

EDUCATION

Marian Frank, Education Editor, 602-444-8868
E-mail education@arizonarepublic.com

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School program stresses activity

By Karina Bland
The Arizona Republic

Imagine a school where students wear pedometers and keep track on a computer of how far they walk.

At the top of every hour, the kids would take a five-minute break in their classrooms and do the kinds of things a kid would normally expect to get into trouble for: toss around a ball, jump up and down, play balloon volleyball, march in place.

Even after the last bell rings, the children would stay at school so they could play sports on the big field outside.

This fall, Sheely Farms Elementary in west Phoenix will become that school, with a \$325,000 grant from the Arizona Department of Health Services and help from the Arizona Interscholastic Association Academy, Tolleson schools, Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department and Arizona State University.

The students will be involved in new physical educa-

tion activities, an after-school intramural and health program, as well as recess for all grades. Only first- and second-graders get a morning 15-minute recess now, although all students have 20 minutes for lunch with an additional 20 minutes of free time afterward.

Students' families will be invited to events that stress the importance of physical activity and healthy eating.

Sheely Farms will be the first of the three schools in the Tolleson district to get moving, followed by Arizona Desert Elementary and Porfirio H. Gonzales Elementary in the second and third years of the project. The goal is to improve youngsters' health and promote an active lifestyle, said Darren Treasure, director of the AIA Academy, a community and educational outreach program. The AIA governs Arizona high school sports and activities.

He hopes to create a program that can be replicated at schools statewide.