

# Intro Letter to Parents/Community

Dear Parents,

We are pleased to announce our involvement in the *Building Healthy Communities: Engaging Middle Schools through Project Healthy Schools* program supported by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and the University of Michigan.

*Building Healthy Communities: Engaging Middle Schools Through Project Healthy Schools* is an evidence-based, school-wide program that works with schools to improve students' health literacy, emotional wellness, and academic outcomes. Throughout the school year, students within each grade level will receive 20 social emotional learning (SEL) lessons focusing on self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness. Students will also receive 10 hands-on lessons that promote physical activity, healthy eating, and an understanding of how nutrition and activity influence their lifelong health. These lessons focus on 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students; however, our school will also pursue ways to promote health with the entire school community through wellness events and building changes that benefit all students. These school-wide efforts will promote healthier habits and allow students to practice the health literacy and SEL skills they learn in the classroom. Once implemented at Pontiac Academy for Excellence, the program continues year after year, creating a culture of health that benefits future generations.

As part of this program, we will work to improve our nutrition and physical activity environment in support of the five *Project Healthy Schools* goals:

1. Eat more fruits and vegetables
2. Choose less sugary food and beverages
3. Be active every day
4. Eat less fast and fatty food
5. Spend less time in front of an entertainment screen

Our leaders in this effort are Nicholas Benedetto (Athletic Director) and Sharon Cooper-Jones (Physical Education and Health teacher), who is the designated Wellness Champion. Please contact Nicholas Benedetto via email at [nicholas.benedetto@leonagroupmw.com](mailto:nicholas.benedetto@leonagroupmw.com) to learn about how you can get involved.

For more information about *Project Healthy Schools*, visit [www.projecthealthyschools.org](http://www.projecthealthyschools.org).

Sincerely,

Latricia Brown, School K-12 Principal

Nicholas Benedetto, Athletic Director