

Alberta Coalition for School Health Newsletter

The Alberta Coalition for Healthy School Communities – A New Name – An Expanded Concept

The Alberta Coalition for School health is proposing a name change. The Alberta Coalition for Healthy School Communities (ACHSC) implies by its very name, a network of people and organizations committed to promoting healthy school communities. The Coalition is an affiliate of the Canadian Association for School health. The coalition is currently beginning a process to increase involvement and strength.

MISSION

The mission of ACHSC is to facilitate healthy school communities.

A NEW VISION

This vision will be developed and accomplished by:

- A process to involve partners.
- A Communication strategy for knowledge sharing.
- A recognized provincial effort.
- An enlarged executive.
- Partners who understand, support and are involved.

As we begin a new century, ever-changing societal trends bring new challenges to school communities. As knowledge building institutions they can promote excellence in learning and contribute to healthy societies. The current fast-paced learning environment, along with evolving social pressures, creates many challenges for today's children, youth, families, schools and larger communities. Social interactions are more intricate, health concerns more diverse, and we

require an evolved set of life skills in order to cope, thrive, and support each other.

The strength of interrelationships within schools and between schools and their communities is fundamental to the creation of healthy school communities. There is a great need for schools as learning institutions to facilitate the development of their knowledge building capacities and their contribution to the larger society. It is through active engagement and the linking of the concepts of health and learning that communities can holistically work toward maximizing the learning abilities and well being of children, youth, families, staff and the larger society. A healthy school community according to Allensworth, (1995):

- focuses on key risks to health and learning.
- receives involvement and support from school and community members.
- draws on the thoughts and efforts of many disciplines, community groups and agencies.
- uses multiple programs and components.
- provides staff development programs.
- uses inclusive and broadly based program planning.

Creating healthy school communities is a shared responsibility among teachers, students, parents, health professionals, supportive agencies and community members.

To this end, ACHSC aims to provide leadership and support to promote development, implementation and longevity of a comprehensive approach which encourages the linked concepts of health and learning in Alberta schools. By

creating opportunities to network, advocate, learn and encourage community involvement, we will strengthen our resources, and establish strong interrelationships and integrated goals for our school communities.

Your input is important to this process. If you would like to be involved, please feel free to contact one of the co-chairs, Vel Thompson (780) 413-5685 - ythomps@cha.ab.ca or Susan Hall (403) 298-1167 - susan.hall@cssd.ab.ca.

DID YOU KNOW ?

- Coming soon is an ACHSC website. This will provide an opportunity for interested participants to access information on-line.
- The University of Alberta, Faculty of Education, Department of Secondary Education, is offering a Health Education minor to better prepare teachers to teach health education.
- The University of Alberta is offering a Summer Program. A practical accredited course has been designed to assist teachers plan and implement the new Kindergarten to Grade 9 Health and Physical Education programs. This course will include assessment, communication and evaluation strategies, integration links and resource suggestions. You may attend any portion of the course or if you meet all the 39 hour requirements you will receive 3 (400 or 500 level) university credits. Partial credit is available. Varying levels of understanding, in relation to the new programs, will be accommodated through creative programming and assignments.

Proposed Timeline

July 3, 4, 5 (eight hour days) plus 2 callback sessions-one in the later part of August and October 13th.

EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The Ever Active Schools Program is a new initiative that will contribute to the healthy development of children and youth by fostering social and physical environments that support active living. The Ever Active Schools Program

promotes healthy, fun participation in physical activity.

The program will be membership based and will encourage, identify and recognise schools that value and promote physical activity opportunities through initiatives that affect the entire school community. Schools will be provided resources, assessment tools, and tracking mechanisms to reflect upon current practices and implement individualized action plans.

The program is to be implemented over a three year period beginning in the 2000-2001 school year. For more information on how your school can become Ever Active contact Marg Schwartz at (780) 454-4745 or email: marg@everactive.org. There is also a website: www.everactive.org

SUCCESS STORIES

At the ASCH forums last May, it was evident that there was a lot happening in school health around the province. Participants at the forum were asked to share their success stories. Here is the first of a series that will be presented in upcoming newsletters.

Dare to Care

Sponsoring Organization: Calgary Family Services

The goal of the program is to change the balance of power away from the bullies and punitive reactions to the other students to help improve overall school climate and create a safe learning environment. The entire school community is involved. The project includes staff training, parent workshops, student curriculum and school wide activities

Contact: (403) 269-9888

Virtual School Health Program

Sponsoring Organization: School of Hope

An interactive program where health questions are posted weekly on a web site and to a news group. The students can respond to questions through e-mail or by fax. Students are free to express their feelings and thoughts without peer pressure. A

discussion group also exists. Contact: Lisa Lastiwka (780) 472-1652

Creative Health Presentations in School

Sponsoring Organization: Capital Health Authority

Provides interactive learning experiences on hygiene issues, e.g., “aliens” from Planet Clean (namely, Anti-Bacteria, Hygiene and Plaqueterria) visit earth children. Hosted a “Winterfest” involving both Catholic and Public Schools. The project was facilitated by a 4th year physical education practicum student from the University of Alberta. Contact: Janet Pattison, or Jean Ashmore at (780) 413-5685.

C-Smart (C is for “community, culture and communication” SMART is Students Managing Anger Respectfully Together). Sponsoring Organizations: Public/Separate Schools, City Police, Chinook Health Region

Partners in the A.L.E.R.T. program developed a new curriculum for grade 7 students. These will provide students with transferable skills that will assist with conflict resolution based on ethics, sensitivity, empathy and communication. All partners, including school Public Health Nurses, school resource officers, native liaison workers and school counsellors are involved in the delivery of eight sessions. Contact June Crighton (403) 382-6666.

Co-operative Play Project

Sponsoring Organizations: Millwoods Public Health Ctr., Grace Martin School, St. Elizabeth School, Leefield Community League

A collaboration of community stakeholders provided opportunities for students and staff to learn new skills in meeting recreational needs of students at recess and lunch breaks.

Contact: Jane Pedersen (780) 413-5682.

RESOURCES

Recommended Reading:

Health is Academic: A Guide to Co-ordinated School Health Programs

Health is Academic details the importance of putting children’s health at the center of school programs and policies as a prerequisite for learning. The Authors discuss ways schools and communities can improve the school environment and the health and educational status of young people.

For more information on the book or to order it contact the American School Health Association at www.ashaweb.org/. The cost is approximately \$25 US.

Websites

Websites of school health initiatives and/or approaches to comprehensive school health:

www.search-institute.org

The Search Institute

www.albertaonline.ab.ca/

Alberta Online Consortium

www.oise.utoronto.ca/~aanderson/csh

The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (Comprehensive School Health)

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/compehe.htm

National Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (US)

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/children

Government of Canada, School Health

www.schoolnet.ca/home/e

Canada’s School Net

csos.jhu.edu/p200

School/family/community partnerships (Centre at John Hopkins University)

If you have any websites, success stories or other items to share, please submit them to Susan Hall at fax: (403) 298-1480 or email susan.hall@ccsd.ab.ca