

# Turning High School Into Healthy School



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Low-calorie snacks in the vending machines...healthy lunches in the cafeteria...and "Dance Dance Revolution" in the open gym.

East Rochester High School has been transformed this week, in a project partnering with the University of Rochester Medical Center to show kids and teens what a [healthy](#) lifestyle can look like.

"We'd like to think we're taking the first steps now for things to transfer to a lifetime of changed behaviors," said Dr. Laura Tomaselli, a pediatrics resident at URMC. "We know it's difficult."

500 free pedometers were handed out to encourage kids to get walking, especially to school.

Even though East Rochester is a walking district, school officials said not enough students are taking advantage of the obvious health benefits of walking to school.

"We're a walking district, but if you come up in the morning, the loop's pretty crowded with cars," said Brian Tournajoe, assistant principal at East Rochester Junior/Senior High School. "A lot of kids actually do get dropped off by their parents. We're really trying to get kids to walk more, it'd be better for our loop for traffic congestion and actually get kids healthier."

Many students discovering Monday's transformation in the cafeteria – with healthier, low-fat fare – were surprised by the changes.

"We never had wheat bread before," said sophomore Sean Nudd. "We have a lot of fruits now, a lot of milks, skim milks, not as many fat-foods, not as many sugars."

"Usually at my house, my mom usually makes healthy food," said senior Brandon Young. "That's the only place I eat healthy food. I didn't expect it to be, like, at school."

"They look, like, uh, all the apple juice away and put healthy food there," said sophomore Kyle Vanthof. "It will probably change my eating habits a little bit."

The "Wellness Week" at East Rochester was funded by a \$15,000 grant from the University of Rochester. The district hopes some of the ideas from the program will be able to continue throughout the school year.

With obesity effecting around 18% of U.S. teens, doctors also hope focused community campaigns like this one can be one of the best ways to combat that trend.