



Alberta Coalition for Healthy School Communities www.achsc.org

ACHSC COMMUNIQUE - JULY '08

It has been a whirlwind year for ACHSC. Beginning with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) approving our funding request in mid January to host a symposium in March, **The Time is Now: Taking Action on School Health**, the pace continues to be brisk as we expand the message of school health across the province. The full evaluation report and the executive summary of the March symposium are now available on the ACHSC web site www.achsc.org. We are continuing to build on the success of that symposium and are pleased, in this communiqué, to report on several positive developments in the area of school health.

Consistent with our primary objective of engaging the decision making levels of education in our symposium, we were delighted to have the Alberta School Board Association (ASBA) co-sponsor our event and the Alberta Teachers Association (ATA) sponsor a nutrition break and have two observers in attendance. We believed that developing relationships with these important organizations was an important step forward in elevating the profile of student health. Little did we suspect how quickly these relationships would start to pay dividends.

In mid May, at the Annual Representative Assembly of the ATA, attended by over 400 teacher delegates from across the province, the following resolution was considered and supported:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alberta Teachers' Association urge the Government of Alberta to establish a high-profile task force on health and learning in schools, with broad participation from groups involved in health and learning and with a mandate to develop a model policy for a comprehensive approach to health and learning in schools and school systems.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

A couple of weeks later, at the spring AGM of the ASBA, the Edmonton Public School Board presented the following emergent motion to all school Boards (63) in the province:

Be it resolved, that The Alberta School Board Association urge the Government of Alberta to establish a high profile task force on health and learning in schools, with broad participation from groups involved in health and learning and with a mandate to develop a model policy for a comprehensive approach to health and learning in schools and school systems."

This motion was approved by a 97% majority!

The executive of ACHSC are very excited about this high level support for school health and believe that both our provincial school board organization and the Alberta Teachers Association (representing some 35,000 teachers), speaking with one voice to the government about the need to take action on school health, will be a message very difficult for this government to ignore.

At the ASBA AGM, on June 3, ACHSC delivered a 2 ½ hour workshop to trustees from around the province. Bill Gordon spoke of emotional/social health within the school environment, Dave delivered his "trustee perspective", Pam spoke about nutrition and physical activity across the province and Dr. Claire LeBlanc, who is quickly becoming a key player in our work, addressed the medical imperative of improving school health. We also gave a brief overview of ACHSC...past, present and future. It was well received.

On July 4, at the request of the ASBA, Dr. LeBlanc and Dave delivered a one hour version of this presentation to a national audience of trustees at the annual conference of the Canadian School Board Association (CSBA) in Regina. It was very satisfying to see school health be part of a national agenda for trustees.

As mentioned in our April communiqué, funding from PHAC has been renewed for the 2008/2009 year. This funding, in advance of our work, is very helpful in allowing us to plan the year without the constant concern about finances. Part of our work plan, submitted to PHAC for this year, includes travelling to regions around the province to stimulate the creation of regional school health action teams that will create a true, provincial momentum for school health. Pam, Dave, Bill and Claire LeBlanc will be meeting before the end of July to discuss the details of how this will take place.

At our last Board meeting in May a subcommittee was struck to review our web site and ensure that it is relevant and current in supporting the work of ACHSC. This review is underway.

On Sept. 19 we are scheduling our next executive/Board meeting, in Edmonton, with videoconferencing available to the province.

As always, if you have any thoughts on any of the matters reported, please feel free to contact Pam or Dave.

Hoping you are all having a wonderful, relaxing summer.

Best wishes,

Dave Colburn

Pam Boyson

Co Chairs

The Alberta Coalition for Healthy School Communities