University Professional Development Grant Report
Arkansas Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance Convention
November 2009

Annette Holeyfield

Workshop—The Importance of Quality Pre-Service Training for Future Health Education and Physical Education Teachers

Presented by: Laura McDowell, Program Manager, Coordinated School Health Programs, Arkansas Department of Education

This workshop highlighted two programs that target reducing childhood obesity in the state of Arkansas.

One such program is a grant-based intervention, the Arkansas Child Wellness Intervention Project "CWIP," which awards obesity grants up to $14,000 for K-2 and 3-6 schools and up to $18,000 for middle schools who adopt the program. Because Arkansas is ranked second in the country for the highest obesity rates in children ages 5-17, the Arkansas Department of Education, Arkansas Tobacco Settlement Commission, Arkansas Children's Hospital, SPARK, and PE4Life are collaborating to offer these grant opportunities to the public schools of Arkansas.

The second program is SPARK. This program is a curriculum model that increases the level of physical activity of the participants. SPARK provides pedagogical strategies instead of just supplying activities or providing a manual for adoption. The Department of Health and the Department of Education in Arkansas are partnering to encourage K-12 public schools in Arkansas to adopt this curriculum model.

This workshop targeted higher education faculty who teach the pedagogy classes in health and physical education, so that we can familiarize our students with these two initiatives prior to their internship. All Arkansas Tech University faculty except one attended the workshop and received this information first-hand. I brought back handouts and shared this information with the one faculty member who did not attend the workshop. We will share this knowledge with our students in their "methods of teaching" classes.