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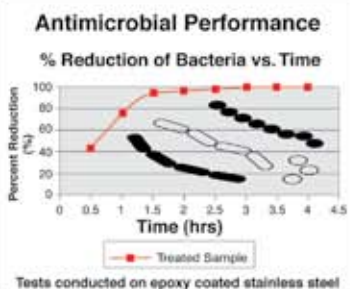
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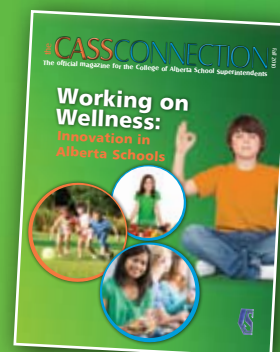
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ON THE COVER:

This issue of The CASS Connection focuses on Alberta as a national leader in promoting wellness in its elementary, junior high and high schools. The three priority wellness outcomes of healthy eating, physical activity and mental and emotional well-being are explored in-depth.



Division Obtains COR with Help from PublicSchoolWORKS

Chinook's Edge School Division No. 73 Uses Automated Safety Training and Incident Reporting to Earn a Certification of Recognition (COR)

In 2010, just three years into using PublicSchoolWORKS' automated safety management system *EmployeeSafe Suite*, Chinook's Edge School Division No. 73 earned its first Certification of Recognition (COR) for its outstanding commitment to workplace safety. For an employer in Alberta to receive a COR, they must develop, implement and sustain a health and safety program that meets rigorous standards put forth by the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB). Chinook's Edge School Division is one of only five of Alberta's 78 school divisions to have achieved this level of safety. *EmployeeSafe Suite* was the platform used to manage the safety program and to generate the documentation needed to provide evidence that training, incident management steps, and safety tasks were completed.

Linden Lonsberry is the sole safety officer for the 38 campuses of Chinook's Edge School Division No. 73 in central Alberta, Canada. Prior to using PSW's *EmployeeSafe Suite* it took more than a year for Lonsberry to complete one round of inspections and training.

Lonsberry decided to try *EmployeeSafe* to reduce inspection and training time and to automate safety tasks. Through the automation, staffers now receive training notifications and complete training online with limited administrative involvement. Lonsberry uses the system to have staff, students and parents report safety hazards and to manage inspections and accidents. All of these elements allowed the division to score highly within the COR process.

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Message from the Minister of Education

The Honourable Dave Hancock | Minister of Education

“As we move forward, I firmly believe that a comprehensive approach that involves and encourages active partnerships between the home, school and community is the best and only way we are going to encourage young Albertans to develop the habits that will support their full potential well into adulthood.”

Most of us have heard that we are educating the first generation of young people who may not outlive their parents. Most of us are shocked by this statistic and see opportunity to contribute toward a solution. I would like to start by commending CASS for its commitment to this important matter. This issue of CASS Connection shares a wealth of the latest wellness information with you, including an article on an interesting Alberta Initiative for School Improvement project involving the University of Alberta’s Faculty of Medicine and Black Gold Regional Schools.

We know that considerable research has focused on the need to improve the health and wellness of children and youth in Alberta. It is internationally recognized that the school setting provides a unique opportunity to significantly and positively influence students and provide access to regular physical activity. Education has been busy working to strengthen Alberta’s leadership role in this area. In September 2005, the ministry mandated the Daily Physical Activity Initiative in grades one to nine and we believe that this is making a difference in classrooms across the province.

More recently, the Framework for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Wellness Education outlines the fundamental concepts and inherent values that provide guidance for the future development and implementation of kindergarten to grade 12 wellness education programs of study in Alberta. Focusing on wellness education nurtures the whole child and enhances students’ capacity for achieving their full potential—intellectually, physically, socially, spiritually and emotionally.

Changes to the programs of study will begin with high school and will expand to provide a continuum of wellness education from kindergarten to grade 12. For students, this means that health and physical education will focus on the priority wellness outcomes of healthy eating, physical activity and psychosocial well-being. This is in line with research and what students told us

when they said that they want content that is “real life” and relevant to their needs, both in the classroom and in creating community connections.

The Framework for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Wellness Education reinforces government’s commitment to enhancing the health and wellness of all Albertans and supports government ministries, schools, families and communities in working collaboratively to create and maintain a culture of wellness in school communities in Alberta. This commitment is demonstrated through initiatives such as Healthy Kids Alberta! and Healthy Alberta School Communities.

As we move forward, I firmly believe that a comprehensive approach that involves and encourages active partnerships between the home, school and community is the best and only way we are going to encourage young Albertans to develop the habits that will support their full potential well into adulthood.

Focusing on the three priority wellness outcomes of healthy eating, physical activity and mental and emotional well-being will reduce the incidence of chronic disease that we hear and read about far too often and will ensure a healthier, happier community for us all. This is work in which many of you are already deeply engaged, and I look forward to working alongside you as we make the framework a reality. ■

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President's Message

Barry Litun

President

College of Alberta School Superintendents

"I am a firm believer that by providing learning opportunities in our schools for issues that impact the larger community, we develop an understanding among our youth who truly do become leaders of tomorrow."

The mandate of every school is to educate, and it can be argued that there would be few, if any, topics that are more important for all of us to learn about than wellness. As a physical education teacher in my earlier days, I have long been an advocate that a healthy body allows for a healthy mind. I am positive that readers will find the stories in this month's CASS Connection interesting and relevant to issues we are all facing.

I am a firm believer that by providing learning opportunities in our schools for issues that impact the larger community, we develop an understanding among our youth who truly do become leaders of tomorrow. An example of this was provided to me a year ago when I attended a school council meeting at one of our elementary schools. The school was part of a healthy living pilot that received funding to employ a teacher as a health coach. The teacher provided instruction on healthy eating to the students. A mother in attendance at the school council meeting told the story of shopping with her grade five daughter. As mom put groceries into the shopping cart, the daughter checked the nutrition label and admonished mom about the salt content on that particular product.

I have the pleasure of serving as superintendent of Lethbridge School District and we have undertaken a number of initiatives related to wellness in recent years in addition to that of health coaches I spoke of in the previous paragraph. Last year our Board passed a Healthy Nutritional Choices policy that has raised awareness of good nutrition in our school and general community.

In 2006/2007, our District was a pilot for an Alberta School Employees Benefit Plan (ASEBP) project designed to inform staff about risk factors in their lives. The pilot resulted in a number of school-wide and individual initiatives. The staff at one of our high schools developed a wellness challenge that resulted in a combined weight loss of over 400 pounds in a six month period. District administration jokingly commented that this might save two FTE staffing positions! On a more serious note, the ASEBP pilot was the stimulus for one of our principals to become more conscious of his eating and fitness habits. He undertook a personal challenge to improve both, and over the course of the year lost a considerable amount of weight and became much fitter. The following year he suffered a very serious illness and his doctors credited his survival and full recovery to his fitness.

Subsequent to the ASEBP pilot, our District has had a Wellness & Health Incentive Plan (WHIP) in place. A committee of staff representatives from all employee groups has worked to maintain the awareness of maintaining wellness for District staff. Success stories are plentiful, but perhaps none more heartening than that of our School Board's vice chair, Keith Fowler. In 2008/2009, Keith determined it was time to take charge of his personal wellness and committed to a program of healthy eating and physical fitness. This past spring he reached his goal of losing 200 pounds, and has become an example of the power achieved through commitment and dedication. Keith welcomes anyone who is interested to contact him so he can share his story in order to assist others.

On behalf of the CASS Executive, I extend thanks to all who have contributed to this edition of CASS Connection. Enjoy the reading and live well.

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Anne-Marie Connolly

Français au primaire

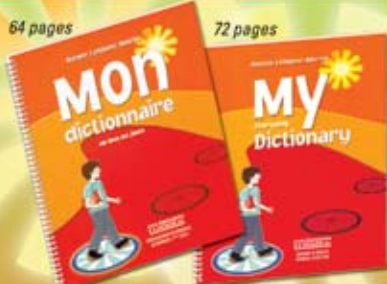
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Les trois cahiers dans cette série sont conformes au programme du MELS.

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By Jim Parsons

Marching to the Beat of a Healthy Heart

Black Gold School Division's partnership with the University of Alberta's Faculty of Medicine has produced the largest cardiovascular investigative project of its kind in the world.

Black Gold School Division's Healthy Hearts project, which encourages enhanced daily physical activity for students and staff, is a great example of the success of the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI). This project has created what has become known worldwide as the "Black Gold Protocol"—a cutting-edge partnership between Black Gold School District and the University of Alberta's Faculty of Medicine. This research project and the resulting partnership had its genesis after several brainstorming sessions involving key people from the University of Alberta's Faculty of Medicine, Edmonton Regional Health Authority and Black Gold Regional Schools from 2001 to 2003.

Before these talks even began, Dr. Paul Wozny—former Principal of Leduc Junior High School and now working within Alberta Education—had performed a number of cardiovascular assessment experiments with his students in the optional SciTech Program - Students as Scientists and Engineers. These initial experiments led to the development of a detailed cardiovascular research protocol—the first of its kind in Canada. The research team consisted of Dr. Richard Lewanczuk, (MD, Director of Endocrinology, University of Alberta), Dr. Paul Wozny, (EdD University of Alberta), Dr. Jon McGavock, (Associate Professor, Children's Health, University of Manitoba), Mr. Brian Torrance, (University of Alberta, Department of Medicine), a support team of Post-Doctoral Researchers (University of Alberta), Black Gold Regional School Division and Alberta Education.

The Black Gold research protocol has been supported by a variety of grants and technical support. Further support by AISI staff brought this world-class research project into reality. This team effort now provides critical data on the cardiovascular health of youth in Alberta and strategies to improve cardiovascular health.

The goals of the Healthy Hearts project include: (1) enabling all students to become more actively engaged in meeting General Outcome B of the Physical Education Program of Studies that directs that students understand, experience and appreciate the health benefits that result from physical activity; (2) enabling students to become more actively engaged in meeting General Outcome D of the Physical Education Program of Studies that directs students to assume responsibility to lead an active life; (3) improving all students' activity levels and cardiovascular health; and (4) promoting student and staff physical activity by using a Healthy Hearts Portfolio.

Already, cutting-edge research has emerged through a medical article titled, "Cardiorespiratory Fitness and the Risk of Overweight in Youth: The Healthy Hearts Longitudinal Study of Cardiometabolic Health", published by Jonathan M. McGavock, Brian D. Torrance, K. Ashlee McGuire, Paul D. Wozny, and Richard Z. Lewanczuk. The primary objective of this longitudinal study was to determine links between cardiorespiratory fitness and the risk of obesity in youth. The study analyzed data from annual school-based surveys of cardiorespiratory fitness and anthropometry conducted between 2004 and 2006.

The large number of study participants makes the project exceedingly helpful to the medical community and Canadian youth. The study analyzed 902 youth, aged six to 15 years old, over 12 months to assess the correlation between cardiorespiratory fitness levels determined from a graded field tests and the risk of becoming overweight. A second analysis was conducted on a cohort of 222 youth, who were followed for two years to assess their continuous association between annual changes in fitness and weight gain.

Findings from this longitude study show that children with low cardiorespiratory fitness have larger waists and disproportionately higher weight gains. Within the entire cohort, the 12-month risk of being overweight was 3.5 times higher in youth with low cardiorespiratory fitness, relative to fit peers. The study's mixed effects regression model revealed that reductions in cardiorespiratory fitness were significantly and independently associated with increasing Body Mass Index (BMI) and that low cardiorespiratory fitness and reductions in fitness over time are significantly associated with weight gain in children six to 15 years old.

Healthy Hearts is supported by University of Alberta researchers and papers written from the data are used throughout the world. The research team believes it can create an assessment of cardio-respiratory fitness using a common field test in ways that might help identify youth at risk of becoming overweight and serve as a potential target for obesity prevention. The Healthy Heart initiative is the largest

cardiovascular investigative project of its kind in the world and the Healthy Hearts initiative provides the medical community valuable data on heart rate, blood pressure and other changes in children from year to year. Students are followed from elementary school to grade 12. The research team won a federal research award from the Canadian Diabetes Association and secured funding for three years.

Wozny, a co-researcher and the original author of the project in 2001, notes that, "We got together a group of medical people at the U of A to look at what we could do at the schools to promote regular physical activity in a way that includes parents and the community."

He recalls an experience in 2004, when the team was driving from community to community in Black Gold School Division to share the Healthy Hearts initiative with parents and students during evening school meetings, "the winds were howling and snow was blasting the highways with wind chills below -30°C, but our Healthy Hearts research team still drove on to do school presentations and gather input from communities—truly a committed team of researchers."

Wozny adds that they were "constantly smiling and nurturing a long-term research relationship between students/parents/schools/communities/Alberta Education and the University of Alberta, Faculty of Medicine—how lucky we have all been to be a part of this collaborative research and learning experience focused on improving health and wellness."

New students are added to the study every year, and students are being monitored and kept track of throughout their time at school. Students go through a yearly testing sequence. The school also received a grant to build a cardiovascular and strength-training centre. Black Gold trustees and central office staff were given pedometers by the University of Alberta for Healthy Hearts—with a target goal of at least 10,000 steps per day. The Healthy Hearts initiative has encouraged physical activity with the students, who take measurements and readings throughout the year.

But the program isn't finished promoting good health. On May 20th to 22nd, 2010, the Healthy Hearts team broke the Guinness World Record for the longest indoor arena

soccer game. They played for 30 hours and 10 minutes continuously and received authentication certificates from Guinness World Records in August 2010. ■

Jim Parsons has been a professor in the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta for 35 years. He is director of the University of Alberta's Alberta Initiative for School Improvement. For more information on Healthy Hearts, check out: www.blackgold.ab.ca/healthyhearts.



The Healthy Hearts research team, along with community volunteers, set the new Guinness World Record for longest indoor arena soccer game on May 21, 2010.

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Living in a Healthy School Community

In 2004, the Medicine Hat School District was the first school jurisdiction in southern Alberta to implement a district-wide healthy eating policy.

By Sherrill Fedor and Kimberlee Brooks

In 2004, Medicine Hat School District became the first school jurisdiction in southern Alberta to implement a district-wide healthy eating policy. The district believes that “schools play an important role in improving the health of students and their ability to learn by reinforcing sound nutrition principles through its food services and its education programs”, as indicated in the district healthy eating policy.

District level support

The board and central office recognized that additional support was essential to provide implementation of the healthy eating policy in all of the schools. In 2009, the district created two new administrative procedures based on the provincial Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth to provide clear guidelines on the provision of healthy food choices in schools. There was a collective commitment from the school board, central office staff and school administrators to support healthy eating and active living initiatives in the schools.

Living in a Healthy School Community project

In 2009, the school district was a successful recipient of large grant funding offered through the Alberta Healthy School

Community Wellness Fund. The Living in a Healthy School Community project was funded to help schools bring their practice into alignment with the district nutrition policy and thereby enhance the physical and emotional health of students in kindergarten to grade six.

The project also focused on supporting the implementation of the Daily Physical Activity requirements as mandated by Alberta

Education. A school health project facilitator was hired to coordinate project activities that improve active living, healthy eating and positive social environments in the schools. The project is moving in to its second school year, 2010-2011, and the focus is to extend support to the junior and senior high schools to align with the district nutrition policy.

Lead teachers: champions in the schools

A representative lead teacher from each school attends quarterly advisory meetings to discuss successes, challenges and next steps to improving the school health environment. Lead teachers provide leadership in identifying needs in their respective schools to move healthy eating and active living initiatives forward.

Various activities were identified by the teachers and in-services. Information and resources were provided to each school to assist them in making changes to meet the district healthy eating policy and Daily Physical Activity requirements. The district has committed resources to continue the advisory lead teacher meetings. It is believed that this group has been pivotal in providing leadership and direction.

Successes

Key to the success of this project was the sustainability piece that was built into the activities. Resources were developed to support healthy food choices to be available in school cafeterias,



hot lunches and special food days. Alberta Nutrition Guidelines presentations were provided at the district professional development days and at individual schools. Cafeteria choices were changed to meet the provincial guidelines in the elementary schools. Special food days and hot lunch sales are providing better healthy choices including the offering of fruit, vegetables, juice and milk. All elementary schools are meeting the daily physical activity requirements.

Another success was the implementation of a four-week district-wide health challenge. The Healthy Habits challenge encouraged elementary students to practice healthy habits at home such as eating healthy, being active, getting enough sleep and brushing their teeth. Local business provided a variety of prizes as incentives for participation. Parent feedback was extremely positive and many reported increasing their own activity and improving their eating habits as a result of tracking their child's healthy habits checklist.

Community partners have been an integral part in the successful implementation of the policy and project. Ongoing collaboration with community partners such as Moving and

Choosing (www.movingandchoosing.com), Alberta Health Services and the Be Fit for Life Centre has provided access to numerous resources and the dedication of staff to work with the school community.

To capture all of the successes in elementary schools around school health and wellness, a district best practices handbook was developed. The intent of this handbook was to highlight healthy eating, active living and positive social environments initiatives and share these best practices with others. A section was added to the district website to house all of the great resources developed so that all schools can continue to access them.

Next steps

Over the past year, the district has experienced a change in culture. All stakeholders expect that healthy eating, active living and positive social environments are to be characteristic of elementary schools in the Medicine Hat School District. The next step in moving forward with this focus is to move beyond the elementary schools to the junior and senior high schools. The Lead Teacher Advisory

Committee will expand to include junior and senior high school teachers and students. Student representation at the advisory table will ensure that we are engaging youth in decision making and leadership for the implementation of these healthy school initiatives.

Another important next step is to support food service providers in providing healthy food choices to students and staff in junior and senior high school cafeterias and catering services to schools. This will require a commitment by the service providers and school district to work collaboratively to make this a reality.

The Medicine Hat School District school board and staff are committed to continuing this invaluable work. There is no doubt that the impact on lives will be long term and far reaching in the community as a result of the work done in the schools. ■

Kimberlee Brooks is a registered dietitian and health promotion facilitator with Alberta Health Services. Sherrill Fedor, the associate superintendent of student services with the Medicine Hat School District, oversees the implementation of the Healthy Schools project.

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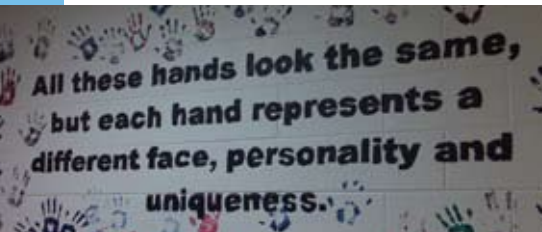


Buffalo Trail Public Schools Experience...



Wainwright on Wellness (WOW), one of 39 projects in a province-wide initiative called Alberta Mental Health Capacity Building in Schools initiative, is helping students to succeed.

By Ariel Haubrich



ABOVE: A favourite hallway at WHS with all students' handprints: a fun and famous activity for new students.

BELOW: Grade six students building relationships, gaining confidence and having some fun in preparation for grade seven.



Wainwright on Wellness, referred to as “WOW!” in the community it serves, is one of 39 projects in a province-wide Mental Health Capacity Building in Schools initiative. The initiative is funded by Alberta Health and Wellness and facilitated by Alberta Health Services Addictions and Mental Health Services in partnership with Alberta Education and Buffalo Trail Public Schools.

The Mental Health Capacity Building in Schools initiative is an integrated, multidisciplinary team approach providing promotion, prevention and early intervention services in schools. The areas addressed include health, addiction and mental health services to children, youth and their families within a school-based setting. The goal of these projects is to build resiliency skills in children, youth and families and to support children and youth to stay in school and succeed.

We’ve all experienced the truths behind phrases like, “It takes a village to raise a child,” “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful and committed citizens can change the world,” and “People may forget what you said, but never how you made them feel.” Wainwright on Wellness has integrated these adages along with the mandates and vision of Alberta Health Services through research-based best practices in the areas of emotion and learning. These practices enhance the ability of the school division as well as partner agencies to reach goals regarding the wellbeing of children and youth within the school setting and family. Specific links are made to the Alberta Education Accountability Pillar under safe and caring schools, quality of education, high school completion rates, post secondary transition and preparation for lifelong learning. A key portion of the Accountability Pillar is citizenship, and a key feature of the Wainwright on Wellness initiative is its ability to foster citizenship in activities directly linked to learning outcomes in schools and overall wellness.

Emotion is directly linked to learning. The limbic system housed within the brain stem acts as a gatekeeper that decides what information will form a permanent part of the brain’s understanding. Children and youth are especially susceptible to an emotional component in new information and learn effectively when their experiences aid them in attaching emotion to the things they learn. Educators who are aware of the role of emotion in learning achieve many goals at once because enactment of the curriculum takes place in a manner that fosters participation and resiliency. This leads to success in all areas of the Accountability Pillar.

Wainwright is a small rural community in east central Alberta with a diverse population and demography including a military training center that contributes to a transient population. The committee overseeing the project includes

Alberta Health at both provincial and local levels, Buffalo Trail Public Schools Regional Division system leadership and school administrators, the Military Family Resource Centre, the local RCMP and Lakeland College. The staffing of the project includes a coordinator, a transition and success facilitator and a mental health counsellor, all with advanced professional credentials.

The target areas for programming in the two Wainwright public schools (Wainwright High School and Wainwright Elementary School) are enacted in a way that fosters healthy relationship development between students and staff, schools, families and community. Partnership is essential in all work on the areas of emphasis in the project:

- Mental health, addictions awareness and support;
- Academic motivation, attendance and completion;
- Physical health and nutrition; and
- Successful academic, environmental and developmental transitions.

In order to think outside the “clinical office box” in the provision of support and education in each of these areas, activities and programs in the schools occur in one of three formats: individual services, targeted group activities and universal awareness and programming.

Some of the highlights of the WOW project programming implemented to date include:

- “Commando Zone,” an alternative extra-curricular after school games group;
- “Just Say Hi,” a relationship building campaign between students and healthy adults in the community;
- Homework help programs;
- “Grade 8 Girl’s Getaway” which includes sessions in body image, positive choices, parent-teen communication, self-defence, etc.;

- Healthy cooking clubs;
- A youth theatre group;
- Cyber-safety presentations and awareness programs;
- Health and fitness programs and promotion;
- Transition and welcome interviews and programs;
- “Breakfast for Exams” programming designed to connect nutrition and academic success;
- Diploma exam anxiety and preparation sessions;
- One-on-one and classroom presentation services in all target areas;
- Friends for Life© elementary social and coping skill building groups; and
- The creation and maintenance of a “WOW” website which includes informational links and activities of interest for all ages in each of the target areas (see www.wainwrightonwellness.com).

Statistical reporting of the number of students being served in one of the three service delivery formats (individual, targeted group, or universal) have reached in some cases up to 75 per cent of the student body, their families and the community at large. In connection with Alberta Education’s Accountability Pillar results, since the inception of the program in 2008, there has been an increase in the outlined provincial goals in both of the schools served. Particular increase has been noted in the areas

of High Quality Learning Opportunities and Excellence in Learner Outcomes. Specific areas and criteria seeing positive movement include citizenship, parental involvement, education quality, dropout rates, transition rates, and safe and caring schools.

A seasoned educator in the district provided the WOW team and Alberta Health Services with an evaluative comment that summarizes positive feedback received from parents, community members and students, “we are very fortunate to have WOW! Students are comfortable and open with others, and with the WOW professionals’ familiar and friendly faces. Staff and parents are more confident, aware and understanding. The WOW program has helped us to realize the importance of educating the entire child, and this has made an incredible positive impact on our school. I hope that we continue with this initiative, as our schools grow to be healthy, positive places to be.”

WOW’s work continues knowing that our thoughtful and committed citizens, who will someday bring change to the world, are sitting with smiles just down the hall. The Board and senior administrative team of Buffalo Trail Public Schools is pleased with the project’s success in addressing these areas of student success. ■

Ariel Haubrich (M.Ed Psych) is the program coordinator with the Wainwright on Wellness program, and is involved with mental health programming and school counselling in the division.

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By Darcey-Lynn Marc,
Ron Taylor and John Orr



Making Health Happen in Northern Lights School District

Discover the strategy Northern Lights School District has implemented that has resulted in very important changes in the health and spirit of their employees.

Imagine a school district where:

- Health is becoming a way of working rather than an extra add-on in the day;
- New health activities are initiated by staff, occur every month at every site and have been sustained for two years;
- Many individuals have improved their health status and have reduced or eliminated chronic diseases;
- Everyone is invited to contribute individually or with others to make health happen!

How did Northern Lights School District transform its culture to include health as a strategic aspect in support of exceptional educational experiences for students? Why is the enthusiasm and commitment for healthy people and healthy workplaces getting stronger? Let's explore how this began and why it is continuing.

In the beginning...

At the time that administrators in Northern Lights were looking for a strategy to support the health of employees, the Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan was looking for a school district to partner with to implement a Healthy Living program. Following initial meetings, a resounding, "Yes, let's do it", occurred and so began the journey. Here are some of the key steps that help make health happen:

Obtain active support from senior leaders

and trustees: While health is a shared responsibility with employees, an investment of time and money is required from the school district. As one superintendent identified many years ago, "As goes the leader, so goes the school". While participation in the program is voluntary, leader support is key, so any interested employees feel supported in their participation.

Action: create a Steering Committee to provide high level direction, funding and address any significant barriers or challenges.

Involve all employee groups: While leader support paves the way, it is each person who makes a decision to take action to become healthier or to maintain their health. The framework for the Healthy Living program is defined but is fully customized to meet the interests and needs of the district.

Action: create a Working Committee with a representative from all employee groups and geographic regions. The committee members developed the orientation for the program, gathered input from their colleagues, addressed questions/concerns and were significant ambassadors and role models for the program. They were also instrumental in keeping the program alive from one year to the next.

Make health a way of being, not an

event: Wanting to be healthy and taking sustained action over time to get healthy and stay healthy are very different. It is easy to

introduce the concept of health; most people want to do this. By involving the entire district in health, it makes it easier for each person to maintain or keep their healthy lifestyle choices. As health became part of the "way we work in Northern Lights" we began to see how health can positively influence our day-to-day work. For us, this has included:

- Ordering healthy food for all-day meetings or sessions;
- Including "health activities" as a standing agenda item at all staff meetings; and
- Making health a thread through all aspects of our System Day (our welcome back at the beginning of the year). Healthy food, healthy energizers during the plenary, health information booths and speakers with topics that relate to or support the context of health.



Action: create Site Coordinators to facilitate health action at every location in the district. Volunteer Site Coordinators involved their colleagues in identifying actions and activities for the group to participate in each month. New activities were introduced monthly to keep the interest and energy high.

Celebrate success

Individuals learn from one another and are encouraged by one another. Losing weight, being more active, dealing with stress in a more positive way is hard work sometimes. By celebrating individual and team success and initiatives, we have found encouragement on those days when making health happen feels more challenging.

Provide information

With solid health information it is easier for individuals to make informed choices about their lifestyle choices that either contribute or detract from their health. One of the main components of the Healthy Living program provided individuals with a complete lipid screen (HDL, LDL, blood glucose, triglycerides). These provide insights into health that are otherwise invisible until health symptoms appear.

Combined with an online health assessment, individuals were able to see their personal health profile. This provided them with information about low, moderate and high risk areas of their health. This proved to be powerful for many employees who were able to take action to improve specific health risks. Speaking with a registered nurse and access to a health coach for follow up support proved invaluable.

Weekly “did you know” emails were created and distributed to all employees. Success stories contributed by individuals, combined with health facts, were included.

Costs and returns

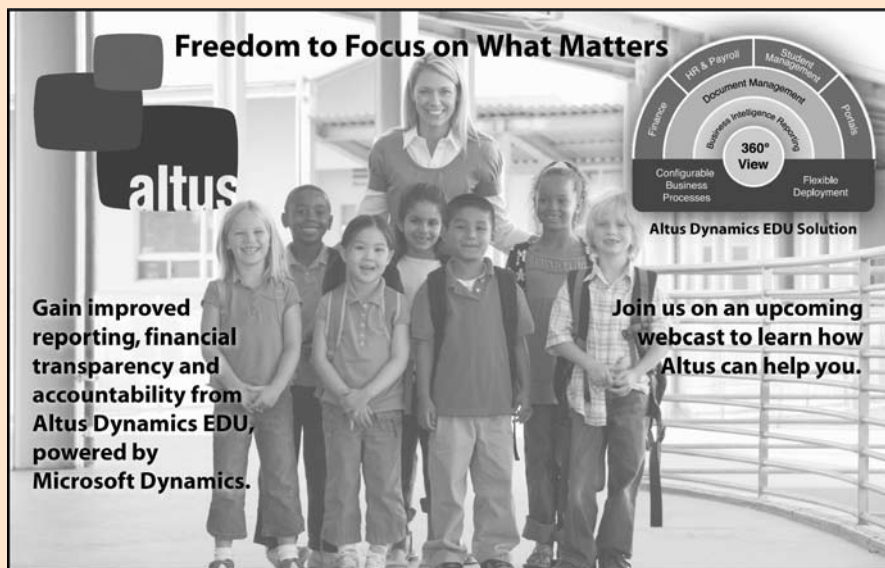
Creating a focus on health requires commitment, passion, time, resources and money. We provided cover off for employees wishing to participate in the health screening program. Individuals on the working committee and site coordinators

participated in a number of meetings throughout the year (between two and four depending on the committee). Resources were also provided as incentives for those participating. These included books related to healthy recipes and information on what to buy and not to buy when eating out or shopping for groceries. Three draws for a dinner out were also provided.

While a budget was required, the value obtained has been significant. The primary benefit has been the improved physical and mental health of our employees. We also

experienced a decrease in the cost of benefits and the surcharge position has now been removed. Northern Lights School Division is proud to support making health happen! ■

Darcey-Lynn Marc is a consultant working with ASEBP's Health Services Team. Ron Taylor, associate superintendent of human resources and John Orr, director of instruction for Northern Lights School Division No. 69, have been involved with the project in various forms throughout the development of the Healthy Living program.



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Wellness in Calgary Catholic

By adopting the international model of Comprehensive School Health, Calgary Catholic School District is creating sustainable, active and healthy school communities.

By Jessica Badzgon

For the past two years, “Learning is the Work” has been the academic theme for the Calgary Catholic School District (CCSD). This theme also supports the knowledge that “Healthy Kids Learn Better.” We know that students who are connected to their school communities, have good nutrition and are physically active on a daily basis are more successful. In order to develop more successful students and active healthy school communities, Calgary Catholic has long supported Comprehensive School Health (CSH).

The international model of CSH was adopted by the Calgary Catholic School District in the late 1990s. The four areas that CSH uses to promote wellness are social and physical environment, teaching and learning, healthy school policy, and partnerships and services. Each of these areas is addressed at various levels throughout the district. Calgary Catholic supports education about healthy choices that permeates across curriculums and the culture of schools. Using the CSH model, schools promote health and wellness outcomes throughout the school day, during both instructional and non-instructional time.

CSH came to life in the Calgary area through a collaborative grouping of three

school jurisdictions and the Health Region. Working together, the three jurisdictions created resources, offered professional development opportunities and worked at the district level to promote the importance of wellness in schools. The gains made in these early days led to Calgary being a provincial leader for CSH as well as fostering strong collaborative ties between the jurisdictions. This group continued to grow and now consists of Alberta Health Services, Calgary Catholic and five additional school districts. The Health Promoting School Collaborative meets monthly to promote CSH and share their work and resources across the province.

At a district level, CSH is a vital part of moving forward in creating safe, caring, active, healthy school communities. Healthy Choices for Healthy Learners is the title of CSH within the district. A steering committee provides direction and support to move Healthy Choices forward.

The three primary pillars of nutrition, physical activity and positive social environments are embraced by schools based on their individual needs. In an effort to improve these three areas of wellness, many schools have created “wellness teams” to assess the needs

of their school, develop action plans, monitor the work being completed and ensure opportunities exist to celebrate the changes being made. This process allows schools the freedom to tailor their plans specifically to the varying demographics and needs of their school community. The wellness teams are usually comprised of a teacher champion, public health nurse, students, a parent as well as a member of the school administration.

Through grant funding from the Wellness Fund, Healthy Choices has, over the past year and a half, been able to make significant strides in increasing awareness. This past year, 10 schools were chosen to be a part of a project to highlight the importance of having a Wellness Team and following the steps of CSH to improve the overall wellbeing of a school community. These schools were provided with professional development support for their teacher champion and public health nurses to come together to work on the action plan for their respective schools. These schools were also provided with funds to bring their projects to life. Finally, there was a celebration in June where the teacher champions along with their wellness teams came together to share their successes.

One of the key partnerships this past year was with the University of Calgary, Be Fit for Life Centre. This regional office of the provincial organization also received funding through the Wellness Fund. Their PHAT (Positive Healthy Active Today) project involved five CCSD junior high schools and brought CSH to life for the students. Through teacher professional development sessions, parent information nights and on-site school activities these schools were able to make great strides in their school awareness and promotion of wellness.

Resiliency, or a student's connectedness to their school community, is often a difficult area to work on, as many equate this mental health piece as a negative. In Calgary Catholic, every school is a Catholic Community of Caring (CCC) school. This district-wide program uses respect, family, faith, trust and caring as its foundation. This program has provided an excellent avenue for supporting positive social environments or resiliency in our students. CCC is supported by the religious education team, facilitating professional development for teachers and students, and assisting with student celebrations and resources.

Wellness is not only for the student population but is also for our employees. CCSD provides safe and caring places of employment. Along with an effective employee family assistance program, Calgary Catholic hosts district-wide family days. Under the leadership of our Chief Superintendent, Dr. Lucy Miller, we have had Calgary Catholic Day at Calgary Hitmen games, as students in sports performance programs provided the between period entertainment. We also had a district day at the Calgary Zoo where many district employees came out with their families to enjoy the local venue. The largest of the district days is our District Run and Walk.

The opportunity to work in positive school climates, with district policies on nutrition and various district employee initiatives, contributes to fostering healthy relationships, personal wellbeing and creating an effective place to make "Learning the Work". ■

Jessica Badzgon, B.Ed., M.Ed., is the health and physical education consultant for the Calgary Catholic School District. She is passionate about health promotion and wellness in schools.

Calgary Catholic Run & Walk

The Calgary Catholic School District hosted the 5 km/10 km Run & Walk for staff, families and clergy on Saturday, September 19th, 2009. As part of the District's 125th anniversary, this event brought together our Catholic community to participate in a healthy activity, build relationships and raise funds for a charity of choice—Inn from the Cold.

On the day of the event over 1,100 participants gathered at Foothills Athletic Park. Following a blessing by Bishop Henry, everyone stretched and danced in a musical warm-up activity. Participants had the option of a 5 km or 10 km distance as the route traveled beside McMahon Stadium and through the University of Calgary Campus. A highlight was the world renowned Bishop Grandin Marching Band that performed on the course. With a primary goal of building community, everyone then relaxed in the stadium, enjoying a full breakfast as they listened to the "Herb Tarleks" teacher band. As well, an inspiring activity was the "little legs" race where preschoolers ran 100 meters into the arms of eight school mascots and were cheered on by parents.

At the presentation ceremony, prizes were awarded for school spirit, exemplary participation and top finishers. The biggest cheer, however, was for Inn from the Cold, as a cheque for \$17,123 was presented to representatives from the charity.

Many volunteers and groups collaborated to ensure the event was successful. The City of Calgary and Calgary Police Service supported the closure of roads. Various corporations, private donors and the Local ATA 55 donated funds to support the initiative. Running clinics that were sponsored to prepare participants for the event proved to be very popular.

Dr. Lucy Miller, Chief Superintendent, closed the Calgary Catholic Run & Walk by thanking the many dedicated volunteers and participants with the words, "This has been the best event ever!" In the fall of 2010, we will host our second Run & Walk, building on the success of last year.

Mike Ross is director, instructional services, secondary, for the Calgary Catholic School District. He has been a principal for many years at all divisional levels, most recently at Bishop O'Byrne High School.





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Inspiring Hearts and Minds - Right From the Start

In the fall of 2007, Canadian Rockies Public Schools (CRPS) launched Inspiring Hearts and Minds—A Strategy for the Future of Public Education in the Bow Valley. With the pressures of declining enrolment and limited resources, we challenged ourselves and the community to envision with us what we wanted education to look like for the next generation. Through community discussions, focus groups and many conversations, it was decided that our primary focus would be on the **WHOLE CHILD**.

With this central focus, we developed a comprehensive approach to learning that recognizes that for young people to thrive in our rapidly changing world, we need to nurture their development in a number of different but interrelated areas:

- Physical;
- Cognitive;
- Emotional;
- Social; and
- Spiritual.

Surrounding the whole child in the model are the elements of whole learning, whole teacher, whole community and whole world perspective. Within each of these elements, CRPS endeavours to make education decisions

that support preparing our children to thrive as individuals and to contribute as citizens and leaders in our interconnected, complex and exponentially changing world. Under the Inspiring Hearts and Minds (IHM) umbrella, there are a number of wellness elements embedded into each of the four elements. (see graphic 1)



Graphic 1

Canadian Rockies Public Schools submitted a proposal to the Alberta Mental Health Board on Mental Health Capacity Building for Children and Families. CRPS was awarded a grant for a three-year project which was titled “Right From the Start” (RFTS).

This project is a community-based initiative housed in the school system with the overall aim to “increase coping behaviours, knowledge and skills of children to enable them to

For more detailed information around Inspiring Hearts and Minds, please visit the Canadian Rockies website at www.crps.ab.ca.

In 2008,

By Kate Belford

make better life choices and adopt behaviours to self protect their mental and physical health at an early age as possible.” The Right From the Start project is using a framework of promotion, early intervention and prevention to support young children in developing values and using strategies that support mental health and well-being.

The RFTS team has strengthened relationships and collaboration with various service delivery agencies to enhance support services to young children and their families at the elementary grade level. As the project has unfolded, the team has recognized the importance of a universal approach to ensuring ALL students are reached. This is a prime example of addressing wellness of students, teachers, parents and community to strengthen resiliency in all and falls in line with the ideas presented in IHM.

(see graphic 2)

Within the strand of **W H O L E TEACHER**, CRPS has introduced a wellness program for district staff. It is recognized that employees need to be healthy

Right from the Start:

Mental Health
Wellness Wheel



Graphic 2

and mentally prepared for their daily work in an increasingly complex school environment. What better way than to offer opportunities for staff to develop their own wellness plans? The Wellness program offers yoga, meditation and a variety of exercises classes to staff after hours within a school building.

These are just a few examples of what Canadian Rockies Public Schools is doing to ensure that students, parents, district staff and the community are ready and resilient for the upcoming challenges in their lives and our ever-changing world. ■

Kate Belford is director of student services for Canadian Rockies Public Schools.



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Body, Mind and Spirit

By Cheryl Shinkaruk

Edmonton Catholic School's innovative project, Wellness - Body, Mind and Spirit, funded through the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) under Alberta Education, takes a K-12 comprehensive approach to health promotion that involves the home, school and community. A variety of topics are addressed to promote healthy eating, physical activity, mental wellness and spiritual connectivity.

Each of the 50 schools identifies a "teacher champion" who takes on a leadership role in the project. These mentors create a school wellness team of students, staff and parents who work together to implement wellness strategies in their school work plan.

Students had the opportunity to participate in a district student symposium on school health and wellness. Sessions were presented by specialists with training in various areas that provided students with wellness strategies they could implement in their school. Throughout the year, students participated in a wide range of activities such as community service, philanthropy, student leadership, digital storytelling, health fairs, pedometer activities and peer education. These authentic experiences helped create a culture of school wellness.

Teachers had the opportunity to interact with parents in a variety of settings that included school health fairs, parent information nights, school newsletters, website links, social activities and parent volunteer opportunities.

Professional development, along with collaborative sharing time with Alberta Health Services School Health nurses, gives staff the opportunity to share knowledge, strategies, successes and challenges in the project. Resource kits were developed for each school to have at their site which provides teachers with support in teaching outcomes from the Health and Life Skills Program of Studies.

Partnerships with diverse community agencies and institutions helped our project foster innovation and creativity. We have developed partnerships with The University of Alberta School of Agriculture and Food Sciences, The University of Alberta College of Education, The Hope Foundation of Alberta, Canadian Mental Health Association, Stollery Children's Foundation, Alberta Health Services, Alberta Milk, AADAC, APPLE Schools and many others. Educational engagement with our partners allows for sharing of expertise which is one of the key contributors to the success of this project.




Our school district is a strong agent of change through the leadership of our superintendent who championed the inclusion of wellness in the district goals and priorities. As a result of our wellness initiative, we have:

- Developed a strong nutrition policy based on the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth;
- Created an awareness campaign that involves colourful, visual posters for each school with examples of healthy choices so we can educate our students at all levels; and
- Educated our "teacher champions" and cafeteria providers about specific strategies for implementation of the district wellness policy.


Our district realizes that change takes time, but we believe that through the education of all project participants, we will be successful in our implementation of our district's wellness project. And successes have already begun as one teacher put it, "I feel that students are taking responsibility for their food choices and the benefit can be seen in the classroom."

To create a sustainable school wellness environment, our goal is to have students gain knowledge, solve problems and engage in reflective thinking regarding what promotes a healthy body, mind and spirit! ■

Cheryl Shinkaruk is a consultant with Learning Services Innovation - Edmonton Catholic Schools and she coordinates the AISI Wellness project.



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Wetaskiwin and Maskwachees: Student Health Partnership

By Corrinne Denham, Marilyn Heggerud, Lorna Muise, Joanne Shantz and Nina Wyrstok

The impact that health factors have on student learning is significant. Quality nutrition and active living are linked to improved attention, motivation and learning (Kleinman et al., 2003; Jensen, 1997). Also, there is a strong link between students' emotional well-being at school and academic success (Curwin, Mendler, Mendler, 2008). Clearly, the three critical pillars of student wellness are healthy eating, active living and emotional well-being.

A grant from the Alberta Healthy School Community Wellness Fund supported Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools (WRPS) in partnering with schools from the Nipisihkopahk (Samson Band) Education Authority (NEA) and Miyo Wahkohtowin (Ermineskin Band) Education Authority to improve student health. Called the CIRCLE project, this initiative brought seven WRPS, Maskwachees (Hobbema) schools and the Central Health Authority together to improve student health.

Working in a Comprehensive School Health model, schools developed action plans targeting the critical wellness pillars. Schools shared resources, best practices and collaborated in professional development, cultural and celebration days.

Healthy eating

All participating schools reported providing healthier snacks and meals to their students. In Ermineskin schools, students took part in food preparation, learning skills to create healthy meals and modifying their bannock recipe to include whole wheat flour. Nipisihkopahk Elementary explored how many students could be fed on a limited budget and then prepared healthy lunches accordingly. They analyzed and rated all of the foods in their canteen and then made improvements to reflect Alberta Nutrition Guidelines (2008). Parkdale School compiled a cook book, capturing the healthy snacks they created and pictures of students at work. Ecole Queen Elizabeth Jr. High



School eliminated their vending machines and improved the quality of food choices in their canteen. Lakedell School, while providing a healthy breakfast, lunch and snack program every day, also increased nutrition instruction, empowering students to make better choices.

"In September our kids were asking to go to the store to buy junk food and then at our Easter lunch, one of our kids actually got angry with another for 'hogging the salad'. This was a huge change in attitude," says Wendy Solland, Ermineskin Ehpewapahk School.

Active living

Ermineskin Alternate Off-Campus program has no gymnasium but was able to make community connections to access daily recreational facility time and purchase much needed sports equipment. Queen Elizabeth School opened a weight room for students and staff alike and supported staff in becoming healthy life-style role models. Parkdale introduced noon hour "Yoga for Kids" and Centennial School launched a successful family "drop-in badminton night". Ever Active workshops and resource bins were accessed by all CIRCLE schools, as they joined the Ever Active ranks.

Positive social environments

Lakedell School students explored citizenship by fundraising for projects abroad while

Parkdale's leadership group did fundraising for a "disability friendly" playground. Queen Elizabeth Junior High launched a student leadership group that led exciting activities and they attended a team building retreat in June. Parkdale had a health fair based on the three health pillars. Centennial, Lakedell and Parkdale Schools all implemented Roots of Empathy programs to build caring and emotionally literate students. Ermineskin Alternate combined cooking classes with Virtues lessons in a First Nations context, resulting in student self-reflection and growth. Ermineskin and NEA schools collaborated in gang prevention activities and Role Model events with RCMP officers and Edmonton Eskimos players.

The results of the CIRCLE project were more than rewarding. But even more exciting and enduring were the relationships that were forged among the partners and also between the two communities.

"The value of creating positive (relationships) between Hobbema and WRPS has been great and the implication for our students who attend these schools is positive. Improving relationships between the communities and reducing the stereotypes has positive implications for the students and us as well," says Belinda Lightning, NES. ■

Corrinne Denham is the school, community and family health education program coordinator with Wetaskiwin Schools. Marilyn Heggerud is the CIRCLE project facilitator. Lorna Muise is the coordinator of the comprehensive school health program in Alberta Health Services central zone. Joanne Shantz, RN, BScN has worked in various nursing roles within Alberta Health Services. Nina Wyrstok is the director of support services in Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools.

To see references for this article, you can email kkornelsen@matrixgroupinc.net. or for more information, contact Corrinne at denhamC@wrps.ab.ca.

Wellness Grant Transforming School Health

By Jane Marshall

Elk Island Catholic School (EICS) received a \$50,000 Wellness Grant in January 2009 to promote the healthy eating, physical activity and positive social environments of their students and staff. EICS consists of 16 schools in four communities, including Sherwood Park, Fort Saskatchewan, Vegreville and Camrose.

The project began with each of the 16 schools selecting a health lead teacher. The 16 health leads participated in a professional development day and two Ever Active School's conferences promoting school health. To assist the schools, a 0.4 FTE Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Facilitator was hired who visited all 16 schools to conduct an assessment of their healthy eating and active living environment.

To promote Comprehensive School Health, each school was encouraged to set up a health team, involving teachers, administrators, parents and students.

After visiting each school, it was apparent that many of the EICS schools were eager to promote health and wellness for their students and staff. Several schools had revamped or were in the process of revamping their vending machines and/or concessions to include Choose Most or Choose Sometimes items. All schools were interested in providing more nutritious school events and hot lunch programs. As well, some EICS schools are now offering fresh fruit and/or vegetables for the students and staff.

To encourage Daily Physical Activity (DPA) in the schools, funds were used to purchase DPA Bins for 10 EICS schools. The other six schools chose to purchase physical activity equipment, such as Wii FIT, for their school. More DPA bins are to be ordered for the schools this upcoming year.

To encourage fitness, many schools offer the students fitness classes/rooms, running/skipping clubs, triathlons, yoga, pedometer challenges and organized playground games. Activity Days are also popular and quite a few



EICS students participating in a Winter Olympic Day in February 2009. This event was organized by leadership students at a middle school for a neighbouring elementary school.

schools held Winter Olympic Days this past year, some organized by leadership students.

Information on "Reverse Recess" was provided to the EICS schools. By having students go out for recess first and then return to eat lunch, the schools have indicated that students are eating healthier lunches with less waste. In addition, there were less disciplinary problems following the lunch recess and less garbage on the playgrounds.

Positive social environments are an integral part of all EICS schools. Programs on bullying, body image, respect, leadership, drug awareness, etc, exist in all of the EICS schools. Religion classes also reinforce positive mental and social wellness for the students.

Throughout the school year, the health facilitator provided relevant resources and information to the schools. "Health Tip of the Day" for announcements, and health and wellness inserts for newsletters or websites were sent out monthly. Teachers were given information including: Websites for DPA Activities, Quick Classroom Energizers and Healthy Rewards for Children. Health information was also included in the monthly division newsletter.

EICS has made great gains in fostering healthy schools including the planned development of a Nutrition Policy for the district this upcoming year. With the continued support of resources such as the Wellness Fund, Ever Active Schools, Apple Schools and Alberta Health, Elk Island Catholic Schools will continue to have successes in promoting healthy lifestyles for students and staff. ■

Jane Marshall is a B.Sc.N working part-time for Elk Island Catholic Schools as a healthy eating and physical activity facilitator as well as a part-time rehabilitation nurse.



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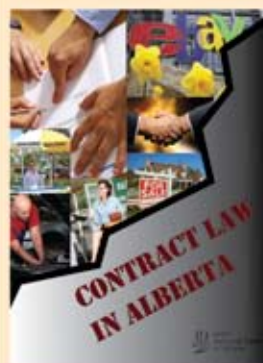
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Teaming UP 4 Healthy Learners

By the Teaming UP 4 Healthy Learners Steering Committee

In 2007, Bowness High School, one of the largest high schools in the Calgary Board of Education (CBE), agreed to be a part of our five school pilot to begin implementation of our Comprehensive School Health strategy, Teaming UP 4 Healthy Learners. The principal at the time expressed a desire to provide a framework for all the health and wellness activities that were happening in the school.

Upon a request to join, the school formed their health action team, and they began to make sustainable changes. The assessment of their learning environment clearly showed that their school cafeteria and foyer needed many improvements. The students expressed a desire to have a more inviting environment that students could take ownership over and want to spend time in. The team, after input from the students and staff in the school, decided that the “Bow Café” would be just the place.

The physical environment was the first to change. Window awnings and a large stage area were constructed in the café. Students worked during instructional time to build planters, large cloth collages and benches. “Tuesdays in the Foyer” became a regular event where students could sample healthy food choices

and get information from community organizations about issues and supports. The café, today, is an area that is used for student celebrations and student performances throughout the school day.

Based on best practice and research, Teaming UP has designed a process for schools to engage in. Schools create a health champion

team, consisting of students, parents, teachers, the health nurse and administrator. The team assesses their learning environment, considering the three pillars of Teaming UP 4 Healthy Learners: eat well, be active and value others. Based on supporting this school, and 90 other K-12 schools for the last three years, we would like to share three key elements of our strategy that are pivotal to success: keep it simple, find your champions, and work with partners.

Keep it simple. The path needs to be clear. We have carefully created a publicly accessible website where schools access resources and strategies. Our portal has all the tools that schools need to complete their assessment, create their action plan, share promising practices and get the support they need.



Students from Arbour Lake Middle School participating in the school milk program.

Champions are essential at all levels of the organization. CBE’s Superintendent of Learning Innovation believes that the health and wellness of our students is critical to improving academic success. Our system team consists of 10 members who have full-time portfolios connected to health and wellness. Each school, 90 out of 214 so far, has champions who work collecting data, passionately working with students and innovatively finding ways to fill gaps to coordinate health and wellness endeavours.

Alberta Health Services provides us with invaluable resources—a dietician on our system team and nurses involved in the school health teams. The funding from Alberta Health and Wellness gave us the impetus to start putting our system wide structure in place. Ever Active Schools, our provincial Comprehensive School Health counterpart, sits on our steering committee and provides a provincial lens to our work. EducationMatters, our current donor, funds innovative public education enhancement programs to help students learn.

Ultimately, our students are ready to make healthy choices. As Margaret Wheatley so profoundly states, “Determination, energy, and courage appear spontaneously when we care deeply about something. We take risks that are unimaginable in any other context.” Bring your group of passionate people together and start “Teaming UP 4 Healthy Learners”. ■

This article was co-written by members of the Teaming UP 4 Healthy Learners Steering Committee, all employees of the Calgary Board of Education.

For more information on the Teaming UP project, visit <http://projects.cbe.ab.ca/ss/teamingup>.



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CSAL Creating Change

By Lorraine Uloth

The CSAL (Creating Sustainable Active Leadership) project was initially designed as a three-year project funded by the Alberta Healthy School Wellness Fund. It is a collaborative effort between Olds College, Chinook's Edge School Division (CESD) and Alberta Health Services (AHS).

The CSAL's vision is to build leadership capacity within students to create healthy change in their homes, schools and communities through projects based on the three pillars of healthy eating, physical activity and positive social environments.

"CSAL has urged me to break out of my shell and look for more opportunities to give back to my community. I enjoy the CSAL program immensely and it gives me ideas as to what I want to do when I'm older," says a student from Penhold School.

The foundation of the CSAL project is leadership. Student leaders are empowered and encouraged to display their capabilities to create healthy change through student led projects. The basis for the CSAL project is infused within the division's three-year plan and is offered to all middle, junior and senior high schools within CESD.

The program also aligns with the framework for the new health and wellness curriculum. "Chinook's Edge School Division No. 73 takes very seriously our responsibility to guide students to become responsible citizens. As important as the curriculum, are the students that are reading the books and doing the math. Leadership programs that consider our shared environment, the plight of our neighbours across the street and around the world, and social justice issues develop a conscience of action to positively impact our collective future" (Three Year Education Plan – 2009-2012, pg. 30).

The CSAL process:

- Student leaders assess the needs of their community;
- Plan and organize activities/events to address the gaps found; and
- Evaluate what they have done to see if it has had the impact that they want.

This process is internationally recognized as the "Comprehensive School Health" community development model. The CSAL

project provides resources and personnel support to help the students with the process. Our goal is for student driven activities to build confidence and leadership skills so they can take the initiative and responsibility for leading a healthy lifestyle by involving students through the entire process.

Support CSAL provides to schools:

- CSAL levels of achievement – After completing specified requirements, schools can submit their action plans and receive recognition. The funds must be used to purchase sustainable resources within the school;
- Support kits – Developed using best practice guidelines in the areas of physical activity, nutrition and positive social environments;
- PD support – Three days are provided by the Curriculum and Instruction department for a lead teacher action group;
- Resource materials (CSAL mentors tool kit binder, student activity work book, school tracking forms, student questionnaires, student/mentor evaluations, checklist for healthy schools, etc); and



- Support from the project leader and school health facilitator.

12 schools are engaged the CSAL project, encompassing a total of 4416 students.

"It's a great program in general; I feel very close to the other CSAL students, and all the students in general," says a grade 10 student from Delburne. ■

Lorraine Uloth, a teacher at Innisfail High School, was the CSAL project coordinator from January 2009 to June 2010.

For more information on the CSAL project, please contact Kory Sholdice at (403) 227-7070 or email ksholdice@chinooksedg.ab.ca.

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Health in Action

By Rebecca Krauss

The Health in Action project, a partnership project between Wolf Creek Public Schools and Alberta Health Services - Comprehensive School Health program, has supported healthy initiatives throughout the division. WCPS recognizes that student health precedes student achievement and has developed a division-wide strategy to ensure "Success for all Learners".

In the spring of 2008, WCPS and AHS received funding from the Alberta Healthy School Community Wellness Fund that bolstered the success of The Comprehensive School Health program in Wolf Creek by supporting the following aims:

- Tapping into the knowledge, skills, resources and energy of the entire school community;
- Enabling all schools to have access to the support and resources necessary to build leadership teams to champion health and wellness in their school communities;
- Facilitating activities and initiatives that promote healthy eating, active living, and positive social environments; and
- Reinforcing healthy messages and information in the core subject areas.

"The main components of this work have been the identification of staff members who are "health champions" in every school. These health champions work with other staff members, students, parents and community members to create a 'health action team' who then develop an action plan addressing the promotion of healthy eating, active living and positive social environments in their school communities," says Wanda Christensen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services.

The Comprehensive School Health program provided schools with resources to assist them in assessing the school environment, selecting priorities and planning for healthy school improvements.

Although the project is led by a steering committee comprised of health and education representatives, it is the work at the school level that has been most significant.

"I am so proud of the positive changes that have been taking place in our schools due to the hard work and efforts of our health champions, health action teams, and Alberta Health Services partners," says Christensen.

From offering healthier choices in vending machines and canteens to initiating healthy snack and breakfast programs, and other



innovative activities, the eating habits of Wolf Creek students have been influenced in a major way. Student involvement has been instrumental at Lacombe Composite High School, where students are directly involved in the process of planning, preparing and serving healthier options in their cafeteria as well as at Lacombe Junior High where students are responsible for running the breakfast program.

Schools have successfully engaged multiple community resources and services to support active living events and programs. All of the outreach and alternative schools were provided with specialized equipment and resources to expand opportunities for physical activity within their school settings.

In addition to the incredible work taking place within all of the schools, lessons plans that infuse healthy messages have been created by a lead teacher. These resources connect the wellness priorities to the core curriculum and are available for teacher use at www.wolfcreek.ab.ca/HIA/.

The strong partnership between Wolf Creek Public Schools and Alberta Health Services has allowed Comprehensive School Health to remain a high priority in Wolf Creek School Division.

"A large focus for 2010/2011 is to work with our health action teams to increase the involvement of students and find ways to build their leadership skills and confidence so they can be active leaders in the promotion of healthy living," says Christensen. "I am excited about the year ahead, expanding the scope of our efforts and being involved in the continued promotion of healthy schools in Wolf Creek Public Schools." ■

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Rebecca Krauss was the Health in Action lead teacher for Wolf Creek Public Schools and is currently a school health facilitator with Alberta Health Services - Comprehensive School Health program.



Sick Leave and Human Rights

*By Teresa Haykowsky,
Partner, McLennan Ross
LLP, Labour, employment
and education law*

The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that an employer has an obligation to take reasonable steps at the workplace to accommodate an employee who has a physical or mental disability.

The Alberta Human Rights Act says that physical disability means “any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness.” Some disabilities that have been established as protected under human rights law are: epilepsy/

seizures, heart attack/heart condition, cancer, severe seasonal allergies, shoulder or back injury, asthma, Crohn’s disease, hypertension, hysterectomy, spinal malformation, visual acuity, colour blindness, loss of body parts such as fingers, speech impediments, arthritis, muscular atrophy, cerebral palsy, alcoholism and drug dependence.

Common conditions such as colds and flus that do not last long and have no long-term effects are not normally considered to be physical disabilities.

Mental disabilities are defined by the Alberta Human Rights Act as “any mental disorder, developmental disorder or learning disorder, regardless of the cause or duration of the disorder.” Some examples of mental disabilities include: dyslexia, depression, schizophrenia and obsessive compulsive disorder. It is not possible to provide a complete list of conditions normally considered to be disabling under human rights law. These disabilities are examples only.

The legal duty to accommodate does not apply if the only way to resolve the problem will cause the employer undue hardship. At times, the concept of undue hardship is difficult to grasp.

The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that the employer’s hardship must be “substantial in nature”. For example, a physically disabled staff member who works for a school jurisdiction, as part of his or her job duties, may be required to carry boxes up a flight of stairs. If the school jurisdiction has no elevator, it may be deemed an undue hardship to expect the employer to install an elevator to accommodate the staff member. However, it may be possible to have another staff member do that task. In exchange, the disabled staff member could assume one or more of the other employee’s regular tasks.

Undue hardship would occur if accommodation would create onerous conditions for a school board employer such as intolerable financial costs or serious disruption to the provision of education to its students. To determine if undue hardship would occur, a school board employer should review factors such as financial costs, size and resources of the employer, disruption of operations, morale problems of other employees brought about by the accommodation etc.

Significant absences from work

The Supreme Court of Canada also examined undue hardship in a case involving the duty to accommodate an employee who had significant absences over many years due to a disability. The court found that situations of chronic absenteeism, where the employee is unable to resume work in the foreseeable future, may cause an employer an undue hardship to continue accommodation, depending on the facts of the case.

Recently in *Naccarato v. Costco Wholesale Canada Ltd.*, 2010 ONSC 2651 (Can LII) the Ontario Court of Justice had the opportunity to examine whether a 12-year Costco employee, Frank Naccarato, who was absent from work due to LTD, had “frustrated” (i.e. terminated) his employment contract with Costco.

Costco had fired Naccarato because of his continued lengthy absence from work (approximately five years) and his ongoing inability to return to work due to his illness (confirmed by his doctor). Costco also relied on the fact that Naccarato had been in receipt of LTD which required a total disability.

Justice Pollack had to decide whether Costco got it right when they fired Naccarato because of his work-related absences on the basis that Naccarato had “frustrated” his employment contract.

At trial, Costco relied a 2008 case from the Supreme Court of Canada (*Hydro-Quebec v. Syndicat des employees de techniques, professionnelles et de bureau d’Hydro-Quebec, section locale 2000*). In that case, the employee was fired after a disability caused her to miss 960 days of work over a seven and half year period. Her doctors were not optimistic that she would ever recover enough to return to work on a regular basis. The Supreme Court upheld the termination, finding that the duty to accommodate ended when the employee was unable to work for the “foreseeable future.”

Unlike the *Hydro-Quebec* case, Justice Pollack found that Costco had wrongfully terminated Naccarato’s employment contract. This meant that Naccarato won his case.

Why did Naccarato win?

The court found that even though the length of Naccarato's five-year sick leave was significant, the medical evidence did not support a finding that there was no reasonable likelihood that Naccarato

would return to work in reasonably foreseeable future. Rather, the evidence was that Naccarato was still being treated by his doctor as a new psychiatrist was being sought. The court found that Costco could have followed up with Naccarato's

doctor to ask further questions (i.e. a prognosis) with respect to the likelihood of a return to work in the foreseeable future but did not do so.

What was important in this case was the issue of the prognosis—and not the length of time the employee had been away from work (almost five years).

Clearly, the recommendation to terminate a teacher who is on LTD is a sensitive matter which requires careful attention. A termination based on frustration of contract must be premised on a proper set of facts, including securing a proper prognosis. We recommend school board employers seek legal advice prior to recommending that a teacher be terminated on the basis of frustration of contract. ■


Teresa Haykowsky works with school jurisdictions on labour, employment and education law related matters. She has appeared before all levels of court, including the Supreme Court of Canada in April 2010,



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ASEBP'S Healthy People, Healthy Workplace News



Important Steps for Eating Right, Getting Fit and Reducing Stress

ASEBP is governed by five members from the ATA and five members from the ASBA. As a partner with the education sector, ASEBP is committed to developing and promoting resources that support individuals, groups and leaders in creating and sustaining healthy people, healthy workplaces. Working with the education sector has provided many learnings that they are pleased to share in their regular column of *The CASS Connection*.

Step one: know your invisible factors

Did you know... that you can be 'thin' and appear to be 'fit' but in fact, can have higher health risks than an individual who appears to be overweight?

Obesity is the cause of many health issues that can result in the development of chronic diseases later on in life. Understanding the difference between visceral fat and body fat can put you one step closer to a healthier life. *Regular physical activity can reduce the risk of developing heart disease, colon cancer, and Type 2 diabetes by as much as 50 per cent!*

Physical Activity tips:

- It is important to incorporate at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day. The best way to reduce internal body fat and build lean muscle mass is with resistance or strength training. You do not need to go to the gym. Use soup cans from your pantry to do some chest flies or arm curls. To target your legs, straighten your arms over your head while holding the weights and try a set of squats or lunges; and
- Dedicate your commercial breaks as activity breaks while watching TV!

Step two: manage your munchies

Did you know that according to the *American Medical Association Journal*, switching from

white to whole wheat bread can reduce the risk of heart disease by 20 per cent?

Eating a healthy breakfast, consuming fruits and vegetables, limiting processed foods and eating healthy snacks can reduce your risk of developing chronic diseases.

Nutrition tips:

- Eat at least one **dark green vegetable** such as broccoli or spinach and one **orange fruit or vegetable** every day;
- One can of pop or energy drink can add 150 to 200 empty calories to your diet;
- Eating whole wheat and whole grain foods will keep you feeling energized and 'fuller' longer because these foods contain fibre;
- Fish, chicken, and meat alternatives such as beans and tofu are high in protein which will help keep bones strong;
- Substitute spices for salt when cooking; and
- Limit alcohol and caffeine.

Step three: know your triggers

Did you know high levels of stress can lead to increased blood pressure, cholesterol and disturbances in heart rhythm?

Eating healthy and staying physically active are good ways to reduce stress and health risks associated with stress.

Stress reduction tips:

- Take a walk at lunch with colleagues or family members;
- Focus on the positive aspects of the situation;
- Join a social club, dance class or aerobics class;
- Slow down and appreciate the moment; and
- Get adequate amounts of sleep.

The promotion of healthy activities and healthy behaviours at work has had a significant impact on reducing levels of absenteeism, injuries, turnover, disability and health care and life insurance costs. ■

To review sources for this article, email kkornelsen@matrixgroupinc.net.

Workplace Health Statistics: Know the Impact

1. Health Canada states that an employee's work performance can be improved by four to 15 per cent through participation in regular physical activity.
2. The Conference Board of Canada reports health expenditures are 50 per cent more for workers who report high levels of stress.
3. Physically active employees take 27 per cent fewer days of sick leave.
4. Workplace productivity increases by up to 52 per cent with physical activity programs.

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