

AAPAR News

Paul M. Wright Selected for InnerLink Research

After a competitive proposal process, AAPAR member Paul M. Wright, Ph.D, was selected to lead a research team that will assess the effectiveness of a physical education program and offer recommendations for future improvements. AAPAR contracted with the University of Memphis for Dr. Wright's services.

The program, called Health eTools for Schools[®], was created by InnerLink, Inc., one of AAPAR's Par Three partners. InnerLink is a web-based provider of health, physical activity, and nutrition resources for teachers.

Wright, Assistant Professor in the Department of Health & Sport Sciences at the University of Memphis, will be assisted by Weidong Li, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in the School of Physical Activity and Educational Services at The Ohio State University.

The ad hoc review committee that selected the Wright-Li team consisted of AAPAR members Anita Lee, Linda Woods Huber, and Thomas Sawyer, along with AAPAR Executive Director Mariah Burton Nelson. Five proposals were received in response to AAPAR's request for proposals in July 2007.

InnerLink's wellness resource operates over a secure Internet portal to provide innovative lesson plans, hands-on activities, and interventions to help students make good food choices and become more physically active with the goal of developing lasting healthy habits. Educators use the customized and sophisticated data collection tools to capture information and prepare reports for physical educators and also others involved in children's well being, including parents, school nurses, nutritionists, wellness coordinators, administrators, and state reporting agencies.

At AAHPERD's 2008 Annual Convention in Ft. Worth, InnerLink's Vice Chair and co-founder, Martha Harris, presented a popular session called "Coordinated School Health: Pennsylvania Model for Improving Student Fitness and Wellness" in which she demonstrated the online resources and showcased their customizable forms, fitness and health assessments, use of handheld computers, and other resources available to health and physical activity educators and administrators.

The primary goals of the project are to:

- 1) Assess the impact of the Pennsylvania Health eTools for Schools[®] program so that it can be improved and expanded;

- 2) Publicize the results through conferences, press releases, published papers, etc.; and ultimately
- 3) Improve students' fitness and health education.

Surveys will be administered in January 2009 and the research is expected to be completed by April 30 2009.