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West Orange School District Documents Innovative Physical Education Course

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WEST ORANGE, NJ – Sit-ups, push-ups, running, and learning game rules...these can be activities that young teens dislike doing in gym class. Physical Education teachers at Edison Middle School decided they should come up with a program that students would actually want to do.

The Phys Ed/Health teachers -- Robert Berke, Corinn Giaquinto, Bryan Azzato and Meredith Schwartz -- worked together to come up with an educational unit that would incorporate skill related fitness components in a fun way, and the sports combine was born.

“At each department meeting, we share best practice lessons as a way to spread great lessons across the district,” K-12 Supervisor of Health and Physical Education Kevin Alvine.

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“After watching the teachers at Edison teach this combine and seeing how much fun their students had with it, I asked the Edison PE staff to explain and teach the lesson to the rest of the middle school and elementary staff at one of our meetings.”

The staff was enthusiastic about the combine training, and Alvine encouraged staff to utilize a video from the Fuel Up to Play 60 Program. (Fuel Up to Play 60 is an in-school nutrition and physical activity program launched by National Dairy Council and NFL, in collaboration with the USDA, to help encourage today's youth to lead healthier lives. Students dressed in their favorite team shirts.

Six stations were set up around the EMS gym and students rotated from activity to activity in teams. The combine included six stations: Over and Under Hurdles, Vertical Jump, Cone Weave, Broad Jump, Shuttle Run, and Sprint. The goals of the combine are:

1. Agility – The ability to change body positions quickly and keep the body under control when moving.
2. Balance - The ability to keep the body in a steady position while standing and moving.
3. Coordination -The ability of body parts to work together when you perform an activity.
4. Power- The ability to combine strength with speed while moving.
5. Speed - The ability to move all or a part of the body quickly.
6. Reaction Time - The ability to move quickly once a signal to start moving is received.

During the week of March 7, Edison, Liberty, Gregory, Pleasantdale, Redwood, and St. Cloud conducted the combine class. The school district filmed the classes and a video will be posted on the Athletic Department web page at www.woboe.org when completed.

“This is a great way for our community to see the innovative Health and Physical Education programs for our students,” Alvine concluded.

(All photos from Edison Middle School.)

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