

Eight Schools in Spartanburg County Named to 2019 List of America's Healthiest Schools

Schools to be honored with national award for promoting healthy eating, physical activity and staff well-being

Spartanburg County, SC September 16, 2019 – The Spartanburg Healthy Schools Initiative, funded by the Mary Black Foundation and supported by Partners for Active Living, the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, and the Arnold School of Public Health at USC and Furman University is happy to announce that **eight schools** across Spartanburg County have been named to the 2019 list of [America's Healthiest Schools](#) by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, receiving national recognition for their commitment to students' health and well-being. Seven of these schools are Spartanburg Healthy Schools Initiative grantees.

A total of 355 schools nationwide were selected based on a rigorous set of criteria—from availability of nutritious foods to access to quality physical education opportunities—as part of [Healthier Generation](#)'s Healthy Schools Program. In South Carolina, 32 schools received recognition this year.

The following schools have been participating in the Mary Black Foundation Spartanburg Healthy Schools Initiative and are being recognized as National Healthy Schools Program awardees for 2019: **Boiling Springs Intermediate School** and **Oakland Elementary School** in District 2, **Clifdale Elementary School** in District 3, and **Arcadia Elementary School, Lone Oak Elementary School, RP Dawkins Middle School, and Woodland Heights Elementary School** in District 6.

In addition, **Jesse Boyd Elementary School** from District 7 is being recognized this year. Cowpens Elementary School in District 3 achieved the award, which runs for two years, in 2018.

The Spartanburg Healthy Schools Initiative (SHSI), which began in 2016, provides a generous budget and intensive hands on assistance to each school to help them increase the development of recommended policies and use of best practices. Long term support of schools implementing the Healthy Schools Program helps these school communities develop a culture of wellness which leads students, families and staff to adopt healthy habits for a lifetime.

Here are just a few highlights from the last 3 years of the Initiative:

Boiling Springs Intermediate School: leveraged SHSI funds to match KaBOOM grant funds to build a large accessible playground from scratch at their campus. This play area is being used for PE classes, recess, and before and after school play. It is also accessible to the community during non-school hours. BSIS sent two of their teachers to become fully trained in comprehensive active classroom techniques. Not only do these teachers serve as trainers for their own school and district, they also help train teachers across the region.

Oakland Elementary School: developed an extensive outdoor area that includes a paved walking loop, a wooded nature/STEM trail, a sensory garden for younger students, and an outdoor classroom. The wellness committee engaged community and school volunteers to plan and implement this project. This amenity is accessible to the community during non-school hours. Oakland also has integrated wellness messaging into the school community through the daily news program, family events, staff initiatives and active recess programming.

Clifdale Elementary: promoted community wellness and school pride through their Color Run. This highly popular event brought the entire community together. Clifdale also upgraded their basketball courts and outdoor track area. Additional PE equipment was purchased for use during PE classes, and before and after school play opportunities which are available to all children.

Arcadia Elementary: built a paved walking path extending almost a half mile through the school grounds, which is being used for PE classes, recess, outdoor learning opportunities and staff wellness. Wellness Wednesdays give teachers a chance to focus on extra nutrition, physical activity and social and emotional learning lessons once a week. Arcadia also engages families in wellness by offering lunch and learns, breakfast and learns, and an annual Family Fitness Night.

Lone Oak Elementary: is using SHSI funds to connect literacy and wellness by offering numerous family events throughout the year. Books and Breakfast, Literacy Luau, and Family Literacy Night are just a few that promote healthy eating as well as reading. Lone Oak is one of several schools that uses the GoNoodle brain break program to encourage better learning through physical activity in the classroom.

RP Dawkins Middle School: built a quarter mile paved walking track that circles playing fields and a school garden area. The track area continues to be developed and serves as an outdoor amenity to the community during non-school hours. The wellness committee also created a comprehensive fitness room that is available to all students and to staff. Dawkins is one of several schools that held Rethink Your Drink campaigns to promote the healthy habit of drinking water throughout the day.

Woodland Heights Elementary: holds healthy cooking demonstrations and classes for families, staff and students, as well as healthy food taste tests in the cafeteria. Indoor and outdoor school gardens provide a fun way to teach about the importance of eating fresh produce. Woodland Heights focuses on modeling healthy behaviors for kids by supporting wellness for staff and for families, through staff wellness challenges and family fun and fitness events.