

## Student and Wellness Success Stories from School Year 2024-2025

Childhood overweight and obesity is a growing problem nationally and in Indiana and rates have more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents in the past 30 years. Jump IN for Healthy Kids' work is grounded in this fact: changing the environment is the best way to change behaviors. Research shows that if healthy nutrition and physical activity policies can be implemented in the places where children and families spend most of their time, their health will likely improve.

With the support of community partners, Jump IN created Jump Right UP, a partnership to improve the health of kids in Indianapolis school districts. Using the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Model as the framework for success, Jump Right UP assists schools in completing the Thriving Schools Integrated Assessment (TSIA) which helps schools pinpoint best practices to improve upon. Goals of the partnership include: establishing best practices around physical activity and nutrition, such as 30 minutes of physical activity every day; implementing a healthy celebration and vending policy; and engaging with the school community to establish a culture of health. These wellness efforts not only help staff and students eat more healthfully and get more physical activity, but they also impact attendance, behavioral issues, and test scores.

### Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Model



Jump Right UP is now in its seventh year and has engaged four school districts: MSD Warren, MSD Lawrence, MSD Pike, and Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) to work directly with both the districts and the school buildings to implement wellness policies and practices as well as implement administrative and structural changes that increase sustainability and accountability for school health and wellness district-wide. In an analysis of all public schools in central Indiana, Jump IN identified 150 out of 600 that predominantly serve populations at higher risk for poorer health outcomes. All 150 schools are in Marion County. Using the CDC's Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model (WSCC) Jump IN has worked with 71 schools so far, strategically planning to work our way through all 150.

Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) is the largest of Indianapolis's public-school districts, employing nearly 4,000 staff and educating more than 30,000 children. It is IPS's work with Jump Right UP that has come the farthest the longest, and we are delighted to share with you three significant success stories that have come from this partnership.

Jump IN began to partner with IPS on the district wellness journey over a decade ago, when Jump IN for Healthy Kids was just forming. In order to develop an understanding of the scope of children's overweight and obesity, Jump IN secured the FitnessGram student fitness platform, employed a fleet of volunteers to administer it, and partnered with IPS to assess students' fitness and feed the data to physical education instructors to use in strengthening physical education programs. This early partnership soon evolved from measuring to strategic intervention and best practice implementation.

- 2014 – 2017: Jump IN provided IPS with FitnessGram licenses for a 3-year period
- 2018 – 2020: Jump IN provided technical assistance through Jump Right UP program for 10 to 11 school buildings
- 2021 – 2025: IPS added all district-managed school buildings to Jump Right UP program, more than 40 buildings/programs annually

“IPS has shown incredible dedication to children's health and has come such a long way toward their wellness goals with the expertise and support of Jump Right UP. IPS has been intentional about connecting its wellness work to its Strategic Plan goals and has effectively used data to drive its work. By investing in and growing staff capacity to make health and wellness a priority for students and staff, IPS continues to integrate nutrition and physical activity best practices for healthier, happier, and more prepared students.” – Julie Burns, Jump IN for Healthy Kids CEO

IPS' 2024-2025 wellness journey began with all IPS schools taking the Thriving Schools Integrated Assessment. The Thriving Schools Integrated Assessment is an **evidence-based tool** that helps schools **identify** their unique strengths and opportunities for **improving** policies and **practices that promote academic achievement and the well-being** of students, staff, and teachers. In connection with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program and web-based Action Center, the Thriving Schools Integrated Assessment **provides actionable steps** and **credible resources** that support improvements rooted in an equitable approach to **whole child health**.

Topics in the Thriving Schools Integrated Assessment:

- Advancing Core Policies & Practices
- Increasing Family & Community Engagement
- Improving Nutrition & Food Access

- Enriching Health Education
- Implementing Local School Wellness Policy
- Bolstering Physical Education & Activity
- Strengthening Social-Emotional Health
- Cultivating Staff Well-Being
- Promoting Tobacco-Free Schools
- Supporting School Health Services
- Reducing Chronic Absenteeism
- Addressing School Discipline
- Fostering Positive School Climate & Culture
- Building Staff Capacity

IPS has established an accountability infrastructure that enabled the district and school buildings to embed the Jump Right UP process throughout the school system, which included:

- Assignment of the District person or team responsible for the ongoing administration of the Jump Right UP program steps.
- Annual completion of TSIA assessment topics by each school building
- Identification of new goals and action plans annually
- Continuation of Wellness Teams at the school building level
- Review of goal progress annually by District-identified person of accountability
- Presentation of District progress through appropriate metrics
- Completion of triennial assessments as required by Federal rules for Local School Wellness Policies

IPS leaders and educators on the impact of their wellness work:

“Through **PD (professional development)**...teachers make the connection between academic performance and physical activity...**helped us garner buy-in from teachers to incorporate movement into their classrooms.**”

“**Our cafeteria is definitely more healthy than it used to be.**”

“Students are looking forward to having healthy snacks **when we consistently promote them.**”

“The new playground and adding tangible equipment **really boosted our recess levels.**”

### **Success Story #1: Enrichment Programs and Increase in Physical Activity**



In an effort to increase physical activity among IPS students and to offer athletic experiences for students that they likely would not get anywhere else, IPS has developed a robust program of after-school enrichment activities. Increasing and broadening their range of community partnerships, IPS has been able to offer these physical activity-based activities in six-week segments in both fall and spring semesters. Every IPS school is eligible to engage with these courses, which include pickleball, archery, track/running, swimming, ice skating, skateboarding, biking, boxing, gardening and Ninja Warrior-type training courses for students among others.

The response to the enrichment programs has been very high: 25 of 44 IPS schools participate in at least one afterschool enrichment activity and more than 1/3 of all IPS students – over 10,000 – participated in at least one enrichment activity during the 2024-2025 school year.



Some highlights: Katie Lloyd-Jones is a teacher at IPS CFI 2 and helps coordinate the enrichment activities. She watched the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders learn the fundamentals of pickleball and play competitively. “Paddlesports increase longevity – it doesn’t take long to be skilled enough to be able to play for fun but can take your whole life to be perfect. They are the perfect lifelong sports.” Pickleball was so popular with the students at CFI 2 that the school invested in a pickleball set so that the students can continue playing well after the enrichment program ended. Katie also leads the running club year-round for students and made it possible for the kids to run in four 5K races throughout the school year. In the fall, her group became part of the Monumental Kids movement (part of Beyond Monumental Marathon) and they ran the Beyond Monumental 5K. They also participated in a 5K at Arsenal Tech, the Donut Dash 5K (that benefits Teachers Treasures) and the Kids Fit 5K as part of Indianapolis 500 Mini-Marathon.

## **Success Story #2: Enrichment Programs and Impact on Behavior and Attendance**

At Christian Park IPS School 82, third grade teacher Monica Shellhamer uses the enrichment activities to support the school wellness goals. She reports that their primary



goal this school year has been to get kids more physical activity. To accomplish that, they have:

- Started an after school running club
- Added the Ninja Warrior experience as an after-school enrichment
- Made getting the kids outside and active a priority - even looking for ways to be outside and active in traditional subject classes
- Used physical activity and enrichment programs to motivate kids academically, increase attendance, and help reduce behavioral problems

Monica and her team have used these physical activity opportunities to motivate the students academically. Students who wanted to participate in enrichments were expected to pass the standardized iREAD test. As enrollment in Ninja Warriors was approaching, she made sure all the kids knew that the better their attendance and behavior, the greater their chances of being able to participate. She also made sure the students knew that on the days they have their enrichment activities they needed to be at school to participate – this helped increase attendance. She and her team encouraged students who had trouble sitting still in class to sign up for the Running Club as a way to get their energy out. It worked; they reported that kids who participated were less fidgety and were able to concentrate and learn better.



Monica states, “This has really improved our discipline practices. We no longer withhold recess as a punishment and instead encourage physical activity as much as possible – it makes a difference.”

At CFI 2, while Katie has led the running group for several years, she has noticed more distinctly the social-emotional impact of all of the

enrichment activities this year. With ice hockey, Katie observed that the students were unsteady and hesitant at first but “after four weeks the kids showed a lot of confidence. There was so much pride in their success. They were proud of themselves.”

Katie also observed, “students who have behavior problems – it’s a lot easier to get a handle on when you have strong relationships with them. After school programs allow these special relationships to develop. The more kids have relationships with trusted adults, the safer they feel and the more successful they will be.”

### **Success Story 3: Special Event: Archery Tournament**

Archery has been an after-school enrichment opportunity for students for the past couple of years but in the 2024-2025 school year it really took off. On March 15, 2025, IPS helped convene a district-wide archery tournament with more than 100 students participating. It was held at Shortridge High School and parents were invited and encouraged to attend. The students competed against each other in three rounds and prizes were awarded to the top-scoring girls and boys in different grades. There was fierce competition and a huge turnout of kids, teachers, and supportive families. The experience was so special that one teacher commented, “these kids are going to remember this for the rest of their lives.”



In addition to seeing great enthusiasm among the students, IPS School 88 teacher Jake Windsor watched the bonds between the students and the teachers deepen. “These enrichments help with trusted adult exposure, which is good for everyone.” Jake likes to highlight one student who had an especially positive experience. She has attended the school since second grade and is now in fifth. She had struggled to engage with her PE classes but came out of her shell during the archery unit. She signed up for the archery enrichment program and was transformed. Jake reports that this student who never showed enthusiasm for physical activity or her PE class was suddenly asking him if she could practice after school. She went on to compete in the district

archery tournament and overcame her nerves. She set her own goals and reached them.



Without this enrichment she might never have learned that she has an interest in archery or developed discipline - a real skill for the sport. This experience could shape her entire future.

## Wellness Award

Finally, Jump IN's Jump Right UP program was recognized by IPS this month at its year-end celebration for the wellness team members and enrichment partners. Jump IN CEO Julie Burns, pictured below with IPS's Kathy Langdon, commented, "We are very proud to have such a strong partner in IPS. The wellness progress across each building and at the district level are inspiring and are helping make students and staff healthier in body and mind."



Interested in additional resources to improve your school wellness work? Check these out:



[The 6-Step Process](#)



[Playworks](#)



[Fuel Up](#)





[IDOE Nutrition](#)



[Action for Healthy Kids](#) \*



[CDC Healthy Schools](#) \*\*

\* Additional Action for Healthy Kids resources: [School Health Index](#), [Tools for Schools](#), [Action Grants](#)

\*\* Additional CDC Healthy Schools resources: [Tools & Resources](#), [Virtual Healthy Schools](#), [School Nutrition](#), [Physical Education and Physical Activity](#), [Health and Academics](#),