

**New York**

## Stepping Up to Promote Healthy Students

### Problem Overview

In the United States, the prevalence of obesity among school children aged 6–11 more than doubled from 1980 to 2006, and the rate among adolescents aged 12–19 more than tripled over the same period. The 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey results indicated that among high school students in New York,

- 11% were obese.
- 87% did not attend daily physical education classes.
- 62% did not meet recommended levels of physical activity.

### Program/Activity Description

To promote healthy practices and supportive learning environments, the New York State Education Department (NYSED), with funding from CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health, initiated the *Healthy Steps* program.

Part of the NYSED's Healthy Schools Physical Activity and Nutrition Initiative, *Healthy Steps* is designed to get students in grades K–5 moving. The “steps” concept builds on the premise that making a positive difference in children's lives can occur, literally, “step-by-step.” Twice during the school year, *Healthy Steps* challenges engage students in a variety of activities and measure their progress in “steps” and “miles” through school competitions. An online tracking system helps students and staff to monitor their “steps” in miles walked via a virtual hike and to compare themselves with students and staff in other schools statewide. *Healthy Steps* activities can also be integrated into art, math, health, geography and language arts studies.

### Program/Activity Outcomes

In six *Healthy Steps* challenges that have occurred since 2006, students in 240 schools have logged more than 1 million miles. Successful school health initiatives, such as *Healthy Steps*, can serve as models for other school districts nationwide.



**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion  
Division of Adolescent and School Health  
[www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth)

