

NEWS\*NEWS\*NEWS

***SANTA MARIA JOINT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT***

**PRESS RELEASE**

---

May 9, 2022

A Righetti High School Physical Education Program has students losing pounds of fat and building muscle.

Nearly 900 Warriors have lost 943.8 pounds and gained 1,436.3 in muscle (from Christmas to March), according to their Body Fat Mass in lbs. and Skeletal Muscle Mass in lbs.

The new PE program, which started this school year, focuses more on cardio and resistance training and nutrition and guidance. The weekly routine includes cardiovascular endurance activities to get the heart pumping and lungs expanding, weights to increase muscle mass and shed fat, and a focus on nutritional choices and its impact on the body and mind.

"During the pandemic I would eat nothing but junk food and Door Dash. The discussion of nutrition in PE reminded me of the importance of eating whole foods and eliminate the junk food. Diabetes runs in my family and I don't want to take shots of insulin I see my family take. So now I don't eat junk food, I don't overeat and only eat until I am full, and I workout every day in class." Since September 1 to March 21, Eric McDaniel lost 53 pounds of fat. He went from 39.6% Body Fat to 22.7%.

"I was severely obese and listening in my PE class made me realize I need to stop eating saturated and trans-fatty foods and reduce my added sugar foods. I started to eat fruits and vegetables, nuts, and whole foods. I never worked out before but now I work out every day in class. I feel better, I feel strong, and I have more energy." Since September 9 to April 1, Janeth Zirate-Gomez lost 37.2 lbs of fat. She went from 47% Body Fat to 34.8%.

Freshman David Abercrombie agreed and described the class as "amazing." "It gives my PE class a new look and feel," Abercrombie added, "I can see the results and it's fantastic."

Warrior PE Teacher Scott Nickason said the idea for the program that is not available elsewhere in the Santa Maria Valley, grew out of the COVID pandemic. That is when the PE teachers noticed the lack of movement impact on students physical and mental health. They decided that something needed to be done differently in PE so it could have an immediate impact and set these kids up for a healthier life.

"People are just blown away when they hear about what we are doing and the results," Nickason added. "This is a life-long lesson that's just not about PE class. Exercise and eating right has become a habit that we hope continues for the rest of their lives. I wish this was around when I was in school."

The District is using \$250,000 of a roughly \$13 million ESSER III allocation (post-pandemic re-entry monies) to support the physical education program, according to SMJUHSD Student Services Director Steve Molina.

"Each school now has the capability to measure the body and fat content to monitor progress," Molina said. "Schools are not just focused on their physical fitness, but on educating students to learn about the nutritional

value of taking care of themselves and their mental well-being. All schools (SMHS and PVHS) should be aligned to a similar program starting the fall of 2022.”

SMJUHSD Media Contact: Public Information Officer Kenny Klein  
[805-709-1454](tel:805-709-1454) or [kklein@smjuhsd.org](mailto:kklein@smjuhsd.org)

XXX