

NEWS RELEASE

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Hudson City School District Awarded Bicycling and Nutrition Grants Focusing on Students' Health, Well-Being and Lifelong Benefits

HUDSON, N.Y., June 17, 2024 - The Hudson City School District has been awarded two grants designed to advance the well-being of students and the community, Superintendent Dr. Juliette Pennyman announced. The Riding for Focus Program grant promotes the benefits of bicycling for junior high school-aged students and provides equipment. The New York Farm to School Institute grant is designed to improve students' health and strengthen the agricultural economy by bringing farm-fresh local foods into school cafeterias.

“Physical fitness and proper nutrition are vital to every student’s successful academic performance, as well as social and emotional development,” Dr. Pennyman said. “Supporting and instilling enjoyable habits such as bicycle riding and smart eating at a young age can contribute to a lifetime of good health.”

The 2024 Riding for Focus Program grant is provided through Outride, which provides research, cycling programs and funding to advance the social, emotional and cognitive benefits of bicycling. Its schools grant program equips young riders with skills and knowledge to be “road-ready.” Bicycles, helmets, curriculum and teacher training materials will be provided at no cost to the Hudson district. Outride partners with more than 300 schools and has granted more than \$2 million to 212 cycling programs, benefiting more than 50,000 youths each year.

“Participation in cycling is associated with lower risk of mortality, cardiovascular disease and Type 2 diabetes, as well as positive mental health and well-being,” according to the [National Institutes of Health](#). Bicycling specifically strengthens leg muscles, bone density, joints and the cardiovascular system. It also relieves stress, avoids obesity and helps kids enjoy physical activity without technology screen time.

The District is actively working on logistics of launching the program. Its team will include a program champion, an administrative team and a community support team, typically composed of a bicycle shop and volunteers.



In April 2024, the Hudson City School District announced it will join the sixth annual New York Farm to School Institute for the 2024-25 school year. The year-long training and educational program is a professional development opportunity for food service staff, educators, administrators and community partners.

The program helps bring more foods grown in New York State into school cafeterias and classrooms by connecting with farmers. Educational goals include improving students' health and strengthening a community's agricultural economy. After a training kickoff seminar in August, there will be workshops for school teams, development and implementation of an action plan, and coaching and peer networking for one year. No cost will be incurred by the district.

Nutrition plays a crucial role in brain development and function, and can impact a student's academic performance, according to the [Centers for Disease Control](#). Healthy eating improves memory, concentration and energy levels. Good nutrition is particularly important early in life, during cognitive development, the CDC said.

“The Hudson City School District is committed to the short-term and long-term well-being of every child,” Pennyman said. “These two grants underscore the importance of health and fitness, as well as educational lessons that can provide a lifetime of benefits.”

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For further information, please contact:

Austin Crosier, Communications Technician/Specialist
518-828-4360 ext. 2145
crosiera@hudsoncsd.org