

## Matteson District 162, Southland College Prep, Seven Community Partners Awarded USOE \$ 557,000 Grant

Posted By richard barry, Community Contributor

RICHTON PARK, IL.- April 15, 2014-Matteson Elementary School District 162 and Southland College Prep Charter High School, together with seven local government agencies and higher education community partner organizations, have been awarded a Carol White Physical Education federal grant by the [U.S. Department of Education](#).

The grant totals \$557,075 over three years.

It will support the "Aware, Active and Healthy ("AAH!") project and will permit Matteson District 162, Southland and their seven community partner organizations to transform physical education, nutrition and health programming programs to better serve the health and well being of the students they serve.

The award is named for the late Carol M. White, a congressional aide and chief of staff to Alaska [Senator Ted Stevens](#) (R- Alaska). She was an advocate of physical education and helped pass the Physical Education for Progress (PEP) Act.

Joining with District 162 and Southland College Prep Charter High School are: Park Forest's Parks and Recreation and Health departments; Richton Park Parks and Recreation, University of Illinois Extension Cook County; [Chicago State University](#) College of Health & Human Services, Cook County Department of Public Health and the Matteson School District's Food Service Director.

The award, whose first year payment will be \$242,470, is one of 67 grants totaling more than

\$ 33 million to expand and enhance physical education and nutrition education for students in kindergarten through the 12th grade, according to an announcement by U. S. Secretary of Education, [Arne Duncan](#).

Two other Illinois school districts, Woodstock Community Unit District 200 and East St. Louis School District 189, also earned similar awards.

"A healthy, active lifestyle is an important ingredient of academic success," said Sec. Duncan. "These grants are a resource to help schools and communities develop programs that teach students the importance of staying active and developing healthy lifestyles," he said.

"We welcome this grant for it will help us develop in our students, from kindergarten through the 12th grade, an appreciation for lifelong, healthy nutrition and physical education habits," said Dr. Blondean Davis, District 162 Superintendent and CEO of Southland College Prep Charter High School.

"In today's digital world when students spend so many of their school hours and free moments in front of ubiquitous screens of all sizes, it's critical that they have the time and energy to move and engage in physical activity and learn the value of lifelong exercise and good nutrition," she said.

"We are very appreciative of the active support and encouragement for this important grant that we received from Sen. Mark Kirk and Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois," she said.

"We are also very cognizant that the grant is aligned with First Lady Michelle Obama's 'Let's Move! Active Schools' initiative to encourage students to move before, during and after school," Dr. Davis said.

"The grant will instruct our students in healthy eating habits and good nutrition and provide numerous opportunities to expand fitness education and assessment.

In addition, the grant will provide for physical education equipment and materials, professional development of teachers and staff based on the latest research, issues and trends in physical and health education and it will permit us to develop a comprehensive student health database system," Dr. Davis explained.