

History of Grundy Center Physical Education Program with Emphasis in Technology

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Abstract: The educational system in the United States is focusing on all students being proficient in reading, math and science. Performance standards and accountability legislation assures that each school allocates time, energy and resources necessary to demonstrate improvement in the core areas. Performance is measured with standardized tests. With so much attention being placed on core subjects the arts and physical education programs are often neglected. Too often the arts and physical education programs are looked upon as an opportunity to provide a prep period for the general education teacher within the school day. With the need to improve our basic skills how do we justify the existence of our traditional physical education programs? In a standardized world how would a physical education teacher demonstrate that a student is proficient? In a country and state that is witnessing increased childhood obesity and diseases/health problems associated with being overweight, what role should the school be playing? The Grundy Center journey needs to be told.

John Stevens has spent thirty-three years as an Iowa educator. He entered the Grundy Center School District as the elementary principal ten years ago. It was then that he realized how special the elementary physical education program that was at Grundy. For the past six years Superintendent Stevens has worked to improve the K-12 physical education program as well as advance the health and well being of students and citizens of Grundy Center. He helped create a fitness facility and Y.M.C.A. within the high school where all students have free memberships and reduced rates for staff. He created a district wellness committee, before the federal mandate. He was one of the first in Iowa to remove pop and unhealthy snack items from the school. John formed a nutrition team that revamped the school lunch menus. He has partnered with the University of Northern Iowa and Polar Electro to create an innovative full immersion “Teaching with Technology” masters degree program for physical education that uses the Grundy Center Physical Education Program as a model for delivery of cutting edge “best practice” for integrating technology into physical education. John has been a guest speaker at National PE Day in Washington D.C. and has presented at numerous National School Board Conferences on the Grundy Center Physical Education Program. Mr. Stevens has also been a guest presenter at the Iowa State Leaders Conference and served as a panelist for a national health briefing sponsored by the Commission to Build a Healthier America (US Dept. of Health).