

# Smart Moves - Physical Activity Programs in Queensland State Schools Evaluation Summary



United in our pursuit of excellence

## Background

In July 2007, the Department of Education and Training (DET) announced the implementation of *Smart Moves – Physical Activity Programs in Queensland State Schools*. The aim of *Smart Moves* was to increase student participation in physical activity and to improve the quality of the activity delivered to all Queensland state school students.

*Smart Moves* is one of a number of cross government initiatives that was introduced to tackle childhood obesity and improve children's health and wellbeing through participation in physical activity.

The six key components of *Smart Moves* are:

1. Allocated time for physical activity
2. Improved access to resources for physical activity
3. Increased capacity to deliver physical activity
4. Professional development in physical activity for all teachers
5. Community partnerships to enhance physical activity
6. Accountability for physical activity through annual reporting protocols.

Following the launch of *Smart Moves* in 2007, state schools had an 18 month lead in time to prepare and plan for *Smart Moves* before full implementation commenced in January 2009.

Schools were supported with the implementation of *Smart Moves* through a range of activities including statewide workshops and conferences, a research partnership with the University of Queensland, the introduction of the departmental procedure *CRP-PR-011 Smart Moves – Physical Activity Programs in State Schools* and a dedicated *Smart Moves* website developed to disseminate information about the policy initiative.

## Evaluation

The implementation of *Smart Moves* was evaluated by considering results from the 2011 *Smart Moves* Principals' Survey and 2011 School Opinion Surveys (principals, staff and primary students). Some comparison of like questions in the 2009 and 2011 *Smart Moves* Principals' Surveys informed the evaluation findings.

The evaluation considered the extent in which the key components of *Smart Moves* have been implemented in schools and what changes occurred as a result of *Smart Moves* to meet the intended outcomes of:

- an increase in overall amounts of physical activity
- classroom teachers embedding physical activity across the curriculum
- increased accessibility of school facilities to the community.

The evaluation used data from self report survey tools that captured observations and perceptions of staff implementing *Smart Moves*. The results of this evaluation should be interpreted with consideration of this limitation.

## Key findings

The findings from the evaluation indicate that:

- schools are showing a strong commitment to implementation of the key components of *Smart Moves*
- *Smart Moves* has increased the overall amount of physical activity in schools with the majority of principals (85.1%) indicating 75% or more of students in their school are engaged in the required time for physical activity
- *Smart Moves* has increased the collective responsibility of school staff in delivering physical activity to students with over half of principals reporting that physical activity is delivered 'often' outside of the Health Physical Education Key Learning Area (HPE KLA).
- *Smart Moves* has contributed to increased school and community partnerships in promoting and delivering physical activity with an increase of principals reporting use of school facilities by community groups at least once a week from 69.8% in 2009 to 73.3% in 2011.
- Curriculum pressure is identified as a significant barrier to effective *Smart Moves* implementation.

## Conclusion

Since *Smart Moves* implementation in 2009, schools have experienced a rapidly changing education environment, with a renewed focus on core learning priorities outlined in Education Queensland's *United in our Pursuit of Excellence*.

While physical activity can continue to be effectively embedded across the key learning areas, it appears localised approaches to planning and implementation may best meet the needs of Queensland's diverse school contexts and individual learning needs of students.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to ensure that *Smart Moves* continues to be an effective strategy in promoting and supporting physical activity of Queensland state school students.

- Review *CRP-PR-011: Smart Moves – Physical Activity Programs in Queensland State Schools* to:
  - provide greater flexibility for schools to determine required time for physical activity
  - clarify the range of programs and activities contributing to ensuring student access quality physical activity.
- Update the *Smart Moves* website to ensure currency of information on the *Smart Moves* procedure *CRP-PR-011: Smart Moves – Physical Activity Programs in Queensland State Schools*.
- Develop and implement a communication plan to inform schools of changes to the *CRP-PR-11: Smart Moves – Physical Activity in Queensland State Schools* and the availability of the *Smart Moves* website as a source of information and resources.