



How to Engage Students

Each of the Plays in the Fuel Up to Play 60 Playbook depends upon the active engagement of students in planning and execution. In fact, student action is key to the success of Fuel Up to Play 60. Researchⁱ shows that:

- Peer-to-peer outreach can have a positive impact on students' behavior and help to influence healthy choices.
- Student involvement is linked to motivation and engagement in learning.
- Students are more likely to care about their school when they contribute to its improvement.
- Student input is potentially the most valuable, but often the least utilized, resource in school improvement.

Students can't do this alone, however. Youth-adult partnerships are key to Fuel Up to Play 60. As a Program Advisor or other adult helping students get involved in Fuel Up to Play 60, here are some ideas for facilitating youth-adult partnerships and for recognizing students' efforts along the way.

It's About Working Together

Students will need the help and support of adult leaders throughout the school. A Program Advisor can help students see how they need to work within the existing school guidelines and "rules," and help both adults and youth recognize the benefits of working together.

Some ideas for facilitating these partnerships include:

- Host a lunchtime meeting for students and the people who can help. Students can present the goals of Fuel Up to Play 60 and ask for ideas and advice from these key adults. Opening up the communication channels will show adults that students want their help and show students how much adults have to offer when asked.
- Help students solicit suggestions from school staff via a survey or questionnaire (See [Polling Resources](#)) to find out which Plays they think have the best chance of "working" in their daily routines. Have students follow up with key groups to ask for more of their input before beginning to plan.
- Host a "6 Minutes to Fuel Up to Play 60" event. Invite key adults to attend, and after giving a brief overview of the program ask them to "speed brainstorm" with students, moving from table to table to brainstorm one-on-one with students about specific activities and Plays. Have students man different tables dedicated to specific Play categories (breakfast, in-school breaks, etc.) Help students prepare quick overview bullets for each table in advance so the adults can quickly learn what the Plays are about before brainstorming begins. When it's over, have

students follow up with the adults that seemed the most enthusiastic to involve them in planning for the most popular Plays.

Putting It into Action

Here are some specific areas and ideas to focus on with students as they delve into the planning and implementation of the different Plays.

Healthy Eating Plays

The School Nutrition Manager and staff will be your most valuable and integral team members for implementing Healthy Eating Plays in school.

- Federal and state regulations, nutrition guidelines and food-purchasing decisions are the purview of the district's school nutrition coordinator or director. Work with this person to find out what involvement the Fuel Up to Play 60 School Team can have. Perhaps you can arrange for the team to meet with the school nutrition department and be part of meetings with vendors about food selections for whichever Healthy Eating Play they're implementing.
- Kitchen safety, health regulations and food service are all in the hands of the school nutrition professionals. Confirm whether and under which circumstances the school team may be involved in food preparation, and help them plan accordingly.
- Schools may have to adapt program ideas to fit their physical layout. For example, schools that are spread out, have multiple floors and/or a large student body may require a Grab-n-Go Breakfast Play to have more than one location or cart to allow easy accessibility by all.

Remember, buy-in from the school's nutrition professionals is paramount, so emphasize to both staff *and* students that the Healthy Eating Plays are meant to enhance what the nutrition staff is *already doing*. Facilitate this partnership early to help ensure a collaborative approach leading up to and during the Plays.

Physical Activity Plays

The School Team will need to work with the P.E. Department Chair and staff to understand what the requirements are and what options may be available inside (or outside) the existing system to help meet them.

School administrators can help guide the team on any legal issues and insurance requirements related to making physical activity options available (for example, it may be necessary to have a supervisor open the school gym during off-hours).

Remember, the school schedule is a complex and carefully planned instrument for student achievement. You will need to help students work respectfully with the P.E. Department Chair and staff, including



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classroom teachers, to find creative ways of integrating physical activity programs without disrupting the learning environment.

General Considerations

Make sure surveys and polling opportunities involve a wide range of the student body so that feedback is universal and a good representation of the school. The more students you involve, the more the program will be considered universal and the more likelihood you have of finding more student leaders!

Have student leaders take the lead in communicating program goals and plans, but maintain oversight to ensure that messaging adheres to stated Fuel Up to Play 60 goals and parameters and school requirements – that is, that messaging is appropriate, free from errors and contains only acceptable language.

Student Leadership and Recognition

Encourage students to take on as much ownership and leadership as possible to make Fuel Up to Play 60 work. Giving students the leadership role is a great way to encourage participation by other students, recognizing that leadership is a great way to keep students motivated.

As students plan and implement Fuel Up to Play 60 Plays, be sure to look for ways to help recognize their efforts. Students will enjoy seeing the successes of their work, but they will also value being recognized for their efforts and time commitment. Celebrate their efforts and successes. the focus where each student's passions are and highlight their hard work. Some ways of recognizing student leaders include:

- Work with the school's or district's community service department so that team members can earn community service hours, if appropriate, for their work on Fuel Up to Play 60.
- Work with the school district's wellness coordinators to create a student wellness committee or task force for team members to share ideas, discuss issues important to their schools and work on new solutions for improving healthy eating and physical activity opportunities across the district.
- Highlight team members' work on the programs by recognizing them as "Most Valuable Players" at school events, in morning announcements and in local media, with references to the program's support by NFL, the National Dairy Council, USDA, and your [local Dairy Council](#).

ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors among Youth](#). Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2009. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/pdf/connectedness.pdf>. Accessed January 21, 2019.