

Turner Middle School (Berthoud, CO)

We wanted the students to take the lead on the cafeteria makeover so we allowed the team to brainstorm projects they would like to do with Fuel Up to Play 60. We have an advisory period and asked the teachers if the students could work on the makeover during the class period. Our goal was to make the cafeteria more appealing for healthy eating and activity without interfering with the functionality of using it as a gym too.

The students took the lead and narrowed down the ideas. One group had to change their plan after discovering that no part of their plan would work. It was a good learning experience because they had to regroup and try something new. The students had to work together to get their projects completed. Some students who do not normally take leadership roles were thrust into leadership. Others had to learn to compromise, a skill that did not necessarily come easily. The students added color, posters, bulletin boards, made an indoor game, and will finish making a "Wall of Fame" to honor former students who have made a difference.

The students chose their project, made a timeline and materials list. Then they were expected to work on the project as a group. Some groups found that they could not accomplish their project in the budgeted amount of time. Individuals learned to be responsible for paperwork and materials as one individual's mistake caused the group to fall behind schedule. The principal and all of the other teachers in our building supported our appeal for using "Advisory" time to work on the cafeteria remodel. We did not finish all of the projects, so students are working in smaller groups to complete the projects.

One girl's father works at a sign shop and is helping us make signs. I have found through the years of working with Fuel Up to Play 60 that whenever students lead the way, like Fuel Up to Play 60 encourages, things take longer but are worth the time. This project was the same. We did not finish all of our projects and the students need more time and guidance but the journey is worth the effort. Take the time to let the kids make the decisions and do the work when hosting Fuel Up to Play 60 events.