

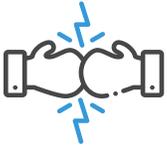
HES Client Experience:

**COLORADO SCHOOL DISTRICTS GO
HEAD TO HEAD
IN *WALKTOBER*
WALKING CHALLENGE**



BACKGROUND

After 8 years of implementing HES wellness campaigns, Academy School District 20 of Colorado Springs accepted a different kind of challenge. Rivaling School District 49 from the neighboring Pikes Peak region presented the idea of a district vs. district showdown. Partnering with both organizations, HES made a *Walktober* walking competition possible.



Where It Began

The face-off idea was sparked from a participant's response to District 49's staff wellness survey, which suggested competing against another school district would make wellness challenges even more fun. Knowing her population's competitive nature, Rachel Duerr, Coordinator of Health & Wellness for District 49, recognized the potential impact. She then approached Samantha Todd, Health and Wellness Coordinator at District 20. Soon after, the project was set into motion.



Working Together

Before jumping head first into an interdistrict *Walktober*, Rachel and Samantha sat down to discuss plans and expectations. Together, they came up with challenges to encourage participants in reaching goals as well as other promotional tactics.

In addition, they developed a posting schedule to manage who would contribute content to the social wall and when. For good measure, they had weekly phone calls to make sure they were on the same page and things were going smoothly.

“By working together, we had a greater platform for reaching our populations for health and wellness.”

— Rachel Duerr

“I expected it to be a great challenge, but I didn't expect to get that many people to participate!”

— Samantha Todd

MINI-CHALLENGES

Throughout the competition, Rachel and Samantha gave participants weekly mini-challenges to keep them engaged:



Sweaty Selfie

Submit a photo after physical activity.



Group Hike

Participate together in a District 20 and District 49 hike.



Meal Prep

Document packing a healthy lunch.



Healthy Alternative to Candy

Share an idea for a healthy sweet treat.



Mindfulness

Share how they practiced mindfulness and how it affected their day.



Gratefulness

Take a photo of autumn leaves and describe what they're grateful for.



BY THE NUMBERS



323,132,353

Total Steps

(That's 161,566 miles — almost 6.5 times around the earth.)



497,388

Total Minutes of Walking

(Almost a full calendar year.)



75%

of participants reached the program goal of 20 leaves.



65%

of participants joined a team.



District 20 surpassed record participation by

19%

LESSONS, TIPS, AND TAKEAWAYS



Just Ask

Taking wellness surveys is a great way to find out what your population really wants. You can easily gauge what activities are making a difference and which ones flopped. Keeping the conversation open-ended will lead to more quality feedback and new ideas.



Capitalize on Intrinsic Motivation

For these organizations, camaraderie and district pride were powerful motivators. What gets your population excited? What will generate chatter in your workplace? Do your best to inspire participants with the things they actually care about — not just pricey incentives (which don't support long-term behavior change).

PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIALS



District 20

“I didn't think I would ever be able to do this type of exercising again. Being motivated by others is the key to better health. Keeping this mentality throughout the workplace with coworkers has been the push to keep me moving!”



District 49

“I began a new habit just to get my steps in. I added a short hike to my frequent trips to visit my mother. I used Google to find trails and plan stops in areas I was driving through. It was a great way to exercise before I got home. Plus, it was fun to explore new trails.”

LIKED MOST



*“I liked the **competition** between teams within the districts. It kept more people engaged throughout the process.”*



*“I liked earning leaves — not just steps. It gave me a **sense of accomplishment** whether it was 6,000 steps or 10,000 steps.”*



*“I appreciated the health and wellness tips, snacks, recipes, and **encouragement** to get outside!”*



*“I liked being able to cheer for the whole district! I also had friends in the other district, so I was able to **connect** with them on the app as well.”*

WHAT'S NEXT



District 20 created a custom wellness campaign through the *Canvas* platform HES launched this spring.

District 49 plans to round up more school districts to compete in a walking challenge on the completely revamped 2019 *Walktober*.

To learn more about how to implement *Walktober* for your organization, contact HES at **800.326.2317** or visit [HESonline.com](https://www.hesonline.com).

