

HEALTHY SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

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In This Issue

Healthy Schools News

DASH BC Update

- iWalk 2011
- Join the Healthy Schools Network!
- NEW! Action Schools! BC Complimentary Support Services for 2011-2012

Helpful Resources

- Health Literacy - Just Say KNOW!
- Walk to Win with Healthy Families BC
- BC Agriculture in the Classroom

Kathy's Corner: Comprehensive School Health in Action

Healthy Schools News

The 2011 – 2012 school year has started, and that means another year full of potential for building on the great Healthy Schools initiatives happening across BC. A **healthy school** is a place where students have many opportunities – in the classroom, and in every aspect of their school experience – to foster their healthy physical, mental, social and intellectual development. That includes such things as:

- **engaging in regular physical activity, learning about different types of activities, and understanding the importance of physical activity to health and learning;**
- **understanding basic nutrition and learning how to make healthy food choices;**
- **feeling a sense of belonging and connectedness to school; and**
- **having a safe physical environment in which to learn and play.**

During the 2010 – 2011 school year, BC schools made great strides in making their school communities healthier places to learn, work and play. For instance, schools involved in the [Healthy Schools Network](#) addressed a myriad of health priorities by thoughtfully implementing healthy schools initiatives throughout the school year, and linking their actions to learning by using the [Healthy Living Performance Standards](#) (HLPS). The HLPS are a resource that schools and families can use to focus and monitor their efforts to enhance health knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours among students while providing a foundation for student achievement in general.

A couple of key focus areas for a number of schools last year were school connectedness



and student leadership. In addressing these key areas, HSN schools were actively incorporating health into all aspects of their school and learning, acknowledging that health is more than just the absence of illness. Here are some comments schools shared through their year-end reports:

"Providing leadership opportunities not only enhanced the leadership students' connectedness to the school, it also created a sense of community in having the older kids work with the younger kids. As a result we had very few office referrals compared to past years."

"The leadership students helped to improve student connectedness by helping primary students to care for others, solve problems peacefully, learn when to seek help, and work towards becoming confident and independent on the playground."

These reports from schools are important to share, especially considering a recent [report](#) by the [McCreary Centre Society](#) in which youth consistently expressed that "to achieve positive mental health they needed access to supportive adults and peer mentors, as well as opportunities to engage in activities that promoted their physical health." To learn more about how schools in BC are embracing school health holistically, check out more Healthy Schools Network year-end reports [here](#).

DASH BC Update

iWalk 2011 - Less Than One Month Away

Over 200 schools with 61 000 students across British Columbia are getting set to participate in International Walk to School Week October 3-7, 2011 to promote and celebrate the many benefits of walking.

If you have not already registered your school for iWalk, it's not too late! The registration deadline has been extended so schools can still register online until September 12 and ensure they receive their resource packages. Schools can register after the deadline but supplies may be limited. Click [here](#) to register now.



École Pauline Johnson students volunteered as traffic monitors during last year's International Walk to School Week.



Jay Morrison at Alwin Elementary on International Walk to School Day on October 6th, 2010.

Registered schools will receive their packages in September. Packages will include stickers, posters and other resources.

For those schools who registered before June 30, in addition to your iWalk resource package, you will be receiving an iWalk banner that you can use to promote your walking events year round.

Just a reminder that supplies are limited, and packages will be mailed out as registrations are received. Register now to ensure you get everything you need for your school.

Be sure to check www.dashbc.ca for the latest on iWalk.

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. Using innovative evidence gathering and inquiry-based learning frameworks, HSN schools put the CSH approach into practice. Interested in becoming a member or learning more? [Contact us](#) today!



Healthy Schools Network members share their experiences through posterboards and get together at the end of every year.

NEW! Action Schools! BC Complimentary Support Services for 2011-2012

Click [here](#) for a list of Action Schools! BC's complimentary support services for the 2011-2012 school year. Note the new additions: a combined Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Workshop for Full Day K; a Classroom Action Healthy Eating Workshop with an enhanced focus on vegetable and fruit consumption, sweetened beverage reduction, sodium reduction, and media awareness; Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools Support; Healthy Eating Student Leadership training; and the Healthy Living Day with a Trainer. Please contact the Action Schools! BC Support Team at info@actionschoolsbcc.ca or 1-800-565-7727 with any questions.



Helpful Resources

Health Literacy—Just Say KNOW!

Health literacy is the knowledge and skills we need to maximize our health within our environment. In other words, it is our competence to survive and thrive in the world, a world where drug use happens to be common (i.e., 89% of individuals over the age of 15 have used alcohol, and just under half have tried cannabis).

As health education—and therefore substance use education—evolves, more emphasis is being placed on health literacy. Substance use education in schools, for example, is increasingly aimed at helping young people develop the understanding, skills and confidence they need to make choices about alcohol and other drugs. This education will, in turn, maximize both individual and community well-being.

Understanding and managing the factors that impact drug use and its consequences are key aspects of health literacy. Some of these factors relate to individual behaviour choices, but many are social or environmental and are therefore only minimally modifiable at the individual level.

For these reasons, health literacy programs should not be restricted to capacity for making individual lifestyle choices. They should also incorporate advocacy and the empowerment of both individuals and communities. A good example of advocacy is youth-led school initiatives aimed at strengthening healthy relationships and school connectedness.

Authors: Cindy Andrew and Dan Reist, Centre for Addictions Research of BC, University of Victoria. The Centre's work includes iMinds, a learning resource for grades 6-10 that is designed to increase health literacy. For more, see www.carbc.ca/HelpingSchools.aspx or contact Cindy at ciandrew@uvic.ca.

Walk to Win With Healthy Families BC

Want to win great prizes for you and your community by being more active with your family and friends? Then take the Healthy Families BC Walking Challenge!

Olympic gold medallist Maëlle Ricker and the Minister of Health, Michael de Jong, kicked off a six-week walking

challenge that runs until Monday, September 19. British Columbians are encouraged to share their favourite walks through storytelling, photos and videos. The more posts you enter, the more chances you have to win great prizes like bicycles, pedometers or the grand prize of one of six family weekend getaways.

Maëlle spoke about her passion for the outdoors during the launch event in Coal Harbour. "I love being outside with my family and friends, hiking in Garibaldi Park or cruising with my dog along the ocean. There are so many great places to walk in BC and I look forward to hearing about them all during this Healthy Families BC Walking Challenge."

You can help your community win big too! Weekly prizes will be awarded to communities across BC. At the end of the contest, the five communities with the most submissions in each population size range will each receive \$10 000 to build or upgrade trails. One of the five winning communities will be randomly drawn to receive an additional \$50 000.

So what are you waiting for, BC? With walking, everyone WINS! Share your story today on our website at www.healthyfamiliesbcwalkingchallenge.ca.

BC Agriculture in the Classroom

BC fruit and vegetable growers are gearing up to provide healthy snacks to the 1270 schools throughout BC enrolled in the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program. The year will start off with blueberries, plums and late peaches. The 409 000 students taking part in the program will receive the yummy treats 13 times over the school year.

This year the program will include First Nations Schools. Some are in very remote regions of the province but thanks to the program's partners – Saputo BC, the Overwaitea Food Group as well as many volunteers – the product will be delivered.

The BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation is responsible for the successful delivery of the program, including a new program website, at www.aitc.ca/bc. The program is presented to BC K-12 public and First Nations schools as part of Healthy Families BC with funding from the BC Ministry of Health.

Kathy's Corner: *Comprehensive School Health in Action*

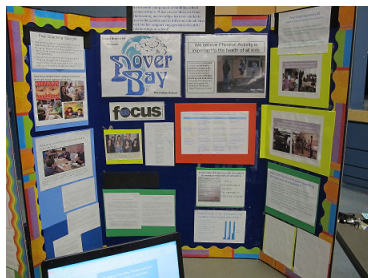
Students, educators, families and community members – welcome to another school year! It's been a busy summer here at DASH as we prepare for the year ahead, and work towards ensuring that every child in BC is part of a health promoting school community.



I believe that school children must participate fully in educational activities to achieve their potential. To do this best, they need to be healthy, attentive and emotionally secure. That's why helping schools become healthier places to learn, work and play has always been so important to me and to the work of DASH.

Yet, becoming a Healthy School doesn't just happen overnight. It requires school communities to work collaboratively to approach health in a coordinated, comprehensive, and holistic way. And it involves sharing stories – sharing successes, challenges, accomplishments and lessons learned along the way.

That's why I'm so excited to share Dover Bay Secondary's story with you. As a member of the Healthy Schools Network for the past few years, Dover Bay Secondary in Nanaimo, BC has been focusing their school inquiry attention on fostering school connectedness, mainly through peer-to-peer mentorship. Their inquiry focus in 2010 - 2011 was to promote healthy relationships through providing opportunities for vulnerable learners in Grades 9-12 to get involved in peer coaching of Grade 4/5 students at Randerson Ridge Elementary, their partner school.



The first part of the inquiry project focused on understanding the social injustices toward the Aboriginal people of the past, while the second part required students to research and present aspects of physical activity to their peers. The Comprehensive School Health pillar, teaching and learning, was a big part of this inquiry question. As Dover Bay learners were taught the importance of leadership through peer coaching, a Community of Learners code of conduct was established as a foundation for teaching and learning. The 4 C's – Commitment, Control, Cooperation and Communication – helped build a community of learners who then became successful peer coaches at Randerson Ridge Elementary. The students were able to self-identify as peer coaches and began to see how they could contribute to the learning of others and themselves.

Clearly, the Healthy Schools Team at Dover Bay Secondary is making great strides toward building healthy relationships at their school, and, in so doing, building a foundation for improving student engagement and ownership of learning. Inspiring!

We all have an investment in the health and well-being of our youth, so I look forward to sharing and hearing more stories from BC schools this year.

Kathy Cassels
Executive Director, DASH BC

In The Next Issue

- Celebrating iWalk 2011
- What is Comprehensive School Health?
- Other Helpful Resources



Ministry of
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The Healthy Schools Newsletter is distributed monthly throughout the school year. This is the first newsletter of the 2011/2012 school year. Please visit www.healthyschoolsnetwork.org for newsletter dates and submission deadlines for the 2011/2012 school year.