

# HEALTHY SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

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## Healthy Schools News

### What is Comprehensive School Health?

Comprehensive School Health (CSH) is an internationally recognized framework for supporting improvements in students' educational outcomes while addressing school health in a planned, integrated and holistic way.

It helps educators, health practitioners, school staff, students and others work together to create an environment that makes their school the best place possible to learn, work and play. It is important to recognize that CSH does not require more work; it is just a way of working that becomes everyday practice.

#### Comprehensive School Health:

- recognizes that healthy young people learn better and achieve more;
- acknowledges that schools can directly influence students' health and behaviour;
- encourages healthy lifestyle choices, and promotes students' health and well-being;
- incorporates health into all aspects of school and learning, acknowledging that health is more than just the absence of illness;
- links health and education issues and systems; and,
- needs the participation and support of families and the community at large.



Students from Maple Ridge Elementary participate in International Walk to School Week. Click [here](#) for more on iWalk!

### The Four Pillars of CSH

CSH extends far beyond what happens in the classroom. It encompasses the whole school environment with actions in four distinct but inter-related areas:

**Social and physical environment** – For example, healthy schools do not tolerate harassment or bullying, and pay close attention to ensuring school facilities and activities are safe.

**Teaching and learning** – This includes both formal instruction, and informal learning, such as having teachers model healthy behaviours for students.

**Healthy school policy** – This can encompass everything from guidelines for food sales and daily physical activity (DPA) to rules regarding conduct to frameworks for engaging community partners.

**Partnerships and services** – These link the school to the broader community, enhancing the range of supports and opportunities available to students, parents, educators and others.

## DASH BC Update

### iWalk Day - October 5, 2011

International Walk to School (iWalk) Day took place on October 5th and more than 220 schools from 42 school districts celebrated the many benefits of walking!

In conjunction with the many activities taking place around the province, BC Olympians made visits to participating iWalk schools to talk to students about the advantages of healthy living. Swimmer Annamay Pierse visited Vancouver's Dickens Elementary, while track and field athlete Robert Esmie was at Georges Vanier Elementary in Vancouver. Julia Murray, Olympian in ski cross, spoke to students at North Vancouver's Blueridge Elementary while rower Dave Calder visited Victoria's Braefoot Elementary. Students enjoyed hearing these Olympians speak and were excited to ask questions about their experiences!



Ski Cross Olympian Julia Murray stands in front of the iWalk banner at Blueridge Elementary in North Vancouver.

We would love to hear about your iWalk events! Tell us about what your school did by sending photos, videos and stories to [iwalk@dashbc.org](mailto:iwalk@dashbc.org).

### Action Schools! BC Student Leadership Training

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. New for the 2011-2012 school year, Healthy Eating Student Leadership Workshops teach a select group of student leaders in your school to lead 5 healthy eating stations. Also available, Indoor and Outdoor Student Leadership Training sessions have become increasingly popular as an active and fun way to socialize Kindergarten students during recess or lunch time. Click [here](#) for more information or contact the Action Schools! BC Support Team at 1-800-565-7727 or at [info@actionschoolsbc.ca](mailto:info@actionschoolsbc.ca) to book a workshop.



## Helpful Resources

### BC Agriculture in the Classroom - Take a Bite of BC

As Chef Instructors and culinary arts students head back to the kitchen this school year, they are also getting into the fall food mindset with the help of BC Agriculture in the Classroom's program [Take a Bite of BC \(TABOBC\)](#).

The TABOBC program, partnering with local suppliers, donates fresh, BC grown product to [participating school teaching kitchens](#) at no cost to schools over a four month period. There are over 30 supplier and/or commodity groups and associations that support and donate to this program. With these generous product donations, Chef Instructors have the opportunity to feature locally grown products in their secondary school teaching kitchens. Students gain experience working with fresh products and begin to develop an appreciation for farmers in their community as they connect with the foods that are grown around them and learn about the benefits of eating healthy, fresh and local.

This year, TABOBC introduced Chef Instructor Trevor Randle of Maple Ridge Secondary as the program's celebrity chef. Chef Randle, along with one of his students, recently demonstrated how to prepare tasty dishes using fresh, local ingredients at events in Delta and Langley, BC. Check out their mouth-watering recipes [here](#).

### Happy 15th Anniversary HeartSmart Kids™



Celebrate HeartSmart Kids™ 15th year anniversary with the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada by joining over 8,000 HeartSmart Kids™ certified educators in BC!

HeartSmart Kids™ provides educators with resources to teach youth about eating healthy foods, living a physically active life, and living smoke-free. This is fundamental to providing students with the awareness and attitudes needed to shape a lifetime of healthy living!

Teachers who complete the free online workshop will receive FREE classroom resources such as lesson plans, a class set of student magazines and classroom posters. NEW this year, the grade 4-6 program is now offered in FRENCH!

The Heart and Stroke Foundation also offers other great resources for students. The Active Fun Kit for Families is a great way to get your students to engage in physical activity with their family and friends. Sip Smart! BC™ will make them aware of the benefits of making healthy beverage choices, and Pumped™ magazine is packed with games and interesting facts offering kids a fun way to learn about healthy lifestyles!

For more information:

Visit: [www.heartandstroke.bc.ca/heartsmartkids](http://www.heartandstroke.bc.ca/heartsmartkids)

Call: 1-888-473-4636 ext. 364

Email: [healthpromotion@hsf.bc.ca](mailto:healthpromotion@hsf.bc.ca)



## The WITS Programs

The WITS Programs provide free online resources to help schools and communities prevent peer victimization and bullying.

The made-in-BC WITS Programs bring together schools, families, children, and communities to create responsive environments that support schools, classrooms, communities and families in creating safe and happy places for children to learn and grow. The WITS Primary Program, directed at children in Kindergarten to Grade 3, encourages children to make safe and positive choices when faced with peer conflict. The WITS acronym - **W**alk away, **I**gnore, **T**alk it out, and **S**eek help - provides a common language so children and adults can talk about and respond to peer victimization. The WITS Leadership Program (WITS LEADS) for Grades 4 to 6 students specifically targets relational victimization (e.g. gossiping, rumour spreading, social exclusion). LEADS stands for **L**ook and listen, **E**xplore points of view, **A**ct, **D**id it work? and **S**eek help.

To help elementary school educators, parents, and community leaders implement the evidenced-based WITS programs, all training modules and resources can now be accessed for free at [www.witsprogram.ca](http://www.witsprogram.ca). The programs are literature-based and include a list of [children's books](#) that integrate WITS messages with curriculum guidelines in language arts, health, social studies or social responsibility. These free resources include a teacher accreditation program, training programs for community leaders, lesson plans and resource guides. Check them out today!

## Is It OK for Kids to Have Diet Pop Instead of Sugary Drinks?



Drinks sweetened with artificial sweeteners are not considered healthy alternatives to sugary drinks for school-age children. Just like sugary drinks, artificially sweetened drinks get children used to sweet-tasting, non-nutritious items. They provide none of the nutrients that a child's growing body needs to be healthy and strong, and can bump healthy foods and drinks out of the child's diet.

Sip Smart! BC teaches children from Grades 4 to 6 what they need to know to make healthy drink choices. All teaching resources are available for FREE download. Visit [www.bcpeds.ca/sipsmart/](http://www.bcpeds.ca/sipsmart/) for more information. Click [here](#) to find information on ordering free posters and drink cut-outs.

Sip Smart! BC is an initiative of the BC Pediatric Society and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon with funding from ActNow BC, a provincial government initiative through the British Columbia Healthy Living Alliance (BCHLA). Sip Smart! BC's resources are among the best practices used by Action Schools! BC.

## Bring Healthy Buddies™ to Your School!

Healthy Buddies™ is a successful, peer-led program that empowers elementary school children to live healthier lives, giving them knowledge and encouraging positive attitudes towards three components of health: physical activity, nutrition, and mental health.

Healthy Buddies™ recently received a generous donation from 130 BC Ferries employees through the North Coast Summer Wellness Challenge, making it possible to offer the program to one BC school for free! Interested? Contact Evett Uy at 604-875-2345 ext. 5120 or [eu3@cw.bc.ca](mailto:eu3@cw.bc.ca). The successful school will be chosen from among applications submitted. For more information, visit [www.healthybuddies.ca](http://www.healthybuddies.ca).

## Kathy's Corner:

### Comprehensive School Health in Action

Happy International Walk to School (iWalk) Month! Congratulations to the over 220 schools in BC that participated in the iWalk program this year (check out the iWalk article on [page two!](#)).



Walking to school (or work) can be a healthy way to begin the day. Not only does it start the day off with physical activity, but it has the potential to be a social activity that students, families, educators and others can do together.

To celebrate iWalk month, I'm happy to share the learning that South Nelson Elementary school in Nelson, BC underwent by focussing their 2010 – 2011 Healthy Schools Network inquiry question around walking to school.

With steep and narrow roads, no parking lot, and busy city streets, school traffic around South Nelson Elementary can become quite congested and unsafe. On top of the concerns regarding road and safety traffic around the school, the Healthy Schools Team at South Nelson noticed that, while most students live within close proximity to the school, many students are dropped off and picked up by car. In an attempt to ease traffic congestion and promote a healthy alternative to driving to school, South Nelson decided to spend last school year focussing on the following health inquiry question: Will the implementation of the W.O.W. (Walking or Wheeling on Wednesdays) initiative increase students' understanding of the benefits of regular physical activity for themselves and others as measured by the Healthy Living Performance Standards?

By focussing on walking and wheeling throughout the entire school year, South Nelson Elementary promoted not only the physical and safety benefits of the initiative, but the social side as well. The momentum of adopting the W.O.W. program was kept alive by regular events and

learning opportunities such as weekly announcements, weekly draw prizes, a Fashion Parade Walk to School, and Chalk Your Walk (sidewalk chalk decorating), amongst many others. The links between walking and wheeling to school and the benefits of regular physical activity were promoted through classroom learning as well as through the leadership of Grade 5 W.O.W. student ambassadors, who regularly went to each classroom in the school to promote walking and wheeling as a healthy personal choice.

As a result of their healthy inquiry, South Nelson Elementary reported a marked increase in students' understanding of the benefits of physical activity, as well as a stronger sense of school connectedness. As mentioned in South Nelson's year end report: "Students were meeting up outside the school with children from other grades who shared their walking route. Parents were meeting parents of children from other grades whom they may not otherwise cross paths with."

What's so amazing about this inquiry is that it demonstrates how a small, focussed change can impact the overall health and well-being of the whole school community.

Interested in hearing more Healthy Schools stories? Check out past and current [Healthy Schools Year End Reports](#).



Kathy Cassels  
Executive Director, DASH BC

### In The Next Issue

- **Introducing the Healthy Schools BC online portal**
- **Healthy Schools and Student Engagement**
- **Other Helpful Resources**



**Healthy Schools Network**  
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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.