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## Sequoia Healthcare District kicks off Healthy School initiative

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Representatives of Sequoia Healthcare District will kick off the district's Healthy Schools Initiative with a presentation to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors Tuesday, announcing details of a \$4.5 million, three-year program that will affect more than 23,000 kindergarten through 12th graders within district boundaries, according to healthcare district officials.

The aim of the Healthy Schools Initiative programs is to augment school nurse, wellness and fitness programs in four school districts whose programs have been decimated by budget cuts for years. The districts are the Sequoia Union High School District, with 8,200 9-12 students, Redwood City Elementary School District, with 9,200 K-8 students, San Carlos Elementary School District, with 3,000 K-8 students and the Belmont-Redwood Shores Elementary School District, with 3,250 K-8 students, according to healthcare district officials.

Sequoia Healthcare District's role is to fund and help the districts assemble the infrastructure in the schools that leads to sustainable, health enhancing behaviors, according to the district.

The Healthy Schools Initiative will pay for four additional school nurses, four wellness coordinators, three school psychologists, three health educators and three physical education teachers. It will help expand Safe Routes to School programs and school gardens, among other program priorities to be apportioned among the four school districts. Progress will be evaluated throughout of the initial three-year period to determine priorities and strategies and measure program impact, according to the district.

Roots of the Healthy Schools Initiative go back two years when Sequoia Healthcare District began funding school nurses through its Caring Community grant awards, which represent about one tenth of the district's support for community health programs, according to the district.

Formed in 1947 to build Sequoia Hospital, Sequoia Healthcare District encompasses the cities of Belmont, San Carlos, Redwood City, Woodside, Atherton, Menlo Park, Portola Valley, the unincorporated area of Redwood Shores and a small part of Foster City.