

HEALTHY SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

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Healthy Schools News

Physical Activity and Student Achievement



Physical activity is good for students. Most people would readily agree that sports, physical education, and being active in general all have a positive impact on students' physical health and development. Better yet, a growing body of literature suggests that the benefits of being active extend beyond that to mental health outcomes, including improved health-related quality of life and better mood states.

Research also suggests that there is a positive link between physical activity and academic achievement. The literature indicates that students who exercise frequently are almost twice as likely to report satisfaction with their learning compared with those who do not exercise. Furthermore, regular participation in sports and other activities may improve children's behaviour in the classroom. Improved behaviour in the classroom will increase the likelihood for students to experience enhanced concentration on the academic content of their lessons, which in turn, can lead to improved academic performance. It is also thought that physical activity has a direct impact on education and learning by enhancing brain function and cognition.

Here in BC, this positive relationship is supported by the results of the 2009/10 School Satisfaction Survey. This survey addressed a variety of topics including the relationship between self-reported physical activity and achievement. The findings showed that students reporting higher levels of physical activity were also more likely to report significantly higher levels of academic achievement.

Are you interested in incorporating more physical activity into the classroom? If so, there are several great resources available to assist you. [Action Schools! BC](#) has numerous resources to help implement daily physical activity in all areas of the school and throughout the day, including having students move around each time the bell rings!

For more information on the link between physical activity and student achievement, please visit the [research](#) section of the DASH BC website, where you'll find a variety of resources examining the relationship between health and learning. We hope the findings will get you excited about creating healthy schools in your community!

Just a reminder, as of February 1st, DASH BC has moved offices! The new DASH BC mailing address is:

**1055 - 409 Granville Street
Vancouver, BC
V6C 1T2**

Please don't forget to update your address books if you haven't already done so. We can still be reached at the same number:

604-681-0600

DASH BC Update

Comprehensive School Health In a Nutshell

Want to know more about Comprehensive School Health (CSH) but don't know where to start? DASH BC has created a short and simple video to explain CSH and how this holistic approach can be implemented in the school setting.



Endorsed by the World Health Organization, CSH is an internationally recognized framework that can help you and your school become healthier in a way that doesn't require more work, but instead introduces a new way of working that will become a part of everyday practice.

[Click here](#) to view the CSH video and learn how to get started on making your school healthier! Please share the video with others who may be interested in learning about CSH.

New DPA Pages! Snowy Day Physical Activities

Need ideas for engaging students in Daily Physical Activity (DPA) during snowy winter days? [Click here](#) for the newest Action Schools! BC DPA Pages! on Snowy Day Physical Activities. This resource suggests many easy ways to activate students throughout the winter months. This, along with 11 other DPA Pages!, including School-Wide Physical Activities and Classroom Dance, are available for download at www.actionschoolsbc.ca under Quick Links - Support and Resources. Check it out today!



Healthy Schools Network Update

With 2012 underway, members of the Healthy Schools Network are keeping busy implementing their inquiry questions through various health strategies. Over the past few months, HSN members have been thoughtfully developing school inquiry questions to guide their healthy actions throughout the school year. All inquiry questions have now been submitted and we are very excited about what schools are working on! With over 40 schools participating this year, there are a variety of inquiry question topics that each address at least one aspect of the [Healthy Living Performance Standards](#) in addition to school connectedness.

The healthy strategies that schools are using also incorporate the [Comprehensive School Health](#) framework. Below are just a few examples of inquiry questions we have received:

1. "How will peer coaching and mentorship improve students' ability to engage in relationships that contribute to positive engagement with school and community (a.k.a. connectedness)?" - *Smithers Secondary School, SD #54 Bulkley Valley*
2. "Will a morning "breakfast for learning" program support our School Based Team in collecting and connecting with our vulnerable learners prior to them entering into their classrooms?" - *Mount Sentinel Secondary School, SD #8 Kootenay Lakes*
3. "Will increasing the structured DPA program to five days per week from the current three days per week result in academic gains for the Grade 4/5 class?" - *Brechin Elementary, SD#68 Nanaimo*
4. "Can we promote increased community and school connectedness with the building, planting and caring of a garden site (on school grounds), while also promoting healthy activity and nutrition within the school community?" - *Coldstream Elementary School, SD#22 Vernon*

To view a complete list of the 2011-2012 inquiry questions, [click here](#).

Other Resources

HASTE Hub for Action



HASTE, on behalf of Transport Canada, has developed a manual for schools and communities looking to encourage and support students cycling to school. Created with input from programmers and consultants from across Canada, the manual provides a variety of ideas, from programming and skill-building

to infrastructure and policy-making, complete with an excellent list of further resources to help your school jump to action.

The manual, which is available in both English and French, is accessible through the [HASTE](#) website, or [click here](#) for a direct link.

Be Active Every Day

Be Active Every Day is a program from the BC Medical Association to help school age children become more active. Doctors from across BC are coordinating with their local school and challenging kids in all grades to do one hour of physical activity every day for a full month. The challenge starts April 10 and lasts until May 10 – International Move for Health Day.

Physical activity can be anything from walking to and from school, riding bikes, swimming, or playing in the gym or school field. Children will be able to log their activity online, set goals and have the chance to win a prize! To register, visit www.60minkidsclub.com and click on the Be Active Every Day button.

For more information, contact Erica Timmerman by phone at 604-638-8744, [email](#), or [click here](#) to visit the website.

BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation SFVNP Fridge Grants

One of the best ways to eat a cucumber is straight from the fridge so it tastes fresh and crisp. Storing fresh fruits and vegetables properly is key to preserving and maintaining the quality of the produce.

The BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program (SFVNP) offers fridge grants to schools enrolled in the

program to ensure their deliveries stay fresh and ready to eat. The grants are funded by the BC Ministry of Health and sent out by the BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation.

Only schools participating in the SFVNP are eligible to apply, and they must go through an approval process. Once approved, the school can go shopping and purchase a fridge from the supplier of their choice. The school will be reimbursed with a cheque of up to, but no more than, \$1000.

In addition to their delivery of produce, participating schools will receive a handout titled “The Scoop on this Week’s Snack” which gives tips on how the produce ripens and how to store it to get the maximum quality and taste from the produce that week.

Sip Smart! BC Facts

Do your students know the difference between 100% fruit juice and a fruity drink?



- 100% fruit juice contains some of the natural Vitamins (such as Vitamin C) found in fruit.
- Fruity drinks have added sugar along with other additives that are not good for growing children.
- Fruit nectars and juice blends contain added sugar and 50% or more juice content.
- Fruit drinks, cocktails and beverages contain added sugar and less than 50% juice.

Juice labelled “unsweetened 100% fruit juice” is the best choice and one serving of juice per day is enough for kids and adults. Remember, a single serving of 100% fruit juice is just ½ cup (125mL)!

Show this fun [video](#) to educate students about fruit juice and drinks.

Sip Smart! BC is an initiative of the BC Pediatric Society and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon whose resources are some of the best practices used by Action Schools! BC.

Kathy's Corner

Comprehensive School Health in Action

February is a month for the heart, bringing awareness to our physical heart through **Heart Month**, but also bringing awareness to issues of our 'emotional' heart with **Anti-Bullying Month**. Framed through the Comprehensive School Health lens, the **Healthy Relationships** aspect of the Healthy Living Performance Standards is very useful to address bullying issues at school. Furthermore, fostering healthy relationships at school can be done through addressing school connectedness, since the ability for students to feel connected is partially related to their ability to build and maintain positive relationships. I feel



very passionate about school connectedness since it can help reduce bullying, and can even help to increase levels of academic achievement.

Over the years, DASH has seen various strategies aimed at improving school connectedness from Healthy Schools Network members. One school in particular, Ranch Park Elementary School in Coquitlam, BC, has been an HSN member for 3 years and their dedicated team has continuously worked towards improving school connectedness. This month, I'm featuring a guest article from Ranch Park Elementary about their efforts in this area.

Kathy Cassels
Executive Director, DASH BC

Guest Article: Ranch Park Elementary School

Ranch Park Elementary School has 205 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Grade 5. We joined the Healthy Schools Network three years ago. Each year, our inquiry has been focussed on enhancing student connectedness. Our student leadership program has proven to be the most successful avenue. During our first two years in the Network, our school underwent a seismic upgrade. We were faced with many obstacles and inconveniences along the way. As a result, we only offered leadership opportunities to our Grade fives.

This year, with the construction complete, we have expanded our leadership program to include students from both Grades 4 and 5. Approximately 80% of our senior students and six staff members volunteer their time in at least one of our eleven leadership service teams, such as Lunch Monitors, Library Monitors, Playground Leaders, Intramurals Coordinators, Bounce at the Bell Leaders, and Morning Announcements, to name a few. The majority of these leadership responsibilities occur during non-curricular periods of the day. Students in the leadership program are trained using the following resources: PHE

Canada's Leading the Way, and Action Schools! BC's Outdoor Leadership Program. Students meet every six weeks for two hours to review their responsibilities and aspects of leadership, as well as share any concerns or highlights from their service teams. Students rotate through the service teams three times a year.

In addition to our leadership program, Ranch Park offers students in all grades other opportunities to enhance school connectedness. There are many clubs and sports such as Green Planet, Speed Stacks, Running Club, Volleyball and Basketball in which students can get involved. There are also after school programs such as Multisport (Fundamental Movement Skills), Theatrix, Omega Gymnastics, Bricks4Kidz, Rugby, Judo, Mad Science, Art and Scrapbooking facilitated by both members of the school and members of the community.

Ranch Park is a great community and has plenty to offer. We appreciate the opportunity to be part of the Healthy Schools Network.

Submitted by Don Hutchinson, Principal, Ranch Park Elementary School



Ministry of
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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.ca for publication dates and submission deadlines for 2011/2012.