

## President Clinton Praises District Wellness Program



When former President Clinton returned to work after a recent heart procedure, he held a press conference to recommit himself to the fight against childhood obesity. Featured prominently in his remarks was the work of the West New York School District, heralded as success story in its commitment to health and wellness for children.

Because Clinton wanted to highlight the importance of healthy eating habits in the pursuit of overall heart health, he called upon West New York Food Services Director Sal Valenza to speak during the press conference. "Our district has shifted from focusing on cookies to focusing on culture," said Valenza. "We now focus our efforts on whole school reform including school meals, physical activity, health education, staff wellness and beyond. All areas of the school environment play significant roles in making this reform a reality."

Clinton also highlighted the work of West New York's Healthy Schools Program, praising District Supervisor John Fraraccio for his commitment. "The thing about the wellness initiative that excites me is the way that it has taken hold in West New York," said Fraraccio. "It started out with a few individuals who wanted to make a change and the word has spread."

The West New York School District is in its third year with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, an organization created by a partnership among the Clinton Foundation, the American Heart Association and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Three district schools have received the prestigious Silver National Recognition Award, Memorial High School, Public School #4 and Public School #5, placing them among some of the healthiest schools in the nation. During the press conference, President Clinton praised Physical Education teacher Brian Cooney and the successful morning fitness program at PS#5. Four other schools – West New York Middle School, Public School #1, Public School #2 and Public School #3 – received bronze recognition level. [Click here](#) for more photos