

Fitness Center Opens in Berlin Middle High School

A fitness center is open in Berlin Middle High School with a new and welcome approach according to Sandy Honsinger, the school's physical education director.

"The focus of the center is to get kids active and to promote healthy lifestyles," Honsinger said. "To do that, our equipment is user friendly, regardless of someone's initial fitness level; multi-purpose; and includes health rate monitoring."

"Instead of grading kids on skills," she explained, "we look at how hard they work out, getting their heart rate up by moving, by being active. Students measure their own progress. We're confident it will help us change the health of this community by providing another way to get students actively moving and caring about themselves."



Berlin HS students on treadmills

Sixteen year old Clara Riccardi, a junior, said: "The center provides a nice opportunity for kids who are not as athletic as others to workout without pressure."

The center is the result of a three year grant obtained through the Carol M. White Physical Education Program that Berlin shares with the Enlarged City School District of Troy, based on similar population income qualification. "The grant allows schools and other community-based organizations to initiate, expand, or enhance physical education programs for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade with the goal of meeting state standards," explained Honsinger.

During the first year, Berlin updated basic equipment, and now in its second year, they created the wellness center which includes weights, ellipticals, treadmills, benches, and game bikes which are exercise bikes connected to games for incentive.



Berlin HS student on the Smith machine

"The school has developed a new curriculum due to the new equipment," Honsinger noted. "Our goal is to have students engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity for 30 minutes per class. High school students have this class two to three days a week, and elementary students have physical education classes twice a week."

Tenth grade student Kelsey O'Dell, age 15, said: "I love this PE class. It's so much fun, I wish we could come in here everyday."