



# NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## NUSD Schools Start School Day Exercising

Novato, CA – Beginning the school day with an exercise routine is becoming more common at the elementary schools in the Novato Unified School District. No longer are students lining up when the bell rings to go to the classroom. Instead, they are gathering and exercising together for 15 minutes to fun music led by a P.E. teacher, classroom teacher or principal. They are “waking up their brains” as one Loma Verde Elementary School student calls it.

It all began during the 2012-13 school year at Loma Verde Elementary School when P.E. teacher Keith Bergman attended the “Excellence in Schools Summit” in Colorado and learned about the correlation between academic performance and physical activity and wellness initiatives. He found out that the #1 school in Michelle Obama’s Let’s Move initiative was a school in Los Angeles that was incorporating “My School in Motion” into their school day. Mr. Bergman was “overwhelmed” and thought “this is exactly what we need to do. Exercising the whole school, every day.” Principal Eileen Smith embraced the idea and Loma Verde is in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year of “LV in Motion.” “We started ‘walk and talk’ in the morning four years ago so transitioning into a short exercise program was the next step,” commented Loma Verde Principal, Eileen Smith. Loma Verde became a “My School in Motion” pilot school last year.

Rancho Elementary School began “Rancho Team Time” last year, a morning exercise program for the entire school. Beginning its second year, students as well as parents and teachers, participate in an exercise program that ‘wakes up their brains.’

This year, three elementary schools will add a morning exercise program to their school day: Olive, Pleasant Valley, and Lynwood. While all three principals were compelled by the research on the connection between exercise and academic achievement, they also saw an opportunity to build community among the students, teachers and parents. For Olive Elementary School Principal, Elizabeth Sesma-Olinyk, “It was a natural step.” For Pleasant Valley Principal, Dana Sadan, “seeing the entire community exercising together is heart-warming and sets the tone for the day for our students.” Rick vanAdelsberg, Lynwood Principal, added that when he visited the program at Loma Verde, he “liked what I saw. The exercise program is a great community builder as well as a creative and fun way to help meet our P.E. instructional minutes requirement.”

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“Beginning the school day with physical activity stimulates brain activity and sets up the students for a day of learning,” commented Dr. Shalee Cunningham, NUSD Superintendent. “It’s also fun!”

To learn more about “LV in Motion” and see students in action, visit the Loma Verde Elementary School website or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmb6VygvYAs>.

“My School in Motion” was founded by Apryl Krakovsky with the hope of that children across America will be given the opportunity to reap the benefits of daily exercise. Visit [www.myschoolinmotion.org](http://www.myschoolinmotion.org) to learn more about the program.

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