

NJAHPERD Conference 2017

Workshop: Pokemon Move – Gamifying the LMAS Initiative

Presenter: Amanda Amtmanis, Middletown (CT) Public Schools, amtmanisa@mpsct.org

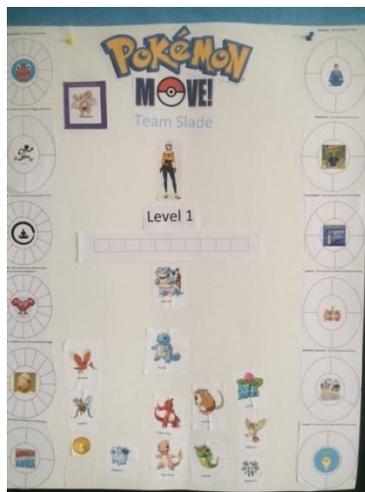
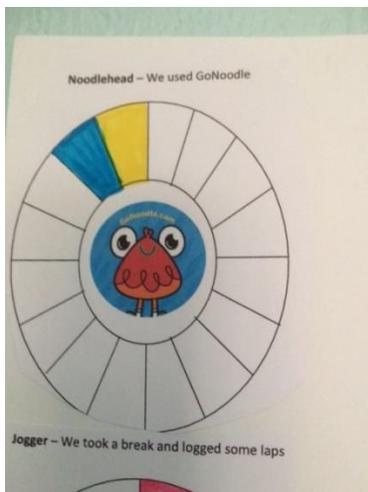
Objectives:

- 1) Participants will explore the different parts of a CSPAP and see how they can be connected by an overall theme and incentivized by becoming part of a game.
- 2) Participants will examine the benefits of this approach in creating buy in and generating enthusiasm among students and teachers
- 3) Participants will be introduced to some of the many free and low cost resources available through LMAS to help schools increase physical activity and see how they have been woven into the Pokemon Move game.
- 4) Participants will consider the benefits of using a theme to help in the creation of a vision or roadmap for their CSPAP and the ways that this can be helpful in figuring out which resources to ask for and which grants might be most helpful

The Pokemon Move Game: This was born out of a combination of the enormous popularity of the Pokemon Go game when it was introduced over the summer of 2016 coupled with my frustration with the challenge of trying to get two schools of staff and students on board with an active schools plan when I only see them each a few days a week (as I split my time between them). All classrooms have their own game board.

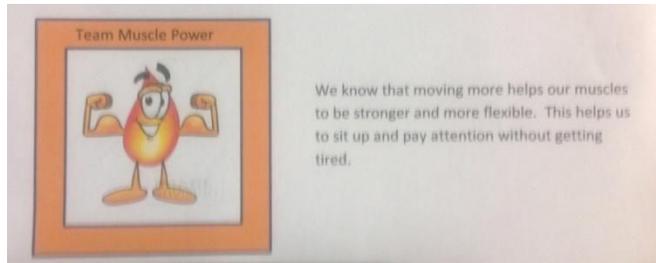
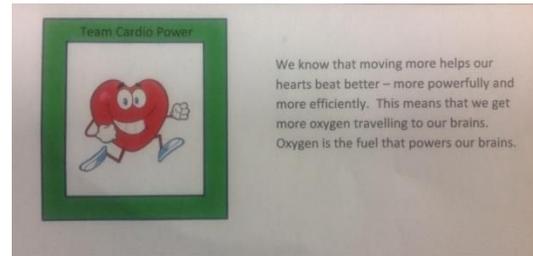
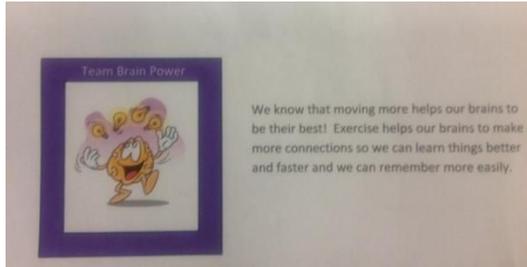


On their game board are medals that they can work towards by completing activity breaks or kinesthetic learning activities (suggested resources for movement in the classroom). They color in spaces and when they fill in the whole circle, they earn a medal. Every time they do any classroom movement, they also color in a space on the level bar. When that has been colored in completely, they move up to the next level (Each board has reusable adhesive dots to hold the level and bar). They also display the Pokémon they have caught by running miles, either in school at recess or during a running break, or by bringing a signed note from home (or having a parent email).

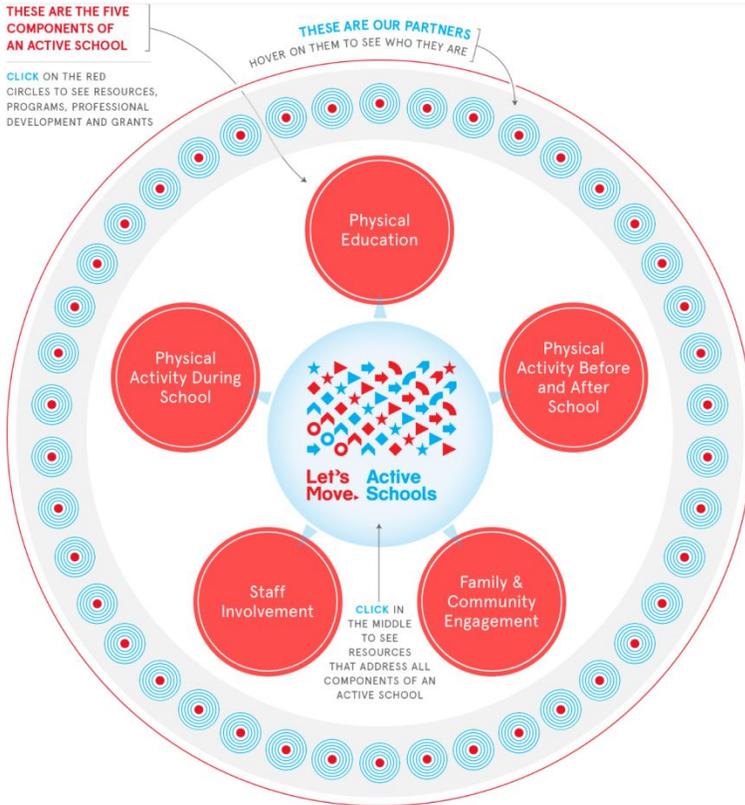


Classes can choose to be part of Team Brain Power, Team, Cardio Power or Team Muscle

Power.



This is the Let's Move Active Schools Infographic Tool that has been designed to help us create a CSPAP. It contains a ton of resources, all organized and at our fingertips.



These resources have been very helpful in creating and expanding Pokemon Move. The area that I had been really trying to chip away at was **Physical Activity During School**. I registered for PAL training several years ago and I have been sharing articles, videos of classroom physical activity breaks, and other resources for some time now, with limited impact. It had been a matter of getting lucky with my timing. My colleagues in the classroom are overwhelmed by the pressures and demands that they are facing. Although these resources should help, it is a matter of someone receiving it at just the right time as to have the time to open it and be in a frame of mind to be receptive to the content. Many of my emails simply got buried and were long gone and forgotten when a colleague reached a moment when they would have liked to have access to the resource in the email. Even physical resources that I provided were used minimally and sporadically, including “active classroom kits” (large tote bags filled with materials to facilitate movement breaks) that I put together through a local grant and provided some PD on using. Making this into a game – Pokemon Move – helped this situation in two ways. First, it provided classroom teachers with a visual display in their classrooms of various resources and strategies (in the form of the badges on their game boards). Second, it provided some motivation, incentive and reinforcement to engage in these strategies because they could see progress with every space they colored in. Some of my colleagues just didn’t like seeing the blank spaces and needed to work at getting some filled in, while others are very competitive and actually work to be at a higher level in the game than their neighbors. The combination of these two factors has finally created the shift that I have been working for to create a culture of movement in our classrooms. One of the most popular free resources among my

colleagues is GoNoodle. Another favorite among some who teach at the primary level is Cosmic Kids Yoga. One of the resources that is included as part of the info graphic and has had grant funding offered is Activity Works. This is a program of classroom physical activities that are linked to common core standards. I am very excited to have been awarded a grant to bring this to my schools. The Pokemon Move Game provides me with a good framework to roll this program out to my colleagues and to hope for an enthusiastic response from them to actually make good use of it.

In the area of **Physical Activity Before and After School**, (along with some overlap with recess and activity breaks), we have registered for participation in The Billion Mile Race and The 100 Mile Club. While we participated in the Billion Mile Race last year, adding the 100 Mile Club and weaving it all into the Pokemon Move Game has made a big difference in the enthusiasm and participation levels of my students. Just as in the Pokemon Go game, students can hatch Pokemon out of eggs for completing miles. We have buckets of plastic Easter eggs in the main office (1 mile eggs, 2 mile eggs, 3 mile eggs and 5 mile eggs). When students complete miles, they can go to the office and open up the eggs of their choice and collect the stickers inside. These stickers get added to their game board. The more they run, the more their Pokemon collection grows. This incentive has been hugely successful. Some anecdotal evidence: Overheard among a couple of boys who were sent down to the office after running at recess to collect their Pokemon out of the eggs: "I'm going to do another mile when I get home before I do my homework!" Several classes have requested game board expansions because they have simply run out of room for new Pokemon. One child's parents purchased a FitBit for him so that he could easily track his miles and we have had very nice monthly contact through email.



In addition to the Pokemon stickers for the game boards, there is a Pokemon theme to the Billion Mile Race in the form of our display which is a Pokemon Gym. The mascots of the 3 participating schools in our district are on the poster and are moveable. The mascot of the school that is currently in first place gets to reside on top of the gym. So far my two schools have battled back and forth for first and second in the district, with the other school consistently occupying the third place spot.



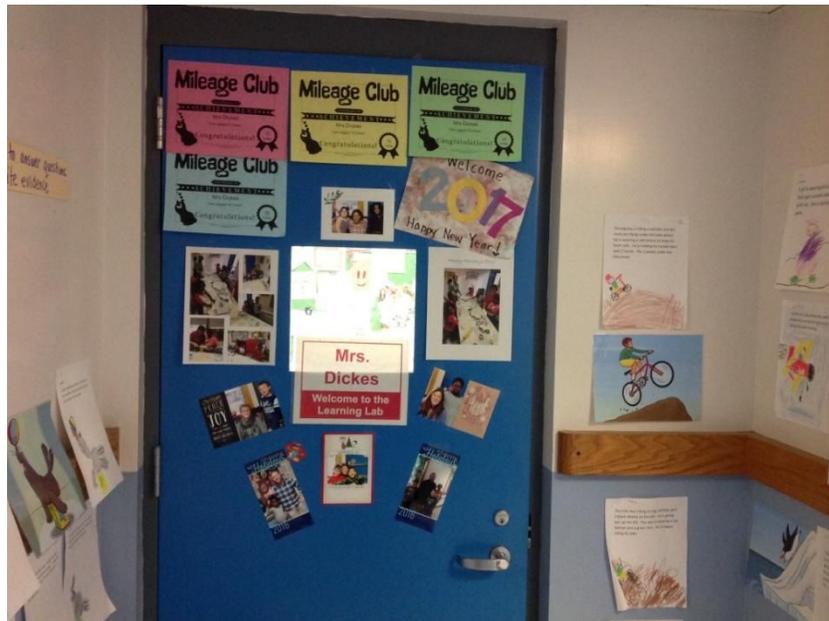
Students' individual miles also count toward the 100 Mile Club. I created posters for the 5 Mile Club, the 10 Mile Club, and so on in increments of 10 miles, up to the 100 Mile Club to display in the main hallway. Each club is represented by a different Pokemon of increasing power and prestige. When students earn their way into each new level, they are awarded a certificate and a Pokemon. These tiny plastic figures are very inexpensive tokens but the students absolutely love them and find them very motivating. We have recently welcomed a few students into the 100 Mile Club and along with their special certificate that includes a gold seal, they each received a PokeBall that opens and closes that they can house their Pokemon collection in.



A resource that has been very helpful in implementing the 100 Mile Club is EZMileageclub.com with their EZTally program (free) and their EZScan app (not free, but essential for me to get other staff on board with running during school). I am able to keep track of everyone's miles and generate award

certificates automatically. The addition of the EZScan app allows other staff members to automatically track students' laps run at recess with little effort on their part.

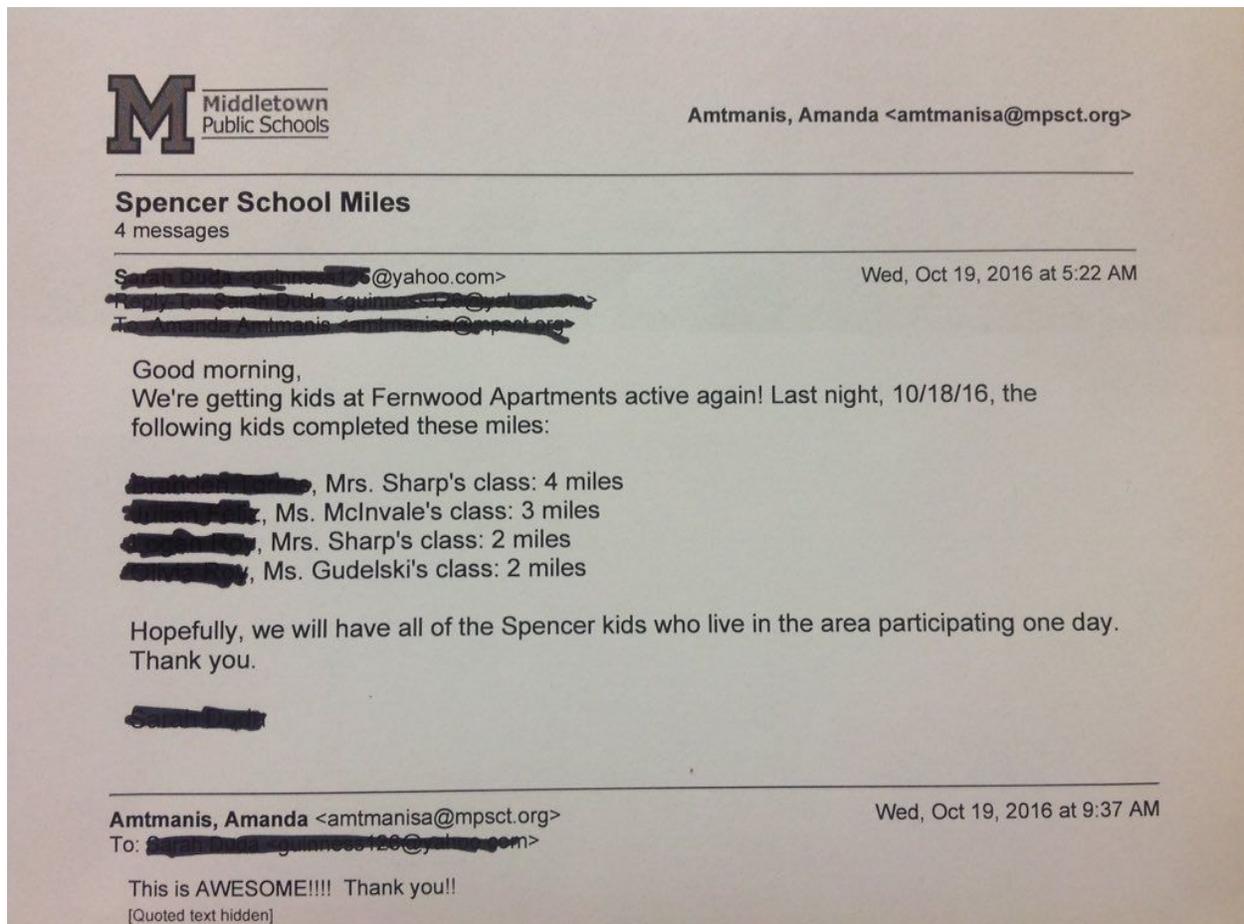
This also ties in with **Staff Involvement**. A number of our staff member have been tracking their miles and reporting them as part of the 100 Mile Club. We are pleased to include them in our public recognition as this sets a great example for our students. A few of our staff members make standing dates with each other to walk laps around our building together before school. They are well aware of how healthy this is for them both in terms of physical health and stress reduction.



To also help spread the message to our students (as well as reinforcing it among ourselves) that movement is important for everyone, we created this staff board in the hallway outside of the gym. It serves the dual purpose of helping us with one another's names since we had an influx of new staff last year with the addition of a new program for students with severe behavioral difficulties.



There has been a really nice impact on **Family and Community Engagement** as well. I have made positive connections with families as they email me their children's miles. I even got this heartwarming email one day from a parent who is not only looking out for her own children, but others in her neighborhood as well:



I have begun to issue monthly homework calendars with the assignment being “go play” – working toward the ultimate goal of 60 minutes of physical activity a day. Actually having to make note and

keep track of something makes it a priority. Each month along with the calendar, I provide some suggestions and resources to help families find ways to be more active. In honor of Heart Month in February, the included resource was a link to the Marathon Kids program, a listed resource in the LMAS infographic. There is a link for families to take part in this program as a family and it provides them with help and resources to get them running/walking together. It can be difficult to get students and families on board with something like homework. This is where the Pokemon Move game has been helpful. Students who return their calendars at the end of the month earn a Pokemon for their class board and they also earn a PokeCoin for the class bank. This has been motivating as the PokeCoins can be redeemed for various prizes:

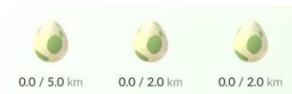
SHOP



Evolve a Pokemon

Second evolution

Automatic Level Up



Hatch a rare egg

2x value of your miles

Open 3 eggs,

Get a Pokemon that isn't in the game



Run a mile, get a 2 mile egg



take the Pokemon you want



Extra 15 minute recess



Choose a PE activity



Extra PE class



When I created a Donors Choose project to add Skillastics as a much needed upgrade to our indoor recess options, both staff members and community members got behind the project and supported it. Although we have been pretty fortunate so far this year weather-wise, these games have seen some good use and students are motivated to earn PokeCoins for their class which contributes to focused, appropriate on-task game play.



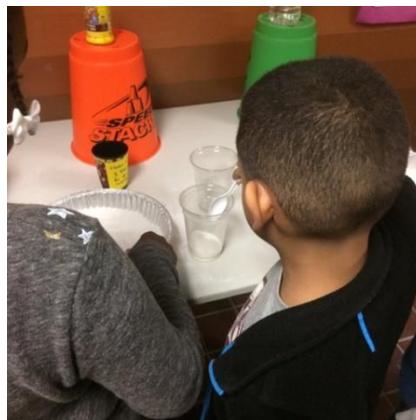
In the area of **Physical Education**, I am frustrated by my limited minutes with my students (one class per week for 45 minutes). While I continue to advocate for more, the growing understanding and support that I have gained through *staff involvement* and *family and community engagement* should provide helpful allies. Creating the Pokemon Move platform has helped students make broader

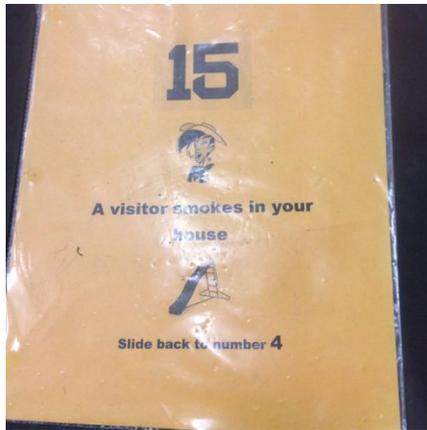
connections between what they learn in physical education class and their broader life outside of PE class. A member of our PTA recently allowed me to spend our remaining Campbell's Soup labels for Education points and I chose to get pedometers. I will be using these with students in class to keep track of activity levels. I will be converting students' steps to distance and adding that to their mileage totals which should provide a lot of motivation for maximum movement during class.

In addition, I have been able to weave the Pokemon Move theme and game into special events. There were special limited edition Ghost-type Pokemon available for each movement break done in the days leading up to and following Halloween to combat the extra sugar and excitement:



When we celebrated our annual Jump Rope for Heart event, in addition to the jumping activities in the gym there were extra learning activities that classes could take part in that covered the American Heart Association's objectives of drink more water, consume less added sugar and sodium, get plenty of exercise and avoid tobacco products. I was able to combine the learning materials that were provided by the AHA along with some Pokemon tie-ins to create a PokeGym with a learning activity to address each of these objectives. Classes earned a special Pokemon sticker and a PokeCoin for each Gym they visited.





In summary, The Pokemon Move game has provided me with the platform to advertise and incentive our CSPAP among the staff, students and families (the stakeholders) in my two school communities. It has given me a common thread to tie all of these varied initiatives together in a way that makes sense for the students and teachers and uses a motivating theme that speaks to their interests. It has also given me a big picture that helps me to figure out the best ways to incorporate new pieces in a way

that will make sense so that people will make use of them.