

# HEALTHY SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

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## Healthy Schools News

### What Are the Benefits of a Comprehensive School Health Approach?

Comprehensive School Health (CSH) is an internationally recognized framework to support improvements in students' health and educational outcomes. It is not only about what happens in the classroom, it encompasses the whole school environment with actions in four pillars:

1. Teaching and Learning
2. Social and Physical Environment
3. Healthy School Policy
4. Partnerships and Services

Evidence suggests that health-promoting policies and practices will have the greatest impact when they fully address all four pillars in a **comprehensive** and **coordinated** way. Ensuring healthy school activities are both comprehensive AND coordinated will support greater improvements in both health and learning outcomes when compared to single approach interventions.

Using a holistic approach in the classroom, for example, enables students to consider health issues in the broader context of their lives – instead of looking at specific health topics in isolation. The life skills and competencies important for youth's development, such as healthy decision making and critical thinking, can be important and common to all health topics. Using a holistic approach will help students make those connections and apply these skills in different life situations.

Research consistently shows that



Students from Eric Hamber Secondary pose in front of their iWalk banner. [Click here to read more.](#)

adopting a CSH approach helps schools achieve many benefits including:

- Better learning outcomes for students;
- Better health and well-being for students, educators and staff;
- Enhanced resources and opportunities through community partnerships;
- More effective teaching and learning; and
- A more cooperative and connected school environment.

The benefits of CSH also extend beyond the school to community partners and service providers. From a community perspective, adopting a CSH approach may lead to:

- Increased feelings of support from schools;
- Improved behaviour and healthy choices at home and in the community;
- Enhanced resources and/or opportunities;
- The development of unique networks of services and programs; and
- Increased understanding of connections between curriculum and skills required in real life.

To learn more, visit the DASH website, or [click here.](#)

## DASH BC Update

### iWalk, You Walk, We All Walk

A big thank you to all the schools who participated in International Walk to School Week (iWalk) this year – without your hard work and enthusiasm, iWalk wouldn't be such a success!

Schools across BC celebrated iWalk in many ways. Walking challenges, classroom walks and walking school buses were only some of the goings-on taking place around the province.



Students from Maple Ridge Elementary show their spirit during iWalk.

For example, Lillooet's Cayoosh Elementary got all of its students and staff to participate in a collective walk around town. École Panaroma Ridge Secondary in Surrey had to endure a rainy day, but the rain didn't stop students from walking to school that morning. École Duncan Elementary in Duncan devised walking events so that students who are driven to school or are bussed in could participate. The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) at Grand Forks' Dr. Perley Elementary School organized a walk around the block and a healthy snack before the start of school to get their students' day started off right. Way to go, BC schools!

### Healthy Living Day with an Action Schools! BC Regional Trainer

Action Schools! BC is a best practices model designed to assist schools in creating individualized action plans to promote healthy living while achieving academic outcomes. Bring in an Action Schools! BC Regional Trainer for a day of healthy living activities in your school! This could include: Student leadership training (on outdoor games, classroom workouts, or healthy eating activities), classroom visits to mentor teachers on Daily Physical Activity, action planning, food and beverage sales guideline planning, staff activity at lunch, after school workshops, and organizing equipment and resources, etc. This new [complimentary support service](#) is available to schools registered with Action Schools! BC. Contact Action Schools! BC at 1-800-565-7757 or [info@actionschoolsbc.ca](mailto:info@actionschoolsbc.ca) to book your school's Healthy Living Day.

### Join the Healthy Schools Network!

Are you interested in making your school a healthy place? Do you want to link the healthy living strategies employed at your school to student learning? Then join the Healthy Schools Network! The Healthy Schools Network (HSN) is a voluntary organization of BC schools established in 2006 to address a variety of academic, social and emotional concerns of students through a [Comprehensive School Health \(CSH\)](#) approach. Visit the [HSN website](#) to learn more about [what HSN members are doing](#) to improve health and learning outcomes at their schools. [Click here](#) to see the HSN step-by-step process and gain access to resources to help your school become involved. Already a member? [Log in to your school account](#) to submit your school inquiry question (or contact us if you have forgotten your password!). Not yet involved? [Contact us](#) today!

## Helpful Resources

### Screen Smart!

Concerned about the amount of time your students are in front of screens? The Childhood Obesity Foundation recently launched a new program called Screen Smart! Screen Smart is a program designed for children in Grades K-7. It aims to: 1) increase awareness among students (and their families) of how much time students spend in front of screens, and 2) reduce students' recreational screen time to less than 2 hours per day (or maintain that level if already achieved).

The Screen Smart program can be implemented over the short term, or set up as an annual event. Activities have been carefully designed to take only 10-15 minutes per day and each supports a BC prescribed learning outcome. Over time, the program can help schools foster a culture that encourages and supports active lifestyles.

To learn how to teach the Screen Smart program and receive the necessary resources, please sign up for a workshop for teachers by emailing Rebecca Frechette at [rebecca.frechette@ubc.ca](mailto:rebecca.frechette@ubc.ca). Please note that the Screen Smart program is available to Canadian schools, free of charge, on the Screen Smart website. Visit: [www.screensmartschools.ca](http://www.screensmartschools.ca).

## How Much Sugar is Safe for a Child?

Health professionals suggest that students in Grades 4-6 have no more than 52 grams of added sugar per day. This includes added sugar in foods and drinks.

52 g of sugar = 13 teaspoons or sugar cubes

Therefore, if a child has one 355 mL can of pop, which contains 10 - 12 cubes of sugar, he/she has nearly reached the maximum amount of sugar for one day.

Sip Smart! BC teaches children from Grades 4 to 6 what they need to know to make healthy drink choices. [Contact Sip Smart! BC](#) to order one of the VERY LAST hard-copies of the Teacher Resource Guide. You will always be able to [download](#) all teaching resources for FREE. Alternatively, you can still receive your Sip Smart! BC Teacher Resource Guides via an Action Schools! BC workshop.

Printed materials such as posters, drink cut-outs and a set of 30 booklets for families can be ordered by contacting the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon at [healthpromotion@hsf.bc.ca](mailto:healthpromotion@hsf.bc.ca).

## The BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation – Spuds in Tubs

Mashed, roasted, boiled – so many ways to prepare a potato! Students participating in the Spuds and Tubs program will not only get to experience eating fresh potatoes, but they will be the ones actually growing them. The program, run by BC Agriculture in the Classroom, gives teachers and their classrooms the tools and directions to grow their very own potatoes in tubs of soil. Teachers can also connect the program to other areas of study such as science, math and language arts.

The program provides students with a hands-on approach to learning, letting them dig in the soil, and harvest their own produce at the end of the school year. Workshop demonstrations are also offered to the teachers, so they get a first hand understanding of how to grow potatoes. Now in 200 schools, the program promotes the importance of agriculture and gives students a better understanding of how farmers produce food.

Spuds in Tubs is run by the BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation and sponsored by the BC Potato and Vegetable Growers Association.

## Project CHEF BC

Project CHEF Education Society is a not-for-profit society which offers experiential programs to teach children and



A student from the Project CHEF program shows her skills.

families about healthy cooking and eating. Project CHEF: Cook Healthy Edible Food is a curriculum-based school program aimed at children in Kindergarten to Grade 7.

The program teaches Vancouver students about healthy food: where it comes from, what it tastes like, how to prepare it and how to enjoy sharing it around the table. Designed to immerse children in the process of cooking, from preparation to clean-up, children gain knowledge about food; they discover the pleasure and satisfaction in creating meals for themselves and they develop required skills so that they can apply their new-found knowledge and abilities in making healthy food choices at home.

Since beginning in 2008, Project CHEF has reached 4000 children from 140 classes in 63 schools. The program is off to a great start for the 2011-2012 school year, they anticipate reaching approximately 1200 elementary students from around Vancouver.

To keep up on what's cooking, please, follow the program on Facebook, Twitter and on their website at [www.projectchef.ca](http://www.projectchef.ca).

## Launch of the BC Education Plan

The Ministry of Education has just launched a new website detailing its BC Education Plan. To learn more about the Plan and to share your thoughts and ideas with the Ministry on the direction you would like to see education go in the future, please visit <http://bcedplan.ca>. You can also follow them on Twitter at [@bcedplan](https://twitter.com/bcedplan) where regular updates will be posted.

## Kathy's Corner:

### Comprehensive School Health in Action

November is a busy time for schools: the academic year is in full swing, activities fill time before and after school, and the hustle of the holiday season is beginning to pull educators, students and families in multiple directions. While all of this activity can be great for some, it has the potential to impact our ability to maintain our healthy living choices.



Taking time to nurture healthy routines and learn about how healthy choices relate to our overall well-being is one way to ensure that we remain healthy and happy at busy times of the year. That's a concept that Alwin Holland Elementary school has been putting into practice through their involvement in the [Healthy Schools Network](#) over the last 4 years. Located in Fort St. John, BC, this energetic school is committed to promoting the development of responsible, respectful, and healthy individuals.

Although Alwin Holland employs multiple healthy living strategies throughout the year, I want to specifically share their exemplary efforts around promoting healthy eating, and how this relates to healthy learning. This past school year, Alwin Holland focussed their efforts in all four pillars of Comprehensive School Health to increase healthy eating at the school. For example, concepts related to healthy eating decision making and "feeding our brains" were specifically taught in the classroom, and these strategies were reinforced through newsletters sent home to families. Students at Alwin Holland were encouraged to take ownership over this learning, exemplified by the senior students preparing and sharing healthy snacks with pre-school students every Friday. The school extended this learning into the community, by partnering with two neighbouring schools to learn about the benefits of eating 5 colourful fruits and vegetables a day. This reminds learners that building knowledge around making healthy food choices is something that we all share.

Alwin Holland has structured their school environment to ensure that healthy food choices are a part of the school culture. On top of adhering to the BC [Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in Schools](#), the school maintains an open and welcoming canteen that offers nutritious snacks and meals at reasonable prices, complementary meals to those students who need them, participation in the [BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program](#), and participation in a school meal program ensuring every child has a healthy breakfast, snack and lunch.

As a result of these efforts, healthy food sales in Alwin Holland's canteen have steadily increased, and survey results show 94% of primary and 91% of intermediate students reported they felt they are learning strategies to stay healthy. Amazing results!

Why not take some time to extend your own learning in this area? This month, the [Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre's](#) Pinwheel Education Series – a free, monthly teleconference learning series – focuses on what is known about the not uncommon issue of children skipping lunch at school. If you missed the session, you can contact Kelty to access the discussion online. Reach them at 604-875-2084 or 1-800-665-1822, or [click here to email](#).

Kathy Cassels  
Executive Director, DASH BC

### In the Next Issue

- **Developing Healthy Partnerships**
- **Healthy Schools and Student Engagement**
- **Other Helpful Resources**



**Healthy Schools Network**  
www.healthyschoolsnetwork.org  
hsn@dashbc.org

**DASH BC**  
www.dashbc.ca  
info@dashbc.ca  
phone: 604-681-0600  
fax: 604-681-0602

The Healthy Schools Newsletter is distributed monthly throughout the school year, keeping readers apprised of developments in school health in BC. Please visit [www.healthyschoolsnetwork.org](http://www.healthyschoolsnetwork.org) for publication dates and submission deadlines for 2011/2012.