

Teachers of Tomorrow: Advancing School Wellness Through Teacher Preparation

Progress Report - November 2018



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
WERKLUND SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Overview

Over the past year we have worked to scale wellness practices and education across the country in Bachelors of Education (B.Ed) programs through a Comprehensive School Health (CSH) approach.

The diagrams below indicate our progress from this year relative to both student level and systems level impact across all three scaling strategies.

Student Level Impact

Scaling Out:

Strategy: Develop a digital repository with multi-media content, contributions from, and connections to, experts and organizations across Canada. Organized through a CSH framework

Scaling Up:

Strategy: Work with provincial/territorial education systems to ensure alignment to existing curricula.

Scaling Deep:

Strategy: Studying the impacts of this work and contributing to the body of knowledge around efforts to support student social and emotional wellbeing and the effectiveness of integrating wellbeing into the K-12 setting.

These strategies, which aim to impact the K-12 student level, will be further advanced in the next two years. Because we are working at the post-secondary level, time is required to see the impacts at the K-12 student level (the future students of the current post-secondary audience).

Systems Level Impact

Scaling Out:

Strategy: Scale the work to three other post-secondary institutions across Alberta and strengthen the system alongside the work of other university partners for future widespread implementation across Canada.

Scaling Up:

Strategy: This strategy occurs within faculties and institutions by shifting priorities toward wellness and integrating or informing practices, but also through alignment with government policies.

Scaling Deep:

Strategy: Depart from prevailing academic practice and share the process and content of our experience with other post-secondary institutions to pilot test in alternative settings and inform the model for broad adoption.

These strategies have been the focus of this years work. We have engaged a total of 12 institutions, including the Werklund School of Education, across the country in this work. Working through a CSH approach, we have begun to shift priorities and break through the traditional boundaries in regards to sharing content and processes between institutions.

The next three pages of this report dive deeper into the progress made on these strategies through four key activities.

Werklund Comprehensive School Health Course



EDUC 551 is the first mandatory course in Canada to systematically address health and wellness with pre-service teachers as a required part of their B.Ed degree. The inaugural delivery of this course (January-February 2018) resulted in 590 pre-service teachers receiving 39 hours of instruction on CSH in priority areas of healthy eating, physical activity and positive mental well-being. Teachers learned how to take care of their personal wellness and build the skills to teach their students within these priority areas.

This course is delivered in an innovative way, which includes community partners and practicing teachers, physical literacy opportunities in the kinesiology gyms, energizer breaks, useable resources for teachers, demonstrations of the CSH model in practice, evidence-based practice recommendations for healthy school communities and key principles about what it means to be a health champion in a school.

Students from this first cohort had the opportunity to participate in research related to evaluating the knowledge, skills and attitudes of Werklund students around wellness. Consenting students submitted one of their assignments, a Letter to Their Future Teacher Self, for analysis. Quotes from these letters include:

"I can integrate health and wellness across the curriculum, communicating to my students that health and wellness are not just isolated events but with us wherever we go (teaching and learning)."

"I have realized that if I'm going to reach my full potential as a teacher, I will have to make a commitment to making conscious decisions to support my overall wellbeing."

"One of the most meaningful messages I took away from EDUC 551 was that a Comprehensive School Health approach not only positively influences students during their school years, but it also builds an important foundation for their entire lives."

Since the delivery of the inaugural course in 2018 the University of Calgary Health Champions Committee has been working to revise the course content and format for the 2019 delivery based on student and instructor feedback. The committee has also realized, from evaluating cohort one, that one priority area moving forward should be to address the current discourse around teacher attrition and the demands of the profession. An increased focus on the joy of teaching is present in the new edition of this course to help shift this discourse.



Project Site Recruitment & Initiation - Primary Sites

Three primary project sites, in addition to the Werklund School of Education, officially signed on to this project work: University of Lethbridge, University of Alberta and Concordia University of Edmonton.

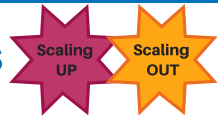
Each of these universities has:

- been provided an overview of the project;
- connected to a project coordinator at Ever Active Schools to increase collaboration across sites; and
- formed a Health Champions Committee

Both the University of Lethbridge and Concordia University of Edmonton have completed the Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health's Healthy School Planner assessment tool with their Health Champions Committee. This assessment led to diversifying Health Champions Committees to include students, community partners, university staff and cross-faculty participation. At both sites, this assessment helped to narrow in on a few key areas to act, including ways to embed wellness into instructor orientations and existing course work; as well as ways to include wellness in extra-curricular professional development and student interactions.

All three sites have started the action planning process and are working towards prioritizing activities for the next year. An immediate action for all three sites that was identified was a policy/program scan of their B.Ed programs to see where wellness currently lives and where there are further opportunities to embed it.

Project Site Recruitment & Initiation - Corresponding Sites



A total of eight Corresponding Project Sites have been identified:

- Mount Saint Vincent University (Halifax, NS),
- Western University (London, ON),
- St. Mary's University (Calgary, AB),
- McGill University (Montreal, QC),
- University of Ottawa (Ottawa, ON),
- University of British Columbia - Okanagan Campus (Kelowna, BC),
- University of British Columbia (Vancouver, BC), and
- Mount Royal University (Calgary, AB)

A health champion has been identified at each of these institutions and initial conversations have been had regarding this work. Five of these eight institutions were present at the 2018 National Forum on Wellness in Post-Secondary Education, where they had a chance to present on what they are currently doing and explore opportunities for further national collaboration. Processes are being put in place to continue communications between this group and the primary project sites.

National Forum on Wellness in Post-Secondary Education 2018



A total of 63 delegates from 9 universities and 15 partner organizations across 5 provinces attended the inaugural National Forum on Wellness in Post-Secondary Education. The forum was hosted by Ever Active Schools and the Werklund School of Education as a way to bring the stakeholders in this space together to share and learn from each other.

Each of the primary project sites from this project and five of the eight corresponding sites attended and presented on what they are doing in their own Faculties of Education. This forum provided an opportunity to continue to build momentum in this space and foster the relationships necessary to move the work forward. We were thrilled to have the Honourable Minister Marlin Schmidt, from the Ministry of Advanced Education in Alberta, offer opening remarks at the Forum.

From the closing of this forum, the following next steps were suggested and identified by delegates as most important: future gatherings of this type to continue the conversation and build momentum; a movement to adapt existing K-12 tools that support the implementation of CSH for post-secondary institutions; and a Hub or online platform to share information and resources nationally.



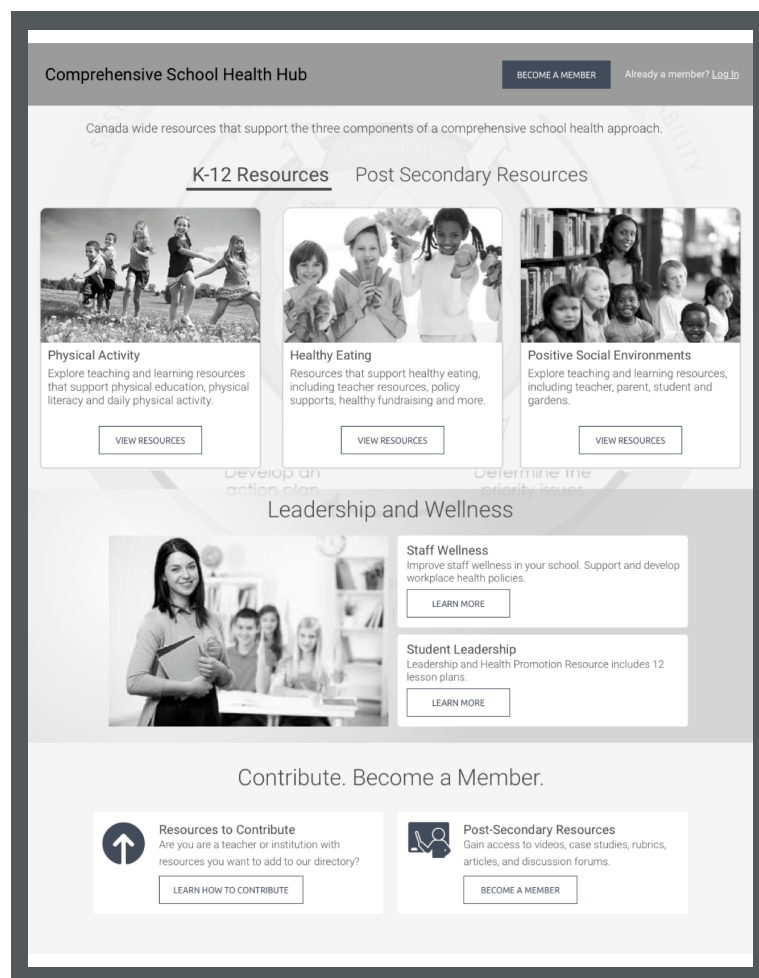
Comprehensive School Health Online Hub

Part of our first year of funding for the Teachers of Tomorrow grant was to support the development of a digital repository, which we are now calling the Comprehensive School Health Hub. For this portion of the work we have partnered with **Innovate Calgary**, the innovation and business transfer incubator centre for the University of Calgary. Innovate Calgary has contributed \$10,000 to the development of this platform. The vision is that this online Hub will be a digital repository of resources for CSH in post-secondary institutions across Canada. It will be a central place for uploading and downloading resources, for collaboration across institutions and will house an online course to support in-service teachers to access training in CSH.

We have engaged Tactica Interactive, a company that specializes in cross-platform digital media strategy and products for researchers, agencies, and producers to develop this platform. During Phase 1 of the project, Tactica conducted the following pre-development activities:

- Discovery & Assessment
- Concept Development
- Learn User Research
- User Experience Design
- Technical Analysis
- Prototyping (Validated Learning Tools)

To further impact K-12 students, an online course for in-service teachers was proposed. Using the emerging online course for pre-service teachers, content for the in-service online course is being developed and the platform for housing the course is being considered in the planning of the HUB.



A visual of the proposed HUB home page.

Lessons Learned



Working as a team is crucial to success. Each institution is beginning to think differently about who should be included in this team (i.e. students, senior admin, faculty, staff, community partners, etc.)



Many institutions are using a CSH approach but don't yet know it. Others that aren't using a CSH approach are beginning to realize the value/potential.

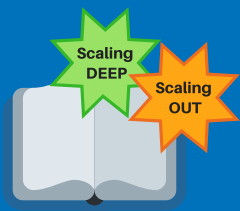


Momentum across the country is high. Institutions are excited, willing and keen to share information and learn from each other.

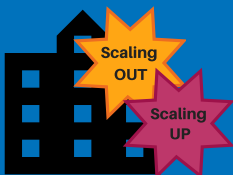
Challenges & Potential Solutions

1. There is a divide between CSH and Mental Health/Social Emotional Learning Researchers.
Solution: working as a collaborator on a grant from the Public Health Agency of Canada to explore how to synergize our work with groups of researchers studying mental health and social emotional learning in schools.
2. Needs assessed for the HUB outweighed the funding available to complete the resource in 2018.
Solution: obtained additional funding through the Alberta Education Teaching Quality Standards grant to further develop this resource.
3. Research opportunities related to this work were not capitalized due to capacity.
Solution: secured postdoctoral scholarship funding to have a postdoctoral scholar develop the research arm for CSH across the primary and corresponding sites across Canada.

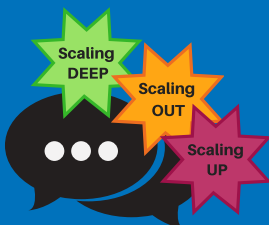
Next Steps



Werklund
Comprehensive School
Health Course -
Cohort 2
(Jan - Feb 2019)



Primary Project Sites
begin to implement
their action plans



Further national
communication and
collaboration amongst
primary and
corresponding sites



Comprehensive School
Health Hub -
development
continues; in-service
teacher course further
explored