

## Upcoming NPBS & HSN Regional Meetings

**March 31, 2008**  
**Langley Network,**  
Langley School Board  
Office, 4 p.m.-5:30 p.m.

**April 15, 2008**  
**Extended Lower**  
**Mainland, Surrey, Surrey**  
Conference Centre,  
4 p.m.-6 p.m.

**April 16, 2008**  
**South Okanagan,**  
Penticton, Parkway  
Elementary School Annex,  
3:30 p.m.-4:45 p.m.

**April 17, 2008**  
**North Shore and**  
**Sunshine Coast, West**  
Vancouver, Inglewood  
Curriculum Centre,  
4 p.m.-6 p.m.

**April 22, 2008**  
**Sunshine Coast Local**  
**Network, location and**  
**time TBA.**

**April 24, 2008**  
**Central/North Okanagan,**  
Kelowna, Hollywood  
Education Centre,  
3:45 p.m.-5:30 p.m.

*To tell us about a healthy  
happening in your  
district, or for more  
information, please  
contact:*

**Healthy Schools Unit**  
**Office: 250-356-6055**

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/hsnetwork/>

## School Connectedness

A sense of school connectedness (a student's feeling of closeness to school personnel and the school environment<sup>1</sup>), effective communication, and perceptions of adult caring have been shown to be related to a wide range of mental health outcomes for students.

Schools with a climate of confidence and respect among principals, staff, pupils and parents tend to have fewer negative characteristics such as general anxiety, school anxiety and emotional and attitudinal issues.<sup>2</sup>

Providing opportunities for student participation and responsibility, where there are also supportive structures for teachers, has shown to be associated with student progress.<sup>3</sup>

An important responsibility of a health-promoting and child-friendly school is to create an environment for emotional and social well-being. A positive school environment can promote healthy social and emotional development during childhood.



By providing a healthy physical environment as well, schools are being consistent with the World Health Organization's definition of health, "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

The extent to which our schools' provide a safe and supportive environment for all plays a significant role in determining whether the next generation is educated and healthy in mind, body and spirit.<sup>4</sup>



The World Health Organization, through its Global School Healthy Initiative, promotes the concept of a Health-Promoting School. A Health-Promoting school is characterized as a school that is constantly strengthening its capacity as a healthy setting for living, learning and working. It does this by:

- ✓ fostering health and learning with all the measures at its disposal;
- ✓ engaging health and education officials, teachers, students, parents, health providers and community leaders in efforts to make the school a healthy place;
- ✓ striving to provide a healthy environment, school health education and school health services along with school/community projects and outreach, health promotion programs for staff, nutrition and food safety programs, opportunities for physical education and recreation, and programs for counselling, social support, and mental health promotion;
- ✓ implementing policies and practices that respect an individual's well-being and dignity, providing multiple opportunities for success, and acknowledging good efforts and intentions as well as personal achievements; and
- ✓ striving to improve the health of school personnel, families and community members as well as students.

### Why is the emotional and social environment of a school important?

The advantages of a positive school environment include greater well-being and happiness, an improved sense of belonging and better quality of life for those engaged with the organization, and:

- can result in better levels of academic achievement;
- can alter some of the more negative aspects of school life by reducing bullying and harassment, injury, truancy, and absenteeism;
- has the potential to diminish stereotyping and prejudice, fear, anxiety, depression and loss of motivation;
- can enhance feelings of well-being during childhood and provide sound foundations for positive health in later adolescence and adulthood; and
- can encourage students to respect their surroundings.

#### How can we assess school connectedness in our school?

The BC Ministries of Education and Health have established the BC Healthy Schools Assessment Tool. Use of this tool enables schools to systematically assess they are doing with respect to the key components of a Healthy School setting. School connectedness is assessed within **Area 2: School Environment**.

Once the assessment is completed, a school will have identified and selected priority areas of focus, taking a multi-factorial approach to making improvements in the inter-related areas of teaching and learning, school environment and partnerships

#### The BC Healthy Schools Assessment Tool:

- ✓ confirms the value of existing health-promoting policies and practices;
- ✓ stimulates discussion within and between school members and other partners; and
- ✓ supports schools in their ongoing efforts to provide an environment and culture that promotes healthy living and fostering students' ability to reach their full potential.

To view the BC Healthy Schools Assessment Tool, click on

[http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/hsnetwork/hsn\\_assessment\\_tool.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/hsnetwork/hsn_assessment_tool.pdf)

---

<sup>1</sup> Bonny AE, Britto MT, Kolstermann BK, Hornung RW, Slap GB. School connectedness: identifying adolescents at risk. *Pediatrics* 2000 Nov; 106(5): 1017-21.

<sup>2</sup> Havlinova, M, Schneidrova, D. *Stress characteristics in schoolchildren related to different educational strategies and school climates.*

<sup>3</sup> WHO. *Creating an Environment for Emotional and Social Well-Being, WHO Information Series on School Health, Document 10, World Health Organization, 2003.*

<sup>4</sup> WHO. *Creating an Environment for Emotional and Social Well-Being, WHO Information Series on School Health, Document 10, World Health Organization, 2003.*

---

## CONNECT FOR SUCCESS!

### Building School Connectedness at Mount Prevost Middle School, SD #79 – Healthy Schools Network Project 07/08 Assessment Element #2

Healthy schools foster a caring, nurturing, and respectful environment, giving students a feeling of connection to their school and community. They engage students in discussing topics such as responsible decision-making, leadership and caring for others, and the skills needed to deal with bullying, intimidation, and harassment. Healthy schools ensure that their students know how and where to ask for the help they need, academically, socially, and emotionally.

At Mount Prevost Middle School, we realize that students who are connected to their school are more successful. But do students know what it means to connect? Do they know how to connect? Do they understand that connectedness promotes success? Our project this year focuses on building that understanding. Using Strategy #2: Developing and Sharing Criteria for Success, we will focus on developing an understanding of the criteria for connecting.

Our first step in building connectedness this year was to establish Advisory representatives. Our leadership students collaborated to establish criteria for classroom representation and each Advisory voted on a student who would speak on their behalf at weekly meetings to discuss issues and to promote school activities. With the help of Advisory representatives, we conducted a survey to establish baseline data about how connected our students feel to their school.

Each Advisory, under the direction of their representative, has taken on the job of discussing and recording problems and possible solutions with the goal of improving student understanding of how and where to get the help they need. These discussions will become the essence of a board game, CONNECT for SUCCESS! that focuses on middle school issues. The game board includes classrooms and locations of significance in the school, such as the counseling office or the student development center. As students advance around the game board, they land on rooms and are required to draw cards that highlight concerns/solutions/resources that occur in those areas. Leadership students are working to provide rules and game moves that will motivate students to want to play.

At the end of the year, we will again ask students how connected they feel to their school. Hopefully, they will have an improved understanding of the benefits to connecting. Our project is long-term and aims to empower students with the skills to connect for success.

For more information, contact Denise Aucoin, vice-principal, at [daucoin@sd79.bc.ca](mailto:daucoin@sd79.bc.ca).

## School Connectedness Resources

**World Health Organization (WHO) Resources for School Health -**

[www.who.int/school\\_youth\\_health/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/school_youth_health/en/index.html)

**Joint Consortium for School Health -**

<http://jcsch-cces.ca>

JCSH Quick Scan of Activities and Resources in Resilience/Positive Asset-Based Social Development in Canadian Schools

**Journal of School Health. September 2004, Volume 74, No.7 -**

[www.jhsph.edu/wingspread/Septemberissue.pdf](http://www.jhsph.edu/wingspread/Septemberissue.pdf)

This issue addresses School Connectedness – Strengthening Health and Education Outcomes for Teenagers – as well as publishing the **Wingspread Declaration on School Connections 2003**, a seminal document by an interdisciplinary group of educators.

**Canadian Asset Building Network -**

[www.csgv.ca/counselor/assets/AssetBasedChampions.pdf](http://www.csgv.ca/counselor/assets/AssetBasedChampions.pdf)

Surveys conducted since 1989 with over two million youth in Canada and the US show that exposure to a high number of the developmental assets results in a more positive and successful development, while exposures to fewer assets increases the possibility of engaging in risky behaviours.

## Healthy Happenings

### *School District #5 Southeast Kootenay*

Some **great news** from Isabella Dicken Elementary School in Fernie... we are the recipients of a \$35,000 grant from the Community Health Promotion Fund through ActNow BC. The grant will be used to target our Healthy Schools goal, focusing on activities, healthy eating, increasing knowledge, and sustainable programs.

We 'kicked off' with a school-wide healthy breakfast which was followed by a 15 minute 'Energy Blast' of aerobic activity. We are funding our own Fruit & Vegetable Program (we were not selected for the provincial one), Fresh Fruit Fridays, as well as a series of healthy hot lunches.

Our grant will cover the expenses of a number of activities for students who will participate in activities including swimming lessons, downhill skiing, snowshoeing and a Classroom Outdoors program.

In terms of leaving a legacy, the program will fund the purchase of a set of school snowshoes (we have snow November to March) and the building of a traversing climbing wall on the back of our stage, which will be 8' x 32' feet long and will provide an additional location



*Isabella Dicken Elementary students enjoy a school-wide healthy breakfast prior to a 15 minute "Energy Blast" of aerobic activity.*

for Daily Physical Activity as well as numerous cross-curricular opportunities.

Other funded opportunities include sessions with dietitians and fitness trainers, the creation of healthy recipe cook-books for all students, a garden plot in Fernie's Eco Garden where students will experience the thrill of growing, harvesting, and eating their own food, and further acquisition of equipment such as 'Cup Stacking' - an activity that enhances brain function and co-ordination skills.

For more information, contact Dawn Voysey, vice-principal, at [dawn.voysey@sd5.bc.ca](mailto:dawn.voysey@sd5.bc.ca).

### *School District #23 South Okanagan*

#### **Play first; eat later.**

Students at South Kelowna Elementary School can't wait to play after morning classes so Principal James Minkus and his teachers let them! The school adopted a reverse lunch schedule on January 7 and the reaction to date has been positive.

The Grade 1-6 students head outside for 30 minutes of play when the bell rings at 11 a.m., then at 11:30, head back inside to eat their lunches.

"The kids are very motivated to get outside and play. They've had 2½ hours of pretty sustained learning time. They had a snack in the morning, but they are anxious to get out there," said Mr. Minkus.

"After a week or so, we've noticed quite a bit of positive effect. It's a calmer eating environment when they come back in; they are more focused on eating. We've found their manners are better; they are hungrier because they have gone out and played; they've burned off some

energy; they've had that fresh air. As well, there is a lot less food waste in the garbage cans."

"Our No. 1 goal in this school is to be a comprehensive, healthy school, so we have a number of strategies to promote not just physical health, but the entire child. We think that a healthy kid is going to be a better learner," he said.

"The big one I've noticed is fewer discipline problems. Generally, most discipline problems happen in the last 15 minutes of lunch hour, but now, they [students] don't have idle hands."

Parents have commented that their children are coming home in a better mood, while the reaction from teachers has been "overwhelmingly positive". The improved quality of the instructional time in the afternoon more than made up for any minutes lost with a later eating time.

James Minkus acknowledges that the process for making the change needs to involve all partners, especially noon hour supervisors, teachers and the PAC.

For more information, contact James Minkus, principal, at [jminkus@sd23.bc.ca](mailto:jminkus@sd23.bc.ca).

*Acknowledgements to:*

- J.P. Squire, *The Daily Courier (Kelowna)*, 18-Jan-2008
- Antifaef P, Porowski J. *Thinking Outside the Lunchbox: Analyzing the Effects of the Reverse Lunch Schedule on Student Nutrition and Performance*. Unpublished paper, Faculty of Education, UBC.

**February 27<sup>th</sup> proclaimed as Anti-Bullying Day in B.C.**

[http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news\\_releases\\_2005-2009/2008OTP0041-000246.htm](http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2005-2009/2008OTP0041-000246.htm).

## SCHOOL HEALTH RESOURCE UPDATES

### Energize Me!

This student friendly quick reference criteria, in brochure form, summarizing the Food and Beverage Guidelines in B.C., developed for schools by the Community Nutritionists in the province, is being used directly with students by some HS Network schools. Schools report that this resource helps students communicate with parents about making healthier school lunches.

Go to

<http://dashbc.org/upload/Energize%20Me%2007.doc>



## DID YOU KNOW?

According to the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute's Canadian Physical Activity Levels Among Youth (CAN PLAY), children and youth living in B.C. take an average of roughly 12,100 daily steps. This amount is greater than those taken by an average Canadian child.

How many steps are sufficient? No definitive answer has yet been determined; however, guidelines have been suggested.

One study suggests that accumulating 12,000 daily steps for girls and 15,000 steps for boys are associated with having a healthy body mass index (BMI)<sup>1</sup>. Using these criteria, 63% of B.C.'s children and youth aged 5 – 19 do not accumulate enough daily steps. Children in B.C. are more likely to meet these criteria compared to children nation-wide.

In B.C., there are no significant differences between girls and boys overall in the number of steps taken daily. Children who do not participate in organized sport and physical activity are also more likely to not meet the BMI-referenced criteria.

Physical activity can be incorporated into all aspects of children's lives by:

- providing opportunities for organized sport and physical activity;
- increasing time spent in unstructured and unorganized play;
- providing active time during recess and lunch: CIRA Ontario has provided ideas on how to successfully implement a year round program [<http://www.mohawkcollege.ca/external/cira/template/RecessRevival.pdf>];
- promoting active commuting: A 15 minute walk to and from school has the potential to add 15,000 steps to children's activity over a typical week (Go for Green has a number of initiatives to promote active and safe routes to school [<http://www.goforgreen.ca/asrts>]); and
- decreasing screen and sedentary time resources have been developed to reduce TV time, allowing more time for active pursuits [[www.tvturnoff.org](http://www.tvturnoff.org)] and [[www.lin.ca/resource/html/ac950.pdf](http://www.lin.ca/resource/html/ac950.pdf)].

The KIDS CAN PLAY article can be found at: [http://www.cflri.ca/eng/statistics/surveys/documents/kidsCANPLAY\\_bc\\_b1.10.pdf](http://www.cflri.ca/eng/statistics/surveys/documents/kidsCANPLAY_bc_b1.10.pdf).

<sup>1</sup> Tudor-Locke C, Pangrazi RP, Corbin CB, Rutherford, WJ, Vincent SD, Raustorp A, Tomson LM, & Cuddihy TF. (2004). BMI-referenced standards for recommended pedometer determined steps/day in children. *Preventive Medicine*: 38(6); 847-864.