Clairton City School District.

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## Preface

First and foremost, I would like to give thanks and praise to the Almighty God for the opportunity to pursue a doctorate degree. God has provided me with the knowledge and strength to endure this doctoral journey and I could not have done it without Him. Through the ups and the downs, He has always been by my side. Special thanks to my committee members, Dr. Carl Fertman, Dr. Cynthia Tananis and Dr. Sally Sherman for your continuous support throughout my dissertation journey. Your teachings have not only taught me how to be a scholarly practitioner, but have positively impacted my perspective on life. Thank you for believing in me and for challenging me to always aim higher. For that, I am a better person because of you. Thanks to 2017 HPA cohort for keeping me afloat when I felt underwater. This journey has brought us closer and we became life-long friends who continued to uplift, support, mentor and persevere when the journey got tough. Last but certainly not least, I thank my family and friends for helping me to realize my full potential and for encouraging me to pursue my true passion and work tenaciously. To my son Justin, I want to thank you for teaching me that no matter what life obstacles come my way, to stay the course because everything in life happens for a reason and things will always work out for the best. I could not have completed this process without all of you.

## **1.0 Introduction**

According to the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, less than one-third of children and adolescents in the United States are meeting the recommendation to get 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day (National Physical Activity Guidelines, 2008). Considering that 95 percent of school-age students attend school regularly, schools play an instrumental role in helping students to establish lifelong healthy behaviors such as promoting physical activity (CDC Healthy Schools, 2020).

### **1.1 Problem Area**

Literature states that students who are physically active tend to have better grades, school attendance, cognitive performance (e.g., memory), and classroom behaviors (e.g., on-task behavior). (CDC Healthy Schools, 2020). In addition, greater efforts are needed to ensure more children are attaining physical activity recommendations, including more opportunities for youth to participate in physical activity during school hours and after school hours to decrease health disparities, improve health outcomes and improve academic performance and chronic absenteeism (Dinkel, 2016). Regular physical activity improves strength and endurance, builds healthy bones and muscles, controls weight, improves mental health by reducing anxiety, stress, and depression, and increases self-esteem (Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee Report, 2018).

The literature also shares that childhood obesity rates are increasing and children should be active for at least 60 minutes every day. Only one-third of high-school students are currently

meeting this goal, and schools can meet this physical activity goal by increasing school health programs, implementing physical education programs, active recess, in addition to after-school and other recreational activities (Kohl, 2013). The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers free, evidence-based tools and resources to help schools implement these guidelines to address health risk behaviors. Specifically, the literature outlines policy recommendations for schools to require daily physical education for students in K-12 grades - 225 minutes per week for secondary schools and at least 20 additional minutes of recess per day (Shape of the Nation, 2016). However, questions remain about physical activity during school hours in the state of Pennsylvania for public schools. Additionally, opportunities to participate in interscholastic sports to try to reach the recommended physical activity levels outside of school hours may also be limited and beyond the reach of many school districts.

## **1.2 Problem of Practice**

For public schools in the state of Pennsylvania, there is no legal mandate on recess, time requirements for physical education, or other physical activity programs during the school day. Neither the Pennsylvania Department of Education nor the State Board of Education mandates a specific number of minutes or times per week that health and physical education should be provided. Each school district in the state of Pennsylvania has the authority to make the decision as to the most appropriate manner in which to schedule classes as long as it is within the boundaries of the Pennsylvania School Code (Pennsylvania Department of Education - PA Public School Code 1949) and the Pennsylvania Code (Pennsylvania Code and Bulletin). These mandates negatively impact all students, including those enrolled at Clairton City School District.

Clairton City School District offers recess, physical education, and interscholastic sports; however, many students are still not meeting the daily recommendation for physical activity, therefore, promoting the implementation of classroom physical activity breaks would increase physical activity during the school day to ensure that students are meeting the daily 60-minute physical activity recommendation.

For this inquiry, sixth grade classrooms were selected for several reasons. First, sixth grade is the first grade level for Clairton Middle/High School (6-12 grade). Since students receive recess at Clairton Elementary School (K-5 grade), students who transition from fifth grade (elementary school) to sixth grade (middle/high school) no longer receive recess, physical education daily and other physical activity throughout the school day. Second, sixth grade students are experiencing developmental changes from physical (i.e., puberty), cognitive (i.e., problem-solving), language, and social and emotional milestones (Understood for All, 2020). Many of these developmental changes affect student achievement and behavior. Hence, it is reported by the teachers within the district that sixth grade students at Clairton Middle/High School have higher student behavioral concerns in the classroom.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Classroom Physical Activity Break**

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), School Health Policies and Practices Study in 2014, only 45 percent of schools have students participate in regular physical activity breaks during the school day. Specifically, 43 percent of elementary school students, 64 percent of middle school students, and 27 percent of high school students (CDC School Health Policies Study, 2015). Considering the barriers of many schools not having physical education, recess or other physical activity opportunities, schools should provide more opportunities for classroom physical activity breaks to help students meet the daily recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Classroom physical activity is an important part of a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (Figure 2.1). Classroom physical activity gives students opportunities for physical activity during the school day in addition to physical education and recess. Encouraging students to be physically active during classroom learning can increase the amount of time they are active and limit the amount of time they are sedentary (Springboard to Active Schools).

According to the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, physical activity is defined as, “any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure such as walking, dancing, jumping and yoga” (National Physical Activity Guidelines, 2008). More specifically, classroom physical activity can be defined as any physical activity done in the classroom that takes place at any time and occurs in one or several periods of time during the school day. Terms used to describe physical activity in the classroom or some aspect of it include,

but are not limited to; movement integration, classroom physical activity breaks, active learning, active classrooms, energizers, and brain boosters (Strategies for Classroom PA in Schools, 2018). Classroom physical activity serves as a strategic opportunity to promote physical activity during the school day and does not take away from student learning time. Classroom physical activity limits sedentary time among students and boosts academic achievement. Every classroom is unique and there are many evidence-based ways to integrate physical activity into the classroom outside of physical education and recess (Springboard to Active Schools).

## **2.2 Importance of Classroom Physical Activity Breaks**

Providing a supportive, active classroom setting gives students opportunities to be physically active while teaching them new strategies for active living (Public Health Law Center, 2013). Classroom physical activity can keep male and female students both equally active and has a positive effect on students in all grade levels (K-12) (CDC Comprehensive School PA Programs Guide for Schools, 2013). Physical activity in the classroom can be an effective strategy to help students reach the daily recommended 60 minutes of physical activity (Public Health Law Center, 2013). Classroom physical activity has been shown to improve student concentration and attention, classroom behavior, motivation and engagement in the learning process and academic performance (Springboard to Active Schools). Making physical activity part of classroom time increases motivation and enjoyment of learning, decreases behavioral problems, and improves concentration, on-task behaviors, and test scores (Strategies for Classroom PA in Schools, 2018).

### **2.3 Approaches to Incorporate Classroom Physical Activity Breaks**

There are several research-based classroom physical activity break resources available for schools to use to help promote and implement classroom physical activity breaks. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is grounded in research and resources to support schools with implementing physical activity during the school day. One resource recommended by the CDC is Springboard to Active Schools.

Springboard to Active Schools is an initiative of the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) and Health Resources in Action (HRiA) through Cooperative Agreement CDC-RFA-DP16-1601 with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Springboard to Active Schools was developed in 2016 as a classroom physical activity promotion toolkit to support CDC-funded state departments of health and/or education to promote active school environments in school districts and schools across the country. Grounded in the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model, an active school environment (also known as a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program) is a multi-component approach by which school districts and schools use all opportunities for students to be physically active. This includes, physical education, physical activity during school, physical activity before and after school, staff involvement, and family and community engagement (Springboard to Active Schools).





**Figure 2.1 Comprehensive school physical activity program framework**

The Springboard to Active Schools toolkit provides 10 strategies for implementing classroom physical activity in schools. Strategy 4 - classroom physical activity promotes classroom management and increases student engagement in the learning process, while helping students get more minutes of physical activity was used during the formative evaluation was used during the formative evaluation process to develop classroom physical activities that could be integrated into planned instruction (i.e., added to the lesson plans) and outside of planned instruction (not tied to the lesson being taught).

## **2.4 Clairton City School District**

The City of Clairton is located in the southern portion of Allegheny County, approximately 15 miles from the City of Pittsburgh. The school district is located in the center which is 2.9 square miles in size with a population of approximately 8,000 people. The district is adjacent to Routes 43 and 51, which provide access to communities from Pittsburgh to Uniontown. Clairton City School District consists of one elementary school and one middle and high school, all located in a single facility named the Clairton Education Center. The school population consists of 775 students, 67 teachers, 19 paraprofessionals and 11 administrators. 87 percent of the students enrolled are economically disadvantaged, 23 percent special education, 66 percent African American, 19 percent Caucasian, and 13 percent two or more races (Pennsylvania Index). Average class sizes are created so that there are less than 20 students for each teacher whenever possible. The community has old historical roots, with some family names extending back to the early 1900's. The community was founded during this period of time to support the newly created steel industry. A Coke-making facility now replaces the old steel mills. This plant is the largest facility of its kind in the northern hemisphere. In addition, the community offers low – income, affordable housing and, therefore, is attractive to younger families. The community was devastated by the down-turn of the domestic steel industry in the 1980's. A national report, 'Fault Lines: America's Most Segregating School District Borders,' lists Clairton as #4 nationally out of 50 poverty segregated districts that border wealthier districts. It is one of the poorest school districts in Allegheny County (Poiner, 2016).

### **2.4.1 Clairton School Physical Activity**

Clairton City School District offers physical education in all grade levels except for eighth grade. The district employs three physical education teachers across the district. The first physical education teacher is a certified health and physical education teacher who has been employed with the school district for 16 years. The physical education teacher teaches physical education for grades 4, 5, 6 and 7. Physical education is structured and offered every three days a week for grades 4 and 5 for a total of 43 minutes. (Hence, one grade level receives a total of 43 minutes of physical education a week while the other two grade levels receive a total of 86 minutes of physical education a week). Grades 4 and 5 begin physical education class with 10 minutes of warm-ups. For the remainder of the class period (33 minutes), students play a physical activity such as basketball, kickball, volleyball, soccer or whiffle ball. Grade 6 has physical education every day for a total of 43 minutes for a total of nine weeks (215 minutes per week; 1,935 minutes per school year). This grade level begins the physical education class with stretching and warm-ups which consists of two laps around the gymnasium (basketball court), 30-second wall-sits and ten dips on the bleachers. For the remainder of the class period, students play pinball (Monday), sports (Tuesday and Thursday), kickball (Wednesday) and free-play/non-structured (Friday).

The second physical education teacher is not a certified physical education teacher and has been employed with the school district for one year. They teach character education which is similar to physical education or what students identify as “gym” for grades Kindergarten, 1 and 2. Character education is integrated through play. Every month there is a theme word and students learn that word through their interaction/play with peers during the class period. For example, the theme word for the month of August is “Kindness” so students are taught what it means to be kind

and how to show kindness to their peers. A writing activity is also incorporated during this class period.

Character education is divided into three groups (i.e., A, B, C) across grade levels (i.e., K, 1, 2). Each group (Table 2.1) has 45 minutes of character education once or twice a week (every four days per group).

**Table 2.1 Clairton elementary school physical education program**

	<b>Group A (45 minutes)</b>	<b>Group B (45 minutes)</b>	<b>Group C (45 minutes)</b>
<b>Grade Level</b>	Kindergarten	Kindergarten	Kindergarten
<b>Grade Level</b>	Grade 1	Grade 1	Grade 1
<b>Grade Level</b>	Grade 2	Grade 2	Grade 2

#### **2.4.2 Clairton School Physical Activity Breaks**

Springboard to Active Schools provides several physical activity break resources that can be used to integrate physical activity into planned academic instruction and outside of planned academic instruction. Springboard to Active Schools recommends the Colorado Education Initiative Take a Break! Teacher Toolbox which is the only resource recommended by Springboard to Active Schools that is targeted towards secondary classroom settings only.

The Colorado Education Initiative Take a Break! Teacher Toolbox developed a 152-page guide that provides useful, tangible and practical tools and templates gathered from resources throughout the nation and within the state of Colorado to create, enhance and implement activity breaks in secondary classrooms (The Colorado Education Initiative Toolkit). The physical activity breaks in the toolbox are 1-5 minutes breaks that are recommended to be implemented once every

30-60 minutes every day for all students, including engagement from the classroom teacher. The toolbox includes Printable Activity Cards and online resources. The Printable Activity Cards contain over 100 secondary appropriate and easy to integrate activities; including a lesson plan template to create student activities. The Online Resources Section includes YouTube videos, games, music, interactive programs/challenges, research to support physical activity breaks and materials you can purchase or create on your own to further your break activities. The guide is user friendly and also provides tips on how to ensure success with promoting and implementing classroom physical activity breaks in secondary classrooms (The Colorado Education Initiative Toolkit).

For this inquiry, seven activities were selected from the Colorado Education Initiative Take a Break! Teacher Toolbox. All seven activities were modified and placed within a guide called, The Teacher's Playbook (Appendix C). Within the Teacher's Playbook (Appendix C), there are seven useful, tangible and practical classroom physical activity breaks gathered from the Colorado Education Initiative Take a Break! Teacher Toolbox to create, enhance and implement activity breaks in sixth grade classrooms. The physical activity breaks can be integrated *into planned academic instruction (added to teacher's lesson planning)* or *outside of planned academic instruction (added to limit sedentary time or to boost student's energy)*.

The activities within The Teacher's Playbook (Appendix C) include:

- Warm-up Stations
- Got Skills?
- What's Your Sport?
- What's Your Call?
- Higher or Lower
- Playoffs: Rock, Paper, Scissors... *SHOOT!*
- The Future Trainer

### **2.4.3 Implementation Process – Clairton Middle/High School Physical Activity Breaks**

A sixth grade classroom physical activity break teacher training (Appendix D) was conducted and developed to provide sixth grade teachers with an overview of classroom physical activity breaks including the importance of classroom physical activity breaks and how to implement physical activity breaks in the classroom. Following the teacher training, teachers reviewed The Teacher’s Playbook (Appendix C) and practiced the seven activities as a group. Observations and Professional Learning Committee (PLC) meetings with sixth grade middle school teachers were proposed to provide ongoing support with implementation of classroom physical activity breaks in addition to focusing on the role of physical activity breaks in sixth grade classrooms, the importance of physical activity breaks and suggestions for future implementation throughout Clairton City School District. Lastly, a survey was completed by three sixth grade teachers to gain their input and insights to improve the activity break implementation.

## **3.0 Methods**

### **3.1 Inquiry Questions**

The inquiry questions are:

1. Are the teachers implementing the physical activity breaks as planned?
2. Are the physical activity breaks working/making a difference?

### **3.2 Inquiry Design**

The inquiry was designed as an intervention and a formative evaluation including three sixth grade teachers implementing classroom physical activity breaks. This was an intentional improvement process to begin implementation of classroom physical activity breaks as a district wide initiative, while gaining input from a small sample of participants and provide them with insights to improve the activity break implementation. An ongoing collaborative approach between the district administrator and the three sixth grade teachers was designed to focus on the role of physical activity breaks in sixth grade classrooms, the importance of physical activity breaks and suggestions for future implementation throughout Clairton City School District.

### 3.3 Setting

Clairton Middle/High school is located on the second and third level of the school building. Sixth grade classrooms are located on the second level on one side of the hallway - three classrooms comprising a total of 70 sixth grade students.

Teacher A has classroom with desks organized in two groups of twelve desks. Some students are facing towards the front of the classroom while other students are facing towards the back of the classroom. The classroom walls are a light brown color which gives a warm and comfortable feel to the classroom environment. Teacher A has two brown chalkboards - one in front of the classroom and a second in the back of the classroom. The classroom is very organized, colorful and Hawaiian themed.

Teacher B also has a classroom with desks grouped together in fours. The classroom is decorated with a superhero theme. Superhero emblems are painted on the walls along with other colorful decorations including math posters. Notably, Teacher B is very thorough when it comes to daily classroom objectives which are recited and also written on the white board in front of the classroom.

Teacher C has white walls and desks grouped together in fours in their classroom. Some chairs are facing towards the back of the classroom and some facing towards the front of the classroom. The classroom is very bare with no decor.



### **3.4 Participants**

There are three sixth grade teachers at Clairton Middle/High School. Teacher A has 17 students in their homeroom and teaches Science and Social Studies. This teacher has been employed with the district for six years. This teacher has a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education.

Teacher B has 23 students in their homeroom and teaches five 43-minute Math classes. This teacher has been employed with the district for two years teaching sixth grade math courses including pre-algebra, algebra 1, algebra 2, trigonometry and pre-calculus. This teacher has a Bachelor of Science degree and has four years of teaching experience; two years in middle school and two years in high school.

Teacher C has 20 students in their homeroom and teaches Language Arts and Reading. Teacher C teaches one 43-minute English class and four 43-minute Reading classes. This teacher has been employed at the district for 19 years. This teacher has a Bachelor of Science degree in Early Childhood Education and a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education. This teacher also has a Master of Science degree as a Reading Specialist. This teacher started working as a Reading Specialist for grades K-12 and for the last 15 years, taught Reading class for grades 7 and 8. The 2019-2020 school year is the teacher's first for teaching grade 6.

**Table 3.1 Clairton Middle School – Sixth Grade Schedule**

<b>Class Period Times</b>	<b>Teacher A</b>	<b>Teacher B</b>	<b>Teacher C</b>
<b>1st Period 8:00am - 8:43am</b>	Class	Class	Class
<b>2nd Period 8:45am - 9:28am</b>	Class	Class	Class
<b>3rd Period 9:30am - 10:13am</b>	Teacher Prep	Teacher Prep	Teacher Prep
<b>4th Period 10:15am - 10:58am</b>	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
<b>5th Period 11:00am - 11:43am</b>	Class	Class	Class
<b>6th Period 11:45am - 12:28pm</b>	Class	Class	Class
<b>7th Period 12:30pm - 1:13pm</b>	Class	Class	Class
<b>8th Period 1:15pm - 1:58pm</b>	Class	Class	Class
<b>9th Period (FLEX) 2:01pm - 2:44pm</b>	Class	Class	Class

### **3.5 Instrumentation**

Four key instruments were used to collect data for the formative evaluation portion of this study. The first instrument used was the pre-classroom observation. The observations we designed to get a feel for the classroom environment including how the physical classroom space looked, how desks were arranged, and how the classroom was decorated.

The second instrument used was the Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Pre-Survey (Appendix A) which was used as pre-existing data to prepare for implementation of classroom physical activity breaks. The Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Pre-Survey consisted of 12 questions using Google Form. The pre-survey questions were designed to receive input from the

sixth grade teachers regarding their knowledge, attitude, understanding and utilization of classroom physical activity (i.e., classroom physical activity breaks). Most of the questions were scored using a five-point Likert scale (i.e., Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always). Some of the five-point Likert scale questions included an open-ended response option to further explain their initial response or provide an example based on their initial response. Additionally, three open-ended response questions were used to provide specific responses.

The Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Pre-Survey (Appendix A) was adapted from the Springboard to Active Schools Classroom Physical Activity Assessment for Strategy 4, the University of Pittsburgh's *Schools on the Move's* Classroom Physical Activity Survey for School Teachers, and Nevada Wellness and SHAPE America Teacher Survey/PA.

The third instrument used was the Activity Log (Appendix E). The Activity Log was used to collect information from the teachers including dialogue and their shared experience with implementation of classroom PA breaks. The Activity Log was used in Microsoft Word.

The fourth instrument used was the Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Post-Survey (Appendix B). The survey consisted of 11 questions most of which were open-ended response questions and "select all that apply". Most of the questions on the survey were pulled from the Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Pre-Survey (Appendix A) and designed to understand and address any barriers to implementing classroom physical activity breaks and how to provide support for future implementation.

### **3.6 Data Collection**

As a district administrator for Clairton City School District, a pre-classroom observation was held for sixth grade classrooms on November 4, 2019. The classroom observations lasted for about 10-15 minutes observing each sixth-grade classroom. A Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Pre-Survey link via Google Form (Appendix A) was distributed on December 4, 2019 and teachers had one week to complete the pre-survey. The pre-classroom observations and the pre-survey were completed as a typical administrative practice to strategically prepare a classroom physical activity teacher training for sixth grade teachers to be held on February 6, 2020.

On February 6, 2020, a 45-minute teacher training was facilitated on classroom physical activity breaks for the three sixth grade teachers after school during a Professional Learning Committee (PLC) meeting. During the teacher training, the teachers were provided with The Teacher's Playbook (Appendix C) which was a guide that was developed specifically for the three sixth grade teachers to use in their classrooms. The Teacher's Playbook (Appendix C) included seven classroom physical activity breaks that were modified and designed specifically for the sixth-grade classrooms.

The Activity Log (Appendix E) collected information from the sixth-grade teachers including any communication with the teachers regarding physical activity breaks including emails and in-person conversation. Data in the Activity Log (Appendix E) was collected between the pre-classroom observations in November 2019 until the post-surveys were complete in March 2020.

Lastly, the Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Post-Survey (Appendix B) was distributed in March 2020. Teachers completed the post-survey within one week.

**Table 3.2 Sixth Grade Classrooms Physical Activity Implementaion Timeline**

<b>November</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>March</b>	<b>April</b>
Pre-classroom observations in three sixth grade classrooms <b>(Nov 4)</b>	Distribute Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Pre-Survey <b>(Dec 16)</b>  Collect and Analyze Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Pre-Survey <b>(Dec 20)</b>	Sixth Grade Teaching Training <b>(Feb 6)</b>  Scheduled Observations <b>(Feb 18- 28)</b>  Professional Learning Community (PLC) Meetings <b>(Bi-weekly Beginning on Feb 20)</b>	Scheduled Observations <b>(Mar 2- 27)</b>  Professional Learning Community (PLC) Meetings <b>(Mar 5 &amp; 19)</b>  Complete Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Post-Survey <b>(Mar 27)</b>	Analyze Data

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

The Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Pre-Survey (Appendix A) was analyzed by compiling the responses from the completed surveys. Common themes, similarities and differences were considered to guide the conversation with the sixth grade teachers when training them on how to implement classroom physical activity breaks in their classroom.

Observations were proposed for the months of February and March to identify whether physical activity breaks are being implemented, if teachers are managing their classrooms appropriately while implementing breaks (i.e., classroom space, set-up, teacher preparedness),

what role did physical activity breaks play in the sixth grade classrooms, what is the importance of physical activity breaks, and suggestions for future implementation throughout Clairton City School District.

The purpose of the Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings were to allocate time for myself and sixth grade teachers to meet regularly to address any barriers with implementing physical activity breaks in their classroom. Additionally, PLC meetings would allow for increased collaboration, training and support for sixth grade teachers. The feedback received from teachers after the study would be used to determine future implementation of classroom physical activity breaks at Clairton City School District including, teacher training, resources and level of support for teachers.

Lastly, responses from the Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Post-Survey (Appendix B) were analyzed and the responses from the survey were compared to responses from the Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Pre-Survey (Appendix A). Data analysis included looking for similarities and differences with each teacher and across the three, pre-to-post.

## 4.0 Results

On February 6, 2020, the teacher training was held, and sixth grade teachers were each provided with a copy of The Teacher's Playbook (Appendix C) to begin implementing the physical activity break activities in their classroom. The teachers and I were scheduled to meet two weeks after the training during a Professional Learning Community (PLC) meeting.

The purpose of the PLC was to devote time for myself as a district administrator and the three sixth grade teachers to meet on a continual basis to ensure that teachers receive adequate support with implementing physical activity breaks in their classroom. PLCs were scheduled to take place bi-weekly after school on a Thursday for a duration of 45 minutes. During the PLC, the teachers and I would collaborate by sharing any challenges or successes that were encountered during implementation of physical activity breaks in the classroom. I would then share suggestions and ideas for teachers who are experiencing any challenges.

The first scheduled PLC meeting was scheduled for February 20, 2020 shortly after the teacher training (Appendix D). The PLC meeting was cancelled due to administrative changes with all district PLCs. Administrative changes included PLC meeting times being switched to different days of the week and the PLC meetings focusing on topics such as attendance, academics and discipline. The administrative changes with PLC meetings and no longer being able to meet with the sixth grade teachers to meeting during a PLC meeting for classroom physical activity breaks was the first challenge that I encountered during the pilot program.

On March 6, 2020, a follow-up email was sent to the three teachers individually, asking if they have implemented any of the classroom physical activity breaks using The Teacher's Playbook (Appendix C). Additionally, the teachers were asked to let me know if they had any

questions or if they were experiencing any barriers with implementing the activities in their classroom. I offered support to help the teachers and shared that I would love to schedule a time to come into their classroom to see the implementation of the physical activity breaks in action. Teacher A responded and shared that classroom physical activity breaks were attempted but it would be best to implement any new initiative such as classroom physical activity breaks at the beginning of school year. Teacher B and Teacher C did not respond to the email.

The same day, I emailed Teacher A asking to schedule a time to meet in-person to complete a one-on-one reflection (informal interview) using the Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Post-Survey (Appendix B). Teacher A responded and we scheduled to meet on March 12, 2020.

On March 12, 2020 I met with Teacher A in their classroom to complete the in-person interview using the Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Post-Survey (Appendix B). All but two questions were answered due to an emergency situation that Teacher A was called to respond to. Later that day, Teacher A and I spoke in person and we planned to meet again on March 16, 2020 to complete the remaining interview questions. On the same day, I emailed Teacher B and Teacher C asking when a good time would be to complete the post-survey in-person. Teacher B did not respond. Teacher C responded and we scheduled to meet in-person on March 16, 2020.

On March 13, 2020 during a district in-service day, it was announced that schools would be closed for the upcoming weeks due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, the interviews scheduled with Teacher A and Teacher C the following week would need to be rescheduled. I spoke with all three teachers during in-service regarding the interviews and shared that I would follow-up with them individually to re-schedule.

On March 18, 2020, I followed up with the teachers individually via email asking to schedule a time to complete the post-survey. No one responded and according to administration



(including myself) teachers were very overwhelmed with transitioning to online learning for students. The alternative plan was to schedule a telephone call or Google Hangouts meeting with Teacher B and Teacher C individually to complete the interview over the phone or computer. Since teachers did not respond to my last email and considering that teachers were overwhelmed with having to transition to online learning, I put the post-survey interview questions into a Google Form and sent it to them. Teacher A completed the last two questions that we did not complete during the interview on March 12, 2020. Teacher B and Teacher C completed the post-survey via Google Form.

Two inquiry questions guided this research study - IQ1.) Are the teachers implementing the physical activity breaks as planned? and IQ2.) Are the physical activity breaks working/making a difference? Findings showed that classroom physical activity breaks were not implemented as planned due to many administrative and individual changes that took place.

The first challenge that was encountered was the initial Professional Learning Community (PLC) meeting being cancelled and changed because of administration changes. This change prohibited the teachers and I from meeting regularly which was our initial plan. The PLC meetings were intended to help the teachers and I to meet to discuss any challenges or barriers they may have experienced while implementing the physical activity breaks in their classroom.

The second challenge I encountered was not being able to physically observe the classrooms to see whether the teachers were implementing the physical activity breaks as planned and if the physical activity breaks were working/making a difference. Responses from the Classroom Physical Activity Break Post-Survey (Appendix B) helped to address both inquiry questions.

To address inquiry question one, the first question on the post-survey asked, “are there benefits of physical activity breaks in your classroom? Do you think they support the classroom learning process?”. All three teachers responded to this question. One teacher responded, “I think they provide a nice way to transition from the hallway and get focused on the lesson! It’s a way to break up the everyday boring routine the students think school is. I think they can provide a sort of support on the learning process depending on how you design them.” A second teacher responded, “I believe that physical activities are positive. It's beneficial for students that need to move and not be stationary for long periods of time.” A third teacher responded, “yes and yes”. Teachers provided examples of how physical activity breaks are working and making a difference. Some examples included, “calm students down, give them a chance to be silly/free, when done, they know it’s time to work, and they help students who are usually more fidgety refocus”.

A second question on the post-survey asked, “what have you noticed about your students that you think may be a result of physical activity breaks?”. Responses included, “they are more focused in the classroom”, “I have noticed positive and negative changes” and “I have not noticed any changes”.

The third question on the post-survey addresses inquiry question two by asking, “are there negative impacts of physical activity breaks in your classroom? Do you think they will cause behavior issues?” Responses included, “The only negative is bringing certain students back into the lesson”, “On some days and with certain classes the activities don’t work at all. Students abuse you trying to do something new and it actually takes longer than normal to get students refocused and ready for the lesson. Our school and our classes change within an instant, so it’s hard to prepare a lesson like that for every class everyday”, and “some kids get out of control when they are used to de-escalate students. They create more free time which makes kids get off task”. Examples

provided for this question were, “some kids want to keep moving instead of engaged back in the lesson” and “students have way too much energy and are only interested in physical activity”.

Additionally, I found it interesting to compare responses from the Classroom Physical Activity Pre-Survey (Appendix A) and Classroom Physical Activity Post-Survey (Appendix B). On the pre-survey, Teacher A responses indicated that they sometimes (2-3 days a week) integrated physical activity during class time while Teacher B and Teacher C had no experience implementing classroom physical activity breaks in their classroom. On the post-survey when asked, “since you participated in this program, how has your use of classroom physical activity breaks with students changed?”. Teacher A responded, “I've already used them so the program made me feel more conscious about the fact that I was already doing them”. Teacher B responded, “Nothing has changed. I already use physical activity breaks in my classroom.”, and Teacher C responded, “I do classroom physical activity breaks with students less.”. According to the response for this question and considering that the physical activity breaks did not go as planned, it was interesting to see how Teacher B and Teacher C went from not implementing classroom physical activity breaks in the pre-survey to attempting to implement physical activity in their classroom in the post-survey.

Another question on the post-survey that addresses this inquiry question is, “What have you noticed about your students that you think may be a result of physical activity breaks?”. According to the responses, one teacher indicated that students are more focused in the classroom. A second teacher indicated that they notice both positives and negatives. A third teacher indicated that the students are more focused in the classroom.

## **5.0 Discussion**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

Although the sixth-grade teachers have insights regarding the importance of classroom physical activity breaks, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, physical activity breaks got lost and there was no discussion of physical activity breaks thereafter. The priority was to support student learning; not only for sixth grade teachers that participated in this study, but for other teachers, students, parents/guardians and administrators at Clairton City School District.

The COVID-19 pandemic began soon after sixth grade teachers prepared to implement physical activity breaks in their classroom. It exposed a gap in the district's ability to support student learning, however an equally important, but not talked about gap, was exposed lack of capacity at many levels to support students' health and in particular their physical activity.

During the COVID-19 pandemic many students were not only no longer in the school building, but many students remained inside of their homes due to fear of the coronavirus disease or national guidelines which prohibited students from participating in outdoor activities such as interscholastic sports or playing at the local parks and playground areas. This caused physical activity to become even more of a barrier and less of a priority for not only students but for teachers, parents/guardians and administrators.

A positive finding was the health and physical education teachers who continued to advocate for health, physical education and the importance of physical activity due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The health and physical education teachers assigned students with activities to do along with instructions to accommodate physical activity inside and outside of the home, however,

there was no evidence of whether or not the physical activity assignments were completed. Examples of assignments included students completing a weekly physical activity log where students shared the date, the type of physical activity and the amount of time spent each day performing the activity. The physical activity log provided examples of activities that students could do both inside and outside of their home such as jumping jacks, going for a walk, riding a bike, sit-ups, and burpees. The health and physical education teachers encouraged the students to do more physical activity by setting goals and submitting the physical activity log at the end of every week. Health and physical education teachers also shared YouTube videos with students including additional exercises and fitness activities that could be done both inside and outside of their homes.

Data and experience showed ongoing resistance and barriers from sixth grade teachers who participated in the study. One question on the Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Pre-Survey (Appendix A) completed by the teachers asked, “What are the barriers to incorporating physical activity breaks in your classroom?”. Responses included, “getting the kids to calm back down”, “so much to cover academically” and “6<sup>th</sup> grade behavior already and crunch time before PSSA testing”. Many of the same barriers were shared during the teacher training (Appendix D) that took place in February and evident throughout the log (Appendix E) and the Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Post-Survey (Appendix B). Another question (Question 2) on the Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Post-Survey (Appendix B) asked, “Are there negative impacts of physical activity breaks in your classroom? Do you think they will cause behavior issues?”. Responses from the teachers included, “On some days and with certain classes the activities don’t work at all. Students abuse you trying to do something new and it actually takes longer than normal to get students refocused and ready for the lesson. Our school and our classes change within an

instant, so it's hard to prepare a lesson like that for every class every day.", "the only negative is bringing certain students back into the lesson.", and "some kids get out of control when they are used to de-escalate students. They create more free time which makes kids get off task."

Another question on the Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Post-Survey (Appendix B) asked, "What barriers remain to incorporating classroom physical activity breaks in your classroom?". Responses included, "The barriers that remain are how much of activities and how often. I also think all of the activities need to be incorporated into games. Such as review games, do a certain activity while thinking or working on a problem and then answer" and "Start at the beginning of the school year so it becomes a routine instead of a surprise. Students are not good with change." Additionally, when asked in question 4, "What are the factors that influence your confidence to implement classroom physical activity breaks?", one teacher responded, "how close to the PSSA tests are we and do we have time to implement these tasks."

Another finding from the study showed that health and physical activity overall, including classroom physical activity breaks from an administrative point of view were not being part of any school programming during the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus was solely on technology and while yes, the COVID-19 pandemic was a crisis that was very stressful and overwhelming for many, physical activity is something that could have been used to better support students and families. Core classes became the priority such as English, Social Studies, Math and Science which electives such as health and physical education, became secondary. While there were many barriers previously addressed that prohibited students from participating in outdoor activities, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) talked about outdoor activity programming and being outside as safe. Many of these resources could have been shared with students and families during the COVID-19 pandemic and not only through health and physical education classes.

Overall, physical activity and classroom physical activity breaks were viable resources, but district did not have capacity to utilize them.

Administrative support was also addressed in the Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Post-Survey (Appendix B), when one teacher stated, “many teachers feel threatened because they don't have the support from administration or leadership (principals). Teachers need more support and fear the unknown. What teachers aren't used to feels chaotic.” This statement can not only be applied to the COVID-19 pandemic but also the study and supporting implementation of classroom physical activity breaks.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed a gap in the district’s ability to support student learning, however an equally important, but not talked about gap, was exposed lack of capacity at many levels to support students’ health and in particular their physical activity. Teacher-focus is content area knowledge and skill (performance) gain. However, physical activity might have been a key aid and support to teachers, if they had agility to consider best practices and capacity to include physical activity (i.e., classroom physical activity breaks) as part of their pedagogy. This idea links to helping teachers move students from technology consumer to online learners that includes physical activity breaks. If the district was more prepared to transition from the typical classroom setting to online learning, then more teachers would be apt to implement online classroom physical activity breaks and share resources with students and families. Of course, this would have to come from the administrative level as well for support.

Additionally, most students residing in the Clairton consider physical activity as being involved in interscholastic sports which involves both the school and the community. The city has playground areas and a community park, however, there is no recreation center or other physical activity programs within the community available for students and families to participate. Physical

activity breaks are models of how one gains balance plus gaining the benefits of physical activity. Physical activity breaks would be beneficial at the school level involving teachers and administrators to get aid students in participating in classroom physical activity breaks in both the classroom setting and online. This also provides the opportunity for families to be more supportive with physical activity breaks if their child is already participating at the school level and they understand that benefits of them.

Lastly, parents/guardians and other community members need support to gain capacity for physical activity and support physical activity breaks. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many families went into survival mode and inequities came out. With support from the school district, parents should begin to think about physical activity breaks and self-regulation (more push-ups, sit-ups, steps, etc.). Many parents/guardians leaned on the school for support with student behavior and services. Knowing the many benefits of physical activity breaks and how to implement them, parents/guardians can use them not only for physical activity benefits but also self-regulation for their children.

## **5.2 Limitations**

There were four limitations in the implementation and formative evaluation. The first limitation is the small sample size of three sixth grade teachers. The second limitation is the sixth grade teachers having a relationship with the administrator and being a faculty member with whom the participants were familiar, they may have provided more socially desirable responses. The third limitation was the gap in time between when the classroom physical activity teacher training was held and when the pre-survey was completed. If the teacher training was held shortly after



the pre-survey was complete in December, the participants would have had more time to implement the physical activity breaks in their classroom before administrative changes took place and teachers not having the time to meet during a PLC meeting to discuss implementation of classroom physical activity breaks and before school closure took place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, the fourth limitation was that there were no classroom observations, interviews and Professional Learning Committee (PLC) meetings were held due to administrative changes and the COVID-19 pandemic. In all, we are unable to determine whether the post-survey data improved amongst the three teachers due to response bias, or actual confidence with implementing classroom physical activity breaks in their classrooms given the limited amount of time they had before changes took place.

### **5.3 Implications for Future Inquiry**

If the implementation of classroom physical activity breaks were to continue at Clairton City School District, more information would need to be obtained. First, more information would need to be collected from sixth grade students asking similar questions to the Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Pre-Survey (Appendix A) that were completed by sixth grade teachers. Examples of student questions would include – what do you know about classroom physical activity breaks? What is the importance of physical activity breaks? Have you participated in physical activity breaks? Can you provide an example of a physical activity break? What would physical activity breaks would you like to see in your classroom (online and in the traditional classroom setting), and what would physical activity breaks would you like to see at home?

Collecting feedback from the sixth grade students would be beneficial to gauging their knowledge, understanding and perspective on classroom physical activity.

Second, more information would need to be collected from sixth grade teachers to inquire what the implementation of physical activity breaks would entail if implemented in an online classroom setting and a traditional classroom setting. Information that would need to be collected would include if teachers would feel more confident, comfortable and prepared to implement physical activity breaks through a virtual learning platform instead of in their traditional classroom. Also, would teachers use any of the seven activities listed in The Teacher's Playbook (Appendix C) in a remote classroom setting. If so, which activities would the teachers use, which activities would the teachers modify, and what type of activities would the teachers like to see more of if implemented online or in-person (i.e., mindfulness, yoga, during instruction time, outside of instruction time)?

This information being collected from sixth grade students, sixth grade teachers and other middle school teachers who are already implementing physical activity breaks are important to not only learn more from other points of view and experience, but to compare feedback to better develop a plan for future implementation. This information sixth grade students, sixth grade teachers and other teachers at Clairton Middle/High School, would be used to develop a plan for future implementation of classroom physical activity breaks at Clairton Middle/High School. The proposed plan would better support teachers knowing that students had input in developing the plan. Also, this plan would be with administrators including the Clairton Middle/High School principal and associate principal and the district superintendent for additional support and approval.

The third implication for future inquiry at Clairton City School District would be to consider all feedback from the three sixth grade teachers who participated in the pilot program. Most of the teacher feedback was recorded on the Classroom Physical Activity Break Post-Survey (Appendix B). Many of the recommendations were gauged from barriers/challenges that took place during the pilot program and steps for future implementation for teachers. One question on the post-survey asked, “What barriers remain to incorporating classroom physical activity breaks in your classroom?”. Responses included, “The barriers that remain are how much of activities and how often. I also think all of the activities need to be incorporated into games. Such as review games, do a certain activity while thinking or working on a problem and then answer.” and “Start at the beginning of the school year so it becomes a routine instead of a surprise. Students are not good with change.” Another question on the post-survey asked, “What steps can the school take to encourage teachers to implement classroom physical activity breaks?” Responses from this question included, “professional development and data showing strong positive areas of this being beneficial”, “have an in-service day to show the benefits and teach all teachers, even if it’s for only like 20-40 mins. Passing on knowledge and the benefits may encourage teachers who never thought it possible.”, and “many teachers feel threatened because they don't have the support from administration or leadership (principals). Teachers need more support and fear the unknown. What teachers aren't used to feels chaotic.”. Considering this feedback, I would then implement a physical activity break teacher training at the beginning of the school year, and plan to provide ongoing professional development throughout the course of the school year during district in-service days and/or Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Next, I would ensure all key stakeholders are engaged in the planning and implementation process including principals and the superintendent so teachers have more buy-in and support from administration.

Lastly, the fourth implication for future inquiry would be to survey all teachers at Clairton City School District for a larger sample size and to capture teachers who have experience implementing classroom physical activity breaks. Based on discussions with teachers and my experience with the pilot program, a suggestion would be to co-facilitate a teacher training with a teacher (such as Teacher A) who has experience with implementing classroom physical activity breaks. Co-facilitators would be identified from the Classroom Physical Activity Break Pre-Survey (Appendix A) which would be completed by all teachers in the district (grades K-12). The number of teachers who have experience implementing classroom physical activity breaks would determine the future model for implementing classroom physical activity breaks district wide including the number of PLCs, teacher training, etc.

#### **5.4 Implications from Practice**

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how schools operate and reprioritize what should be on the forefront, including importance of prioritizing student health and well-being (SHAPE America Reentry Considerations, 2020). Many school districts including Clairton City School District are preparing to create a new model for learning in the fall, and are developing a Health and Safety Plan, as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, which focuses on day-to-day school operations with all students, staff and administrators entering the building and practicing social-distancing guidelines even in the classroom setting. As part of the reentry plan, schools should be considering the affect that the COVID-19 pandemic and school closure has had on students, staff and families mentally, physically, socially and emotionally. Even more, health, physical education and physical activity breaks should be a priority and included in the re-entry

plan for student learning. Although classroom physical activity breaks do not supplement physical education and recess, physical activity breaks, can be implemented in any learning environment whether in the classroom setting or at home in a virtual learning environment.

Implications from this study are intended to provide school administrators and educators with recommendations and considerations for implementing classroom physical activity breaks. Three strategies are considered below and are based on national guidance including SHAPE America's 2020-2021 School Reentry Considerations: K-12 Physical Education Health and Physical Activity guide. The three strategies include; reentry in the fall with physical activity break implementation across multiple platforms, long-term implementation of physical activity breaks at Clairton City School District, and universal implications for all underserved school districts.

### **Strategy 1: Universal implications for all underserved school districts**

For strategy 1, three recommendations are shared for universal implications for all underserved school districts similar to Clairton City School District. The first recommendation for all underserved school districts would be address social justice and inequity issues to build capacity and support. The second recommendation would be to engage key stakeholders both internally and externally to build buy-in and support. Internal stakeholders include teachers, principals and administrators. External stakeholders include community members including parents/guardians and associations who advocate for physical activity in schools. One recommended external resource would be Springboard to Active Schools toolkit which can be used as a guide to support where schools are at in the process with implementing classroom physical activity. While the toolkit provides support for in-classroom physical activity breaks, Springboard to Active Schools is a partner with national organizations including SHAPE America

and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, therefore strategies for implementing physical activity breaks outside of the classroom setting (i.e., at home, virtual platforms) could be addressed. Also, depending on where underserved schools fall with their experience with classroom physical activity breaks, the Springboard to Active Schools physical activity toolkit is a guide that schools can use to implement classroom physical activity breaks in the traditional classroom setting regardless of where schools are with the implementation process - beginning, intermediate, advanced, etc. The ten strategies for classroom physical activity in schools provide thorough, step-by-step instructions for implementation in addition to resources and professional experts who are available for support. Springboard to Active Schools has a team of experts who provide professional development opportunities including virtual training (i.e., webinars). I would suggest exploring the Springboard to Active Schools website, reviewing all materials and requesting more information from a Springboard to Active Schools staff member to answer any questions or to assist with the implementation process.

As the primary investigator for this study and a new district administrator at Clairton City School District, I developed a plan for implementing classroom physical activity breaks and shared the plan with other administrators for approval prior to implementation. Based on feedback from the three sixth grade teachers who participated in the pilot program regarding administrative support for future implementation, it may be beneficial to have all district administrators present in the planning and implementation process at Clairton City School District. This includes having administrators participate in teacher trainings and the Professional Learning Committee (PLC) meetings. The more involved administrators are, the more supported teachers will feel when implementing physical activity breaks in their classroom.

The third recommendation for all underserved school districts would be to develop a cadre of trainers to train and provide ongoing training and education to local schools with implementing classroom physical activity breaks. The cadre would consist of a team of representatives who meet regularly to share challenges and successes with implementing physical activity breaks through online learning and in the classroom setting as well as ongoing professional development training and education with national partners including Springboard to Active Schools, SHAPE America and PA-SHAPE who have experience with implementing classroom physical activity breaks different school settings across various platforms (i.e., online, traditional classroom setting).

**Strategy 2: Reentry in the fall with classroom physical activity breaks across multiple platforms**

For strategy 2, there are two recommendations for implementing physical activity breaks with reentry in the fall at Clairton City School District. The first recommendation would be to develop a plan for implementing classroom physical activity breaks both online and in a traditional classroom setting. The major barrier I encountered with the COVID-19 pandemic is not having an alternative for implementing classroom physical activity breaks remotely through virtual learning. Considerations for both classroom physical activity breaks and remote classroom physical activity breaks are readily available on the “Springboard to Active Schools” website. Springboard to Active Schools provides resources for implementing classroom physical activity breaks online, and can be used instead of the activities in The Teacher’s Playbook which are designed specifically for the sixth grade classroom setting.

A second recommendation for implementing physical activity breaks with reentry in the fall would be to involve school counselors and health and physical education teachers with implementing classroom physical activity breaks. The school counselors at Clairton City School

District already have a good relationship with teachers and students. Many teachers lean on school counselors for support especially when it entails de-escalating student behavior in the classroom, providing one-on-one counseling sessions, facilitating small groups, and providing classroom lessons for students. School counselors should imply the same approach with implementing classroom physical activity breaks. School counselors can advocate for classroom physical activity breaks (i.e., yoga and mindfulness) and the benefits of classroom physical activity breaks especially with improving student behavior in the classroom. Additionally, the health and physical education teachers at Clairton City School District already advocate for health and physical activity on a regular basis and they have the knowledge and understanding physical activity and continued to advocate for students to be physical activity while quarantining at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Strategy 3: Long-term implementation of physical activity breaks at Clairton City School District**

For strategy 3, there are two recommendations for long-term implementation of physical activity breaks at Clairton City School District. The first recommendation would be to collect ongoing data and feedback from teachers, students, parents and administrators. By continuing to collect data and feedback, the district can identify what is working and what is not working, develop goals and provide ongoing support to ensure classroom physical activity breaks do not get lost as they did with the pilot study.

The second recommendation would be to collect feedback from all teachers to identify which teachers are already familiar with classroom physical activity breaks and their level of experience. Feedback using instruments such as a survey would help to plan for how to best implement classroom physical activity breaks regardless of the setting. Hopefully, at this point, there will be a plan for implementing classroom physical activity breaks both online through



virtual learning platforms and in the classroom setting. Additionally, based on feedback from teachers, I would suggest utilizing the teachers who are familiar with classroom physical activity breaks to help with buy-in from other teachers, and designate those teachers as “champions” who would assist with the implementation process. The “champion” teachers would facilitate or co-facilitate the teacher training at the beginning of the school year to elicit buy-in from all teachers. This training could take place in-person or virtually using our district virtual platform. The “champion” teachers would lead or co-lead Professional Learning Committees (PLC) meetings throughout the course of the school year. This could also take place in-person or virtually.

To further support teachers in their implementation of physical activity breaks, all three strategies should be considered when developing a comprehensive district-wide plan for a successful implementation process.

## Appendix A Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Pre-Survey

*Classroom physical activity can be defined as any physical activity done in the classroom that takes place at any time and occurs in one or several periods of time during the school day. Terms used to describe physical activity in the classroom or some aspect of it include, but are not limited to; movement integration, classroom physical activity breaks, brain breaks, active learning, active classrooms, energizers, and brain boosters.*

1. How often do you integrate physical activity during class time?

A) Never B) Rarely C) Sometimes D) Often E) Always

2. How often do classroom physical activity breaks occur during class time?

A) Never (0 days per week) B) Rarely (1 day per week) C) Sometimes (2-3 days per week)  
D) Often (4 days a week) E) Always (5 days a week)

If never, please explain:

3. How long does a classroom physical activity break occur during class time?

4. Please describe your experience implementing classroom physical activity breaks. What does a physical activity break look like in your classroom?

***Physical activity can be integrated into planned academic instruction or outside of planned academic instruction time.*** *Physical activity during academic instruction can be added to a teacher's lesson planning process to ensure that activities reinforce the desired content and academic standards and help limit the amount of time students are sedentary. Teachers can identify physical activities that fit their teaching style and include them in their lesson plans.*

5. How often do you integrate physical activity *into* planned academic instruction (please refer to the description above)?

A) Never B) Rarely C) Sometimes D) Often E) Always

Please provide an example:

***Physical activity outside of planned academic instruction.*** *Physical activity outside of planned academic instruction is not necessarily tied to the lesson being taught. It can be spontaneously added to limit sedentary time or when the teacher sees a drop-in student energy, attentiveness, or retention. These physical activities can also be preplanned so teachers can quickly and easily incorporate them during class.*

6. How often do you integrate physical activity *outside* of planned academic instruction (please refer to the description above)?

A) Never B) Rarely C) Sometimes D) Often E) Always

Please provide an example:

7. How often do you use (have you used) classroom physical activity in the last week to engage your classroom?

A) Never B) Rarely C) Sometimes D) Often E) Always

8. How often do you use (have you used) classroom physical activity in the last week to refocus student behavior?

A) Never B) Rarely C) Sometimes D) Often E) Always

9. How often do you use (have you used) classroom physical activity in the last week to improve classroom management?

A) Never B) Rarely C) Sometimes D) Often E) Always

10. How often do you use classroom physical activity *after* returning from school breaks (for example, recess, lunch, passing periods, and assemblies) to re-engage the class?

A) Never B) Rarely C) Sometimes D) Often E) Always

11. How often are school wide opportunities leveraged to promote classroom physical activity (for example, morning announcements and schoolwide assemblies)?

A) Never B) Rarely C) Sometimes D) Often E) Always

12. What are the barriers to incorporating classroom physical activity breaks in your classroom?

## Appendix B Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Post-Survey

1. Are there benefits of physical activity breaks in your classroom? Do you think they support the classroom learning process?

Please provide examples:

2. Are there negative impacts of physical activity breaks in your classroom? Do you think they cause behavior issues?

Please provide examples:

3. What barriers remain to incorporating classroom physical activity breaks in your classroom?

4. What are the factors that influence your confidence to implement classroom physical activity breaks?

5. What are steps the school can take to encourage teachers to implement classroom physical activity breaks?

6. Since you participated in this program, how has your use of classroom physical activity breaks with students changed?

I do classroom physical activity breaks with students more.

I do classroom physical activity breaks with students less.

Nothing has changed. I already use physical activity breaks in my classroom.

Nothing has changed. I don't plan to do physical activity breaks in my classroom.

Other (include comment box)

7. What was helpful about the Classroom Physical Activity Break Teacher Training? (Select all that apply)

I learned about the value of physical activity breaks for student health.

I learned about the value of physical activity breaks for academic performance.

Ways to incorporate physical activity breaks into the classroom setting.

Discussion about barriers to implementing physical activity breaks, and ways to overcome them.

The resources provided by the training team.

Other: (include comment box)

8. What kind of additional support would be helpful to implementing physical activity breaks in your classroom? (Select all that apply)

More training

More ideas/resources for breaks

Buy-in/support from principal/administration

Buy-in/support from school staff

Buy-in/support from parents

None

Other (include comment box)

9. What, if any, supplies might your classroom need to start or continue incorporating physical activity breaks?

10. What have you noticed about your students that you think may be a result of physical activity breaks? (Select all that apply)

They are more focused in the classroom.

Their behavior has improved.

They are rowdier and interruptive.

Students are not engaged or interested.

Improved grades/academic performance.

I have not noticed any changes.

Other (include comment box)

11. What barriers remain to implementing physical activity breaks in your classroom? (Select all that apply)

Classroom space

Lack of time

No personal interest

Lack of confidence performing the activities

Buy-in/support from principal/administration

Buy-in/support from school staff

Buy-in/support from parents

Majority of students refuse to participate or do not enjoy the activities

Lack of resources (e.g., equipment, useful examples)

None

Other (include comment box)

## **Appendix C The Teacher's Playbook**

### **The Teacher's Playbook**

*A Sports-themed Classroom Physical Activity Guide for Sixth Grade Teachers*

Created by Britnee Weatherspoon

*Adapted from The Colorado Education Initiative Take a Break! Teacher Toolbox  
Coloradoinitiative.org*

## **Coach's Corner**

### **Introduction Message**

According to the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, less than one-third of children and adolescents in the United States are meeting the recommendation to get 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day (National Physical Activity Guidelines, 2008). Considering that 95 percent of school-age students attend school regularly, schools play an instrumental role in helping students to establish lifelong healthy behaviors such as promoting physical activity (Childhood Obesity Facts).

**When you move more, you learn more** because healthy students learn better. Research shows that physical activity affects the brain in ways that allow students to be more engaged and ready to learn. Elementary students should not be the only ones to receive and benefit from various physical activities during the school day, such as recess, physical education and physical activity breaks in the classroom.

Considering the need for more physical activity during the school day and the lack of resources for secondary-level teachers to implement physical activity in the classroom, students are not getting the recommended daily amount of physical activity. The Teacher's Playbook was created as a guide from sixth grade teachers at Clairton City School District to promote the implementation of physical activity breaks in their classroom. The Teacher's Playbook was adapted from The Colorado Education Initiative Take a Break! Teacher Toolbox that provides secondary-level teachers with a guide to implement physical activity breaks in their classroom.

Classroom physical activity improves students' concentration and ability to stay on-task in the classroom, reduces disruptive behavior, improves students' motivation and engagement in the learning process and increases the number of students' daily physical activity.



## **Coach's Corner**

### **How to use this guide**

Within The Teacher's Playbook, you will find seven useful, tangible and practical classroom physical activity breaks gathered from the Colorado Education Initiative Take a Break! Teacher Toolbox to create, enhance and implement activity breaks in your sixth grade classroom. The physical activity breaks can be integrated *into planned academic instruction (added to teacher's lesson planning)* or *outside of planned academic instruction (added to limit sedentary time or to boost student's energy)*.

#### **Tips for Success:**

- As a teacher, you should aim for **five minutes** of physical activity during each classroom period. A physical activity break should be used once every 30-60 minutes every day for *all* students, including YOURSELF! Each physical activity card includes step-by-step instructions.
- All activities can be easily modified to ensure *all* students can participate
- If you participate, your students are more likely to join you
- Tell your students why physical activity throughout the day is necessary
- Don't be afraid to try to activities to get the students moving
- Provide input from your students on what they would like to do for physical activity breaks
- Try to integrate physical activity breaks into planned academic instruction and outside of planned academic instruction to see what works best for you and your students
- Have fun!

## The Coach's Favorite Plays Table of Contents

### Get Ready

1. Warm-up Stations
2. Got Skills?
3. What's Your Sport?
4. What's Your Call?
5. Higher or Lower
6. Playoffs: Rock, Paper, Scissors... *SHOOT!*
7. The Future Trainer

## Warm-up Stations

**Equipment (Optional):** Three signs (representing different types of physical activities); stopwatch/timer

1. The teacher will place a minimum of three signs (or designate different areas of the room, illustrating a type of physical activity (e.g., jogging in place, marching in place, jumping in place, jumping jacks, push-ups, sit-ups, Tae Bo boxing jabs), in three different areas of the room.
2. Assign students to each of the three areas of the room.
3. Instruct students to perform the activity for one minute.
4. After one minute, students will rotate clockwise to a new area.

**Variations:** Change type of physical activity, change duration, or add stations.

### **Tip for Success:**

- ★ Teacher participates with the students
- ★ Designate a student to lead each group
- ★ Let students provide input on the types of physical activity for each area

## Got Skills?

1. Have students stand up and push in their chairs. Explain that you are going to give them a series of tasks and the goal is to complete them as quickly as possible.
2. Direct students that once they have completed the task, they should stop where they are and raise their hand.
3. For the first task have students touch 10 chairs not in a row.
4. For the next task have students touch elbows with 8 classmates.
5. For the last task, touch toes with 6 classmates wearing 6 different colored shirts.
6. For other tasks, have the students create more or integrate content relevant to the course.

### **Tip for Success:**

- ★ Teacher participates with the students
- ★ Integrate content related to the course so students are moving while learning!

## What's Your Sport?

**Equipment:** Pencil and paper

1. Students group into pairs at their desks.
2. Partners face each other (one facing the board and the other facing the back of the room).
3. The teacher writes a series of sport professions on the board which could include:
  - Baseball Player
  - Hockey Player
  - Boxer
  - Tennis
  - Basketball Player
  - Football Player
  - Golfer
  - Cheerleader
4. The student facing the board must act out the entire list in 2 minutes while the student facing the back of the classroom attempts to write down which profession his/her partner is acting out.
5. After the 2 minutes has ended, the students facing the back of the classroom turn around and see if their lists match that on the chalkboard.
6. Students in each group switch places (the writer becomes the Actor and vice versa).

**Note:** Entire game could be played silently.

**Variation:** Create a different list of professions for each group.

## What's Your Call?

1. Choose a student to lead the class as Coach.
2. Have the leader say “Coach says...,” then give an activity suggestion, such as:
  - If water is a healthy drink, jump 3 times
  - If skateboarding is a strength activity, touch the front of the room
  - If stretching is a good stress management
  - technique, reach for your toes.
3. If the answer is true, the students complete the suggested activity. If the answer is false, they stand still.

### **Cross-Curricular Linking:**

**Language Arts-** Use the activities to reinforce vocabulary and grammatical elements.

**Social Studies and Science-** Ask true and false questions related to the social studies curriculum.

**Math-** Ask true and false questions related to the math curriculum

## Higher or Lower

1. One student comes to the front of the room. The teacher writes a number on the board behind the student so he/she cannot see it.
2. The student calls out a number while marching in place. The remainder of the class marches in place until the number is called out.
3. If the number is too high, the class squats (guess lower). If the number is too low, the class jumps up and down (guess higher).
4. When the correct number is identified, select a different student to come to the front and repeat.
5. Repeat the activity for a total of five minutes

## **Playoffs: Rock, Paper, Scissors...SHOOT!**

Rock - put feet together and cross arms over chest

Paper - stand straight, feet together and hands down to your side

Scissors - legs arms spread out (like a jumping jack)

1. Ask students to find a partner
2. Partners compete in one round of traditional Rock, Paper, Scissors. Repeat round if there is a tie.
3. The winner from each pair moves on and finds another winning student to play. The non-winner joins the team of the person who beat them and cheers for them in their next competition.
4. Each round, the winner advances and the non-winners continue to follow the winner and cheer for their team. The game continues until there are only two winners left.



## **Future Trainer**

Have a student lead a 5-minute physical activity break doing any activities or games of the class's choosing —be creative and have everyone in the class get involved.

**Variations:** Have a different student lead a physical activity break after 2, change duration, or add stations.

### **Tip for Success:**

- ★ Designate a student ahead of time so they have time to think about the physical activity break they want to lead
- ★ Teacher participates with the students
- ★ Teacher encourage all students to participate
- ★ Teacher assist the student leading the physical activity breaks if they need hel

Here is the link to access The Colorado Education Initiative Take a Break! Teacher Toolbox  
<http://www.coloradoedinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/CEI-Take-a-Break-Teacher-Toolbox.pdf>

# Appendix D Clairton Sixth Grade Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Training Presentation


## Integrate Classroom Physical Activity

Getting Students Active During School

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### Teacher Training


Britnee Nwokeji  
University of Pittsburgh  
Doctoral Student



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## Purpose

- Define classroom physical activity
- Explain the benefits of classroom physical activity
- Explain the National Perspective and Policies for physical activity in schools
- Share *The Teacher's Playbook* resource for classroom physical activity
- Activity breaks in practice



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## Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model




<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/wssc/>



3

## Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs



[www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/cspap.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/cspap.htm)



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## What is Classroom Physical Activity?

Any physical activity done in the classroom...

- Takes place at any time
- Occurs in one or several brief periods
- Occurs at all school levels
- Offered in addition to PE and recess



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## Approaches to Classroom Physical Activity

- Integrated into planned academic instruction
- Outside of planned academic instruction



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## National Perspective: State Policy

No states require breaks in middle or high schools.

**Colorado** is the only state that requires classroom physical activity breaks in elementary schools.



Source: 2016 Shape of the Nation.  
35 states responded to the question about requires classroom-based physical activity breaks.

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## National Perspective: District Policy

District Practice	Percentage of Districts		
	Elementary	Middle Schools	High Schools
Requires schools provide regular classroom physical activity breaks* during the school day	11%	8%	2%
Recommends schools provide regular classroom physical activity breaks* during the school day	50%	39%	28%

Source: School Health Policies and Practices Study, 2016.  
\*For elementary schools, classroom physical activity breaks are defined as "outside of physical education class and recess. For middle and high schools, they are defined as "outside of physical education class."

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## National Perspective: School Practice

Students participate in regular physical activity breaks\* during the school day



43% of Elementary Schools



64% of Middle Schools



27% of High Schools

Source: School Health Policies and Practices Study, 2014.  
\*For elementary schools, physical activity breaks are defined as "outside of physical education class and recess." For middle and high schools, they are defined as "outside of physical education class."

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## National Guidance for Classroom Physical Activity

- Incorporate classroom physical activity in CSPA
- Do not replace physical education and recess
- Integrate physical activity into academic instruction
- Provide physical activity outside of academic instruction
- Reinforce skills learned in physical education
- Minimize barriers
- Do not withhold classroom physical activity
- Provide ongoing professional development



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## Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans - 2008

### Children and Adolescents

- 60 minutes/day
- Include 3 days/week of muscle- & bone-strengthening activities



<http://health.gov/paguidelines/>



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## Interventions to Increase Physical Activity in Youth

### School Setting:

- Multi-component- *Sufficient*
- Enhanced Physical Education- *Sufficient*
- Active Transport- *Suggestive*
- Activity Breaks- *Emerging*
- Physical Environment- *Insufficient*
- After School- *Insufficient*

<http://health.gov/paguidelines/midcourse/pag-mid-course-report-final.pdf>



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## Why Should We Care?

- Promote a culture of health and wellness
- Be a role model
- Support academic achievement



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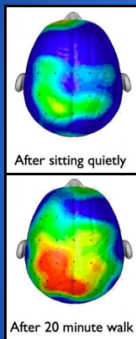
## Benefits of Classroom Physical Activity

- Improves concentration and ability to stay on task
- Reduces disruptive behavior
- Improves motivation and engagement
- Improves academic performance
- Increases daily physical activity

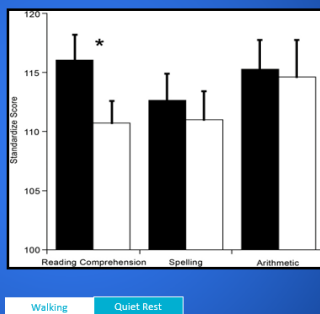


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## Effects of Activity Breaks



### Scholastic Performance



Hillman et al. (2009). The effect of acute treadmill ... *Neuroscience*.

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## Classroom Activity Breaks: Does Duration Matter?

	5 minutes	10 minutes	20 minutes
Executive function	No	No	No
Math scores	No	Yes	trend
On-task behavior	No	Yes	trend
Positive Affect	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student Acceptability	No/Yes	Yes	Yes/No
Teacher Feasibility	Yes	No	No

- 10 minutes of physical activity is the sweet spot...
- Time to help teachers strive for an extra five!

Howie et al. (2015). Acute effects of classroom ... *Research Quarterly For Exercise and Sport*.



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## ACTIVITY BREAKS IN PRACTICE

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## The Teacher's Playbook

- A useful, tangible and practical classroom physical activity breaks gathered to create, enhance and implement activity breaks in your sixth-grade classroom
- Seven activities to choose from:
  - Warm-up Stations
  - Got Skills?
  - What's Your Sport?
  - What's Your Call?
  - Higher or Lower
  - Playoffs: Rock, Paper, Scissors... SHOOT!
  - The Future Trainer




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## Warm-up Stations

Equipment (Optional): Three signs (representing different types of physical activities); stop-watch/timer

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2. Assign students to each of the three areas of the room.
3. Instruct students to perform the activity for one minute.
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Variations: Change type of physical activity, change duration, or add stations.



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## Got Skills?

1. Have students stand up and push in their chairs. Explain that you are going to give them a series of tasks and the goal is to complete them as quickly as possible.
2. Direct students that once they have completed the task, they should stop where they are and raise their hand.
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## What's Your Sport?

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  - Boxer
  - Tennis
  - Basketball Player
  - Football Player
  - Golfer
  - Cheerleader



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## What's Your Sport?

4. The student facing the board must act out the entire list in 2 minutes while the student facing the back of the classroom attempts to write down which profession his/her partner is acting out.
5. After the 2 minutes has ended, the students facing the back of the classroom turn around and see if their lists match that on the chalkboard.
6. Students in each group switch places (the writer becomes the Actor and visa versa).



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## What's Your Call?

1. Choose a student to lead the class as Coach.
2. Have the leader say "Coach says..." then give an activity suggestion, such as:
  - > If water is a healthy drink, jump 3 times
  - > If skateboarding is a strength activity, touch the front of the room
  - > If stretching is a good stress management
  - > technique, reach for your toes.
3. If the answer is true, the students complete the suggested activity. If the answer is false, they stand still.

### Cross-Curricular Linking:

Language Arts- Use the activities to reinforce vocabulary and grammatical elements.

Social Studies and Science- Ask true and false questions related to the social studies curriculum.

Math- Ask true and false questions related to the math curriculum.



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## Higher or Lower

1. One student comes to the front of the room. The teacher writes a number on the board behind the student so he/she cannot see it.
2. The student calls out a number while marching in place. The remainder of the class marches in place until the number is called out.
3. If the number is too high, the class squats (guess lower). If the number is too low, the class jumps up and down (guess higher).
4. When the correct number is identified, select a different student to come to the front and repeat.
5. Repeat the activity for a total of five minutes



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## Playoffs: Rock, Paper, Scissors...SHOOT!

**Rock** - put feet together and cross arms over chest

**Paper** - stand straight, feet together and hands down to your side

**Scissors** - legs arms spread out (like a jumping jack)

1. Ask students to find a partner
2. Partners compete in one round of traditional Rock, Paper, Scissors. Repeat round if there is a tie.
3. The winner from each pair moves on and finds another winning student to play. The non-winner joins the team of the person who beat them and cheer for them in their next competition.
4. Each round, the winner advances and the non-winners continue to follow the winner and cheer for their team. The game continues until there are only two winners left.



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## The Future Trainer

Have a student lead a 5 minute physical activity break doing any activities or games of the class's choosing —be creative and have everyone in the class get involved.



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## Potential Challenges

- Lack of motivation
- Time/Space
- Resources
- Administrative support
- Teacher participation
- Noisy students
- Others...



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## Next Steps

- Begin integrating physical activity breaks in your classroom using *The Teacher's Playbook*
- Try to implement all seven activities
- Aim for at least five minutes of physical activity each class period
- Remember to participate with your students
- Have fun!



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**THANK YOU!**

Britnee Nwokeji [bln27@pitt.edu](mailto:bln27@pitt.edu)





## **Appendix E Activity Log**

**Date: November 4, 2019**

**Action Taken/Event: Pre-classroom observations**

On this day, I spent about 10-15 minutes observing each sixth grade classroom. I asked each teacher when would be the best time to come into their classroom to observe for a brief period. I observed student behavior, teacher-student interaction, the classroom structure, decor, etc.

**Date: December 4, 2019**

**Action Taken/Event: Distribution of pre-survey to sixth grade teachers**

I distributed a pre-survey link via Google Form to each teacher. The purpose of the pre-survey is to gather teacher input regarding classroom physical activity. The results from the pre-survey were used to conduct content (PowerPoint slides) for the February 6, 2020 teacher training.

**Date: January 2, 2020**

**Action Taken/Event: Initial sixth grade teacher training (In-service)**

This day was our district wide in-service (Act 80 day). The initial plan was for me to conduct the sixth grade teacher training on this day, however, one teacher was scheduled to be absent on this day. The sixth grade teachers suggested that we reschedule for a time when everyone could be present for the teacher training. Suggestions included time on the February 7, 2020 in-service (7:30am-3:30pm), third period prep during the week (Monday-Friday between 9:30am-10:13am) or after school (between 2:45pm-3:30pm). I would seek approval from the Middle/High School Principals and the Superintendent.

**Date: January 2, 2020**

**Action Taken/Event: Spoke with Middle School/High School Associate Principal**

I spoke with the Middle/High School Associate Principal during In-service on January 2, 2020 to suggest a date and time to have the teacher training. The Associate Principal suggested that I speak with the Middle/High School Principal.

**Date: January 6, 2020**

**Action Taken/Event: Spoke with Middle School/High School Principal**

I spoke with the Middle/High School Principal to discuss a date and time to have the teacher training. The Principal suggested that this not take place during the February 7, 2020 In-service since this day is already scheduled. The Principal also suggested that I meet with the sixth grade teachers to see when would be the best time to meet with them to have the teacher training. Once I meet with the teachers, I would then seek approval from the Superintendent regarding the date and time for the teacher training.

**Date: January 6, 2020**

**Action Taken/Event: Confirm meeting time with sixth grade teachers to discuss pilot program**

I asked the three sixth grade teachers when would be a good time to meet briefly during their prep period. All teachers suggested January 14, 2020. I sent out a meeting invitation for January 14, 2020 from 9:30am-9:40am.

**Date: January 14, 2020**

**Time: 9:30am-9:40am (10 minutes)**

**Action Taken/Event: In-person meeting with Sixth Grade Teachers to Discuss Study Meeting During Prep: Sixth Grade Teachers to Discuss Pilot Program**

I met with the three sixth grade teachers during the first ten minutes of their prep period to discuss collaboration with piloting the classroom physical activity breaks program and when would be the best time to hold the teacher training. The teachers suggested that we meet during their already scheduled Professional Learning Committee (PLC) on Thursday, February 6, 2020 from 2:45pm-3:30pm to hold the teacher training. I sent out a meeting invite (Google Calendar) to the teachers.

**Date: January 14, 2020**

**Action Taken/Event: Emailed Middle/High School Principal and Superintendent**

I emailed the Superintendent regarding my meeting with the sixth grade teachers and if I can hold the teacher training during their PLC Meeting time. The Superintendent approved as long as the Middle/High School Principal approved. I emailed the Middle/High School Principal and copied the Middle/High School Associate Principal. The Middle/High School Principal approved.

**\*\*Email Copy\*\***

**PLC Meeting for Sixth Grade Teacher Training**

**6 Messages**

**From: Britnee Weatherspoon**

**Tue, Jan 14, 2020 at 10:13AM**

**To: Superintendent**

Good morning,

I have to provide a Teacher Training for the three sixth grade teachers for my dissertation study. I met with the three teachers briefly today to discuss options for the training and I wanted to run this by you for approval.

Would it be possible for me to meet with the teachers on Thursday, February 6, 2020 after school during their PLC Meeting time from 2:45-3:30pm for the training?

Warm regards,

Britnee Weatherspoon

**From: Superintendent**

**Tue, Jan 14, 2020 at 10:17AM**

**To: Britnee Weatherspoon**

Yes, if the principal is okay with it.

**From: Britnee Weatherspoon**

**Tue, Jan 14, 2020 at 10:18AM**

**To: Superintendent**

Ok thank you so much! I'll run this past the principal.

**From: Britnee Weatherspoon**

**Tue, Jan 14, 2020 at 10:20AM**

**To: Clairton MS/HS Principal**

**CC: Associate Principal**

Hi,

I met with the sixth grade teachers briefly to discuss options for the teacher training I'll need to do with them. They suggested holding it during a PLC meeting time after school, preferably on Thursday, February 6th from 2:45-3:30pm. I ran this past the superintendent and they are okay with it as long as I have your approval. Please see below.

Warm regards,

Britnee Weatherspoon

**From: Clairton MS/HS Principal**

**Tue, Jan 14, 2020 at 11:30AM**

**To: Britnee Weatherspoon**

I am happy to help if needed.

Principal

**Date: January 14, 2020**

**Action Taken/Event: Follow-up email to Sixth Grade teachers regarding teacher training**

**\*\*Email Copy\*\***

**Teacher Training during PLC Meeting Time - Thursday February 6, 2020**

**1 Message**

**From: Britnee Weatherspoon**

**Tue, Jan 14, 2020 at 12:44PM**

**To: Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C**

**CC: Principal, Associate Principal**

Good afternoon,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. I got approval from your principal and the superintendent to hold the training for you on Thursday, February 6, 2020 during PLC time after school (2:45-3:30pm). I sent a calendar invite to you.

Whose classroom should we plan to use? I will need to set-up PowerPoint slides.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Warm regards,

Britnee Weatherspoon

**Date: February 4, 2020**

**Action Taken/Event: Reminder email to sixth grade teachers regarding the teacher training**

I sent a reminder email to the sixth grade teachers regarding the teacher training on February 6, 2020.

**Date: February 6, 2020**

**Time: 2:45pm-3:30pm**

**Action Taken/Event: Sixth Grade Teacher Training**

Teachers completed the Classroom Physical Activity Teacher Pre-Survey (Appendix A) in November of 2019. The feedback from the pre-survey determined my approach for how I would deliver content for the Teacher Training (should I spend more time on background information and why classroom physical activity is important, policies, etc.?). Teacher A is a proponent of classroom physical activity breaks. Teacher A has implemented physical activity breaks in the classroom. This teacher believes that classroom physical activity breaks are important and shared one barrier that they have experienced when implementing classroom physical activity breaks - getting students to calm down and refocus after doing them. This led me to talk more about challenges when implementing classroom physical activity breaks and how to overcome them (Appendix D - slide 26). Teacher A's feedback during the teacher training was vital and created additional buy-in for Teacher B and Teacher C who according to the pre-survey (Appendix A), were both not aware of classroom physical activity breaks, nor have they ever tried them in their classroom. During the teacher training, I spent more time presenting on the importance of classroom physical activity breaks (Appendix D - slides 3-15). During the teacher training, teachers received an individual paper copy of The Teacher's Playbook (Appendix C). Teachers followed along in the guide while we practiced each activity as a group.

After the teacher training, I briefly asked the teachers what they thought about the training and whether or not they would consider trying the activities provided to them in The Teacher's Playbook (Appendix C). The teachers said they would at least try but shared that they foresee challenges due to student behaviors that already take place in the classroom. I shared that the pilot program would be a collaborative approach and that we would consistently meet to discuss

implementation challenges and successes. Meeting times would take place every other Thursday (bi-weekly) during PLC meetings from 2:45pm-3:30pm. I also shared that I would like to observe the teacher in the classroom when they were ready to start implementing them.

**Date: February 12, 2020**

**Action Taken/Event: All K-12 PLCs would need to be switched**

Administration shared that attendance PLCs would need to switch to different days and meet more often with grade level teams. This conflicted with Thursday PLC meetings for the pilot program.

**Date: February 18, 2020**

**Action Taken/Event: Follow-up email to sixth grade teachers**

**\*\*Email Copy\*\***

**Classroom Physical Activity Breaks Follow-up**

**1 Message**

**From: Britnee Weatherspoon**

**Tue, Feb 18, 2020 at 8:26AM**

**To: Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C**

Good morning!

I hope you are having a positive week thus far. I wanted to follow-up with you since we've had the Classroom Physical Activity Break training. I am attaching a copy of The Teacher's Playbook that I shared with you that includes the seven physical activity breaks that you can use in your classroom.

Please let me know if you've tried them already and what your thoughts are. Also, please let me know when you plan to try them. I would love to come into your classroom to see how it goes.

Have a great day!

Britnee Weatherspoon



**Date: February 20, 2020**

**Action Taken/Event: PLC Meeting Cancelled**

The PLC Meeting was cancelled. Teachers were asked to meet with grade level teams during this time to discuss attendance.

**Date: March 6, 2020**

**Action Taken/Event: Individual Follow-up email to sixth grade teachers**

On March 6, 2020, I sent an individual follow-up email to each teacher. Teacher A responded and said that she did try activities but she was not as successful and suggested starting something like this at the beginning of the school year. Teachers are also preparing for PSSA in April. Did not hear back from Teacher B or Teacher C.

**Date: March 9, 2020**

**Action Taken/Event: Individual Follow-up email to sixth grade teachers**

On March 9, 2020 I followed up with Teacher A to schedule a time to conduct the interview for the post-survey.

**Date: March 12, 2020**

**Action Taken/Event: Individual Follow-up email to sixth grade teachers**

On March 12, 2020 I met with teacher A to complete the interview via post-survey. We had two questions left to finish and the teacher was pulled for an emergency. Teacher A followed up with me and apologized for the interruption and we scheduled to finish the interview on March 16, 2020. I also emailed Teacher B and teacher C on March 12, 2020 to schedule a time the following week to complete their interview. Teacher B did not respond. Teacher C scheduled to meet with me for the interview on March 16, 2020.

**Date: March 13, 2020**

**Action Taken/Event: Received announcement that school will be closed for two weeks during in-service**

On March 13, 2020 I was informed that school would be closed for two weeks. I spoke with the teachers during in-service regarding our interviews and told them that I would follow-up with them.

**Date: March 18, 2020**

**Action Taken/Event: Individual Follow-up email to sixth grade teachers**

On March 18, 2020 I followed up with the teachers individually via email asking to schedule a time to complete the interview via post-survey. No one responded and according to administration (including myself) teachers were overwhelmed with transitioning to online learning for students.

**\*\*Email Copy\*\***

**Classroom Physical Activity Breaks Follow-up**

7 Messages

**From: Britnee Weatherspoon**

**Fri, Mar 6, 2020 at 12:16PM**

**To: Teacher A**

Good afternoon,

I wanted to follow-up with you to see if you have implemented any of the classroom physical activity breaks using The Teacher's Playbook. Let me know if you have any questions or if you are experiencing any barriers to implementing the activities in your classroom. I am here to help you any way I can. I would love to schedule a time to come into your classroom to see the implementation of the physical activity breaks.

Please let me know!

Warm regards,

Britnee Weatherspoon

**From: Teacher A**

**Fri, Mar 6, 2020 at 12:29PM**

**To: Britnee Weatherspoon**

I have had some classroom breaks that we used as a review game for a vocab quiz and they've gone ok. These kids are difficult to do anything unstructured or different from routine with. They argue over everything and fuss about anything. I feel if we would implement this from the beginning of the year as a part of their routine (which I am planning to do) it would work way better. We are getting our eggs Tuesday and are reviewing for PSSAs at this point so I will work on this more after the tests and eggs.

**From: Teacher A**

**Fri, Mar 6, 2020 at 2:00PM**

**To: Britnee Weatherspoon**

Hi,

I am so glad that you shared this feedback with me and I am glad you've attempted the classroom breaks! Any feedback is appreciated and can help me to plan accordingly for implementing this in the future. I remember you sharing with me about the eggs coming and you were hoping to try this prior to then. I want to schedule a time to meet with you in person sometime this month (before PSSAs) to complete the post-survey which will help me obtain additional feedback from you. I will also have Teacher B and Teacher C do the same thing.

Please let me know when would be a good time to meet with you individually.

Warm regards,

Britnee Weatherspoon

**From: Britnee Weatherspoon**

**Fri, Mar 6, 2020 at 2:00PM**

**To: Teacher A**

Hi,

I am so glad that you shared this feedback with me and I am glad you've attempted the classroom breaks! Any feedback is appreciated and can help me to plan accordingly for implementing this in the future. I remember you sharing with me about the eggs coming and you were hoping to try this prior to then. I want to schedule a time to meet with you in person sometime this month (before PSSAs) to complete the post-survey which will help me obtain additional feedback from you. I will also have Teacher B and Teacher C do the same thing.

Please let me know when would be a good time to meet with you individually.

Warm regards,

Britnee Weatherspoon

**From: Teacher A**

**Fri, Mar 6, 2020 at 2:17PM**

**To: Britnee Weatherspoon**

I am free every 3rd period so whatever fits into your schedule is fine.

**From: Britnee Weatherspoon**

**Mon, Mar 9, 2020 at 9:50AM**

**To: Teacher A**

How about this Thursday, March 12th during 3rd period? Let's aim for the end of the week and the students are here on Friday.

Warm regards,

Britnee Weatherspoon

**From: Teacher A**

**Mon, Mar 9, 2020 at 11:28AM**

**To: Britnee Weatherspoon**

As long as I don't end up getting pulled that is fine.

**From: Britnee Weatherspoon**

**Mon, Mar 9, 2020 at 11:30AM**

**To: Teacher A**

Ok sounds good. Let's plan for Thursday but if you get pulled, we can reschedule. Thank you! :)

**\*\*Email Copy\*\***

**Classroom Physical Activity Breaks Follow-up**

7 Messages

**From: Britnee Weatherspoon**

**Mon, Mar 9, 2020 at 11:30AM**

**To: Teacher C**

Good afternoon,

I wanted to follow-up with you to see if you have implemented any of the classroom physical activity breaks using The Teacher's Playbook. Let me know if you have any questions or if you are experiencing any barriers to implementing the activities in your classroom. I am here to help you any way I can. I would love to schedule a time to come into your classroom to see the implementation of the physical activity breaks.

Please let me know!

Warm regards,

Britnee Weatherspoon

**From: Britnee Weatherspoon**

**Thu, Mar 12, 2020 at 1:03PM**

**To: Teacher C**

Hi,

Do you have time over the next week to complete the post-survey for Classroom Physical Activity Breaks with me? This is the survey I completed with Teacher A today. This should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

Please let me know a day that works for you.

Britnee Weatherspoon

**From: Teacher C**

**Thu, Mar 12, 2020 at 1:22PM**

**To: Britnee Weatherspoon**

Yes...just let me know when.

**From: Britnee Weatherspoon Thu, Mar 12, 2020 at 1:36PM**

**To: Teacher C**

Will Monday next week work for you during the 3rd period?

**From: Teacher C Thu, Mar 12, 2020 at 2:06PM**

**To: Britnee Weatherspoon**

Yeppers

**From: Britnee Weatherspoon Thu, Mar 12, 2020 at 2:10PM**

**To: Teacher C**

Thank you so much. I really appreciate your time.

Britnee Weatherspoon

**From: Britnee Weatherspoon Wed, Mar 18, 2020 at 1:02PM**

**To: Teacher C**

Hi,

I hope you are doing well, healthy and safe! I wanted to ask if you are available for a call sometime this week or next week to complete the post-survey for the Physical Activity Breaks. It should take no more than 15 minutes.

Please let me know!

Britnee Weatherspoon

**\*\*Email Copy\*\***

**Classroom Physical Activity Breaks Follow-up**

**3 Messages**

**From: Britnee Weatherspoon      Fri, Mar 6, 2020 at 12:16PM**

**To: Teacher B**

Good afternoon,

I wanted to follow-up with you to see if you have implemented any of the classroom physical activity breaks using The Teacher's Playbook. Let me know if you have any questions or if you are experiencing any barriers to implementing the activities in your classroom. I am here to help you any way I can. I would love to schedule a time to come into your classroom to see the implementation of the physical activity breaks.

Please let me know!

Warm regards,

Britnee Weatherspoon

**From: Britnee Weatherspoon Thu, Mar 12, 2020 at 1:02PM**

**To: Teacher B**

Hi,

Do you have time over the next week to complete the post-survey for Classroom Physical Activity Breaks with me? I met with Teacher A today during the 3rd period to complete the post-survey with her. It should take 10-15 minutes at most.

Please let me know a day that works for you.

Britnee Weatherspoon

**From: Britnee Weatherspoon Wed, Mar 18, 2020 at 1:08PM**

**To: Teacher B**

Hi,

I hope you are doing well, healthy and safe! I wanted to ask if you are available for a call sometime this week or next week to complete the post-survey for the Physical Activity Breaks. It should take no more than 15 minutes.

Please let me know!

Warm regards,

Britnee Weatherspoon



**Date: March 20, 2020**

**Action Taken/Event: Emailed Post-Survey to Teachers via Google Form**

Teachers did not get back to me regarding the last email and considering that teachers were overwhelmed with having to transition to online learning, I put the post-survey interview questions into a Google Form and sent it to them. Teacher A completed the two questions that we did not complete during the interview. Teacher B and Teacher C completed the post-survey via Google Form.

Teacher A did not complete two questions during the in-person interview for the post-survey. Teacher A completed the last two questions via Google Form. Teacher B and Teacher C were not able to complete their in-person interview due to school closing for the remainder of the year. An alternative option was to schedule a telephone call or Google Hangouts meeting with Teacher B and Teacher C individually to complete the interview over the phone or computer. Teacher B and Teacher C were overwhelmed with the transition to online learning so I put the questions in a Google Form and shared it with them to complete when they had the time.

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