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**Students First-**  
*Inspire, Educate, Celebrate*



## **Grant initiative aims to improve student health**

- *Eight buildings involved in pilot to increase physical activity, healthy eating*

Beaumont Health with other partners is piloting a program at eight Dearborn Public Schools to encourage healthier lifestyles for students with more physical activity, better nutrition and even growing their own produce.

“We are creating edible and physical activity learning classrooms in the schools and the homes while engaging the entire community,” said Sara Gleicher, project coordinator and lead from Beaumont’s Healthy Dearborn initiative.

The grant’s wide-ranging wellness effort includes incorporating more nutrition and health information into science and math classes, reaching out to families via newsletters and activity nights, creating more physical activities for students from quick in-school brain boosters to after school clubs, and reworking gym lessons based on best practices. The most visible change, though, is that each school will get a food and flower garden that students will help build, maintain and use in science classes. Gardens beds and apple and pear trees are being placed this fall.

All that and more is part of D-SHINES, (Dearborn - School Health through Integrated Nutrition & Exercise Strategies) for Healthy Kids! The program, funded by a \$445,890 grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, includes Salina Elementary, Salina Intermediate, McCollough-Unis Elementary and Middle School, Lowrey School, Long Elementary, Nowlin Elementary, O.L. Smith Middle School and Whitmore-Bolles Elementary.

The goal is to prevent diseases like obesity by teaching kids and families about nutrition and exercise and by putting those lessons into action to hopefully spur healthy, lifelong changes.

Baseline data collected by grant partner Wayne State University showed a need for intervention in Dearborn youth. Of the 22 Dearborn schools studied, more than 61 percent of youth were overweight or obese and less than one third met the recommended guidelines of 60 minutes a day of moderate to vigorous physical activity. Half or less reported eating the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables.

Other organizations in the grant include the University of Michigan-Dearborn Environmental Interpretive Center, ACCESS, Michigan State University Extension Service, Dearborn PTA Council and Muslim Girl and Boy Scouts.

While student health is important to the schools, it’s not the only reason they were willing to take on the program.

“Kids who are physically active, it boosts their academic achievement,” Gleicher said.

***Note: Media interested in photo ops at one of the garden installations should contact Communications Director David Mustonen. Installations continue on select dates through Oct. 30.***

**Photo captions**

***PR 11 D-SHINES students pouring dirt*** – Smith Middle School students pour soil into a newly placed garden bed outside of their school on Oct. 3, 2018. The food and flower gardens are being installed at eight Dearborn Public Schools as part of a D-SHINES wellness grant received by Beaumont Health and Healthy Dearborn.

***PR 11 D-SHINES tree planting*** - Smith Middle School students help plant an apple tree outside the school on Oct. 3, 2018. Food and flower gardens are being installed outside eight Dearborn Public Schools as part of a D-SHINES wellness grant received by Beaumont Health and Healthy Dearborn.

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