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April 26, 2013

To: Whom It May Concern

The El Monte City School District has been fortunate to have Operation Tone Up for the past 4 years. We have implemented it in our middle grades and have found it very effective with 4th, 5th and 6th graders. Teachers have been very enthused about the program and have found it highly effective and beneficial to their students and to themselves. The benefits have included improvements in health indicators academic performance, attendance, and in students overall perceptions of themselves and in a dramatic improvement in their self images.

In terms of indicators of health, we have been careful to monitor issues of heart rate, blood pressure and obesity. The children who have been in Operation Tone Up programs have all improved significantly in these areas according to our pre and post data, as measured by our nurses. More significantly, these changes in exercise levels and in the selection of foods for their specific nutrient content, appear to be changes that students will carry forward into their high school and adult lives. This is NOT a one shot program. It is a program that can change lives because of the results students see in themselves.

Significant academic improvement has been demonstrated in the results of our CST scores at the schools that have been the most engaged in the Tone Up initiative. It is no accident that our schools with the highest API scores and growth in API have been those schools which were most engaged in Operation Tone Up. Teachers find it very classroom friendly and take advantage of the parts of the program that specifically improve brain function by having students engage in the work out just before testing periods each day.

Cost is always an issue in these extraordinarily difficult budget times. In our school district we have had to make very difficult choices to keep our budget balanced and to survive the drastic reduction in funding that has occurred. My contention has been that Operation Tone Up more than pays for itself in the increased attendance we see in the schools that have been most faithful to the program. This improved attendance actually pays for the program in our district. We have improved from about 96% to an overall 98% attendance rate and are reaching toward the 99% level. I believe Operation Tone Up is a big part of making that a reality.

The most important part of the program in my view lies in the changes that students see and feel in themselves. In our "Fittest School Challenge" that was recently held, I was deeply impressed and moved by the comments that were made by the students at the end of the competition about what Operation Tone Up had meant to them. Their words, heartfelt and eloquent, underscored that they felt a sense of positive power and accomplishment in what they had done. I heard many of them say that it was a commitment they were willing to make from that point forward.

This program is one of the most effective I have seen in my 25 years as the Superintendent of the District, and in my 43 years as an educator. It is one that changes the lives of students and teachers significantly and positively. As it is implemented more widely in schools across American will produce benefits in ways that will be positive for students, their families and society in general.

If you have any further questions about Operation Tone UP call me at our District. I would be happy to talk with you.

Sincerely,



Jeff Seymour

- District Superintendent (retired)

