



Alberta Coalition for Healthy School Communities

ACHSC Communiqué January 2010

November ACHSC Board Meeting

On November 20th, in the Alberta School Board Association (ASBA) boardroom, a meeting of the Alberta Coalition for Healthy School Communities (ACHSC) Board was held. The primary purpose of the meeting was to review governance within our organization. A governance committee had been created in June, 2009 to examine our role, our structure, our format for decision making and Board composition. As a result of several committee meetings this fall a decision was made to broaden the discussion to include the entire Board. Highlights of the meeting included a presentation by Ever Active Schools (EAS) and an ensuing dialogue on the respective roles of EAS and ACHSC; a lengthy discussion on the role of ACHSC; consideration of what a strategically composed Board would look like; and what our future work might look like with uncertain funding. Some progress was made defining our role and composition. Other matters involved interesting exchanges of views but uncertain outcomes that demand further conversation. We believe that periodic reviews of governance are necessary but the outcomes are not always immediate or clear. We are committed to continuing these discussions until our journey of self examination is complete.

Meeting with Provincial Government Representatives

On November 30th, ACHSC was given an audience with the Ministries of Education and Health and Wellness. Dave Colburn, Education Co Chair attended this meeting on behalf of ACHSC. While both Ministers were scheduled to attend, regrettably, Minister Hancock was unable to attend due to illness, sending a representative of Alberta Education in his place. Minister Liepert and his parliamentary assistant, Dr. Raj Sherman, were also in attendance. The objective of this meeting was to inform the Ministers about our organization and work, and to present our vision for school health in the province. The agenda involved providing background information on ACHSC, acknowledging several initiatives supported by the government that support Comprehensive School Health (CSH) and describing in some detail our work over the past two years, including our work plans for the 2009/2010 year. Finally, Dave presented opportunities related to school health for the Ministries to consider. This included the following:

- 1) Renewed funding for the Alberta Healthy School Communities Wellness Fund (due to expire this year)
- 2) Renewal of funding for Health Promotion Coordinators (front line health professionals that support healthy schools)
- 3) Making effective use of school nurses (who are trained in CSH delivery)

- 4) Urging the Ministries to respond positively to the joint request from the ATA and ASBA for a task force on health and learning.
- 5) Urging the Ministry of Education to include a reference to Health in the new School Act.
- 6) Highlighting the importance of providing support for the health of high school students, including implementing DPA at the high school level or, as Manitoba has recently done, making phys ed mandatory for all grades of high school.

We view this as a productive meeting, both in terms of delivering our messages and having the key Ministries in the same room to talk about school health.

Meeting with Chief Medical Officer of Health

On December 18th, our meetings with important stakeholder groups continued when we were given a one hour audience with Dr. Andre Corriveau, Chief Medical Officer of Health for Alberta. In attendance representing ACHSC were Dave Colburn, Education Co Chair and Dr. Claire Leblanc, ACHSC Board member. The meeting focused, once again on a brief backgrounder about ACHSC and discussion around our work this year to create five regional school health teams across the province. Several senior Alberta Health and Wellness staff members were in attendance and the mood was very positive. The value of our regional work and the growing momentum for school health in the province were referenced.

Current Work

Our 2009/2010 work plan continues to be developed. This plan involves the creation of five regional school health teams and hosting a series of seven meetings across the province to examine the state of aboriginal school health. Two of the seven aboriginal meetings have been held and the first of the regional team meetings will be held in Grande Prairie on Jan. 11. Finally, ACHSC is co-sponsoring a conference with Ever Active Schools in the next two weeks. "Shaping the Future" is scheduled for Jan. 14-16 at the Fantasyland Hotel, Edmonton. We will be sponsoring one of the pre conference days that will focus on aboriginal health and feature well known aboriginal speaker, Dr. Martin Brokenleg. We hope to see you there. For further information please visit the conference web site (<http://www.everactive.org/shaping-the-future>)

Very best wishes for a productive and healthy New Year.