



For this edition, we asked our team what their favourite things are to do in the winter.

Send us your favourite winter activities using #EASWinter and @EverActiveAB!

MATT LETKEMAN KRISTA TRIM "Skiing out the day and "Winter hiking in finishing with a cold the mountains beverage and a HOT it's so quiet!" hot tub!" MEGAN McCORMICK "Drinking coffee! Snowshoeing comes in second place." TERRI CONSTANTINESCU "Decorating for Christmas... . HATE. WINTER." TITUN ADERIBIGBE "Taking long walks when it's snowing."

BRIAN TORRANCE "Shaping the Future."

"Taking evening walks to look at the neighbourhood lights!"

RHONDA SCHILBERG "Getting outside for a walk on a sunny day!"

KATELYNN THEAL

REBECCA MARJORAM 'Cross-country skiing."

"Walking the dog with my husband on a mild day, or a coffee with a book on a cold day!"

TRACEY COUTTS

"Who doesn't enjoy a winter walk in the woods? / Pockets teeming with sunflower seeds for chickadee friends / That land on thumbs and study faces, / As if trying to memorize the trusting child in-

THE TEAN

side."



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IN THIS ISSUE

Alberta is teeming with innovative ideas to reimagine the school experience. We've curated stories of the important work happening in schools and communities around the province to give you practical possibilities that you can modify to suit your own context.

Do you have a story of your own to share? Get in touch! Please reach us at info@everactive.org or @everactiveab on social media. We love feedback, questions and stories!

~ The Ever Active Schools Team

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2020 Healthy School Community Events



SHAPING THE FUTURE: BUILDING BRIDGES - STRONGER TOGETHER

January 30 - February 1, 2020 | Lake Louise

Join us for the 11th annual Shaping the Future conference! Come to Lake Louise to learn and share all about Comprehensive School Health, with topics for beginners to experts, in the beautiful Canadian Rockies.

www.everactive.org/stf

WINTER WALK DAY

February 5, 2020 | Everywhere!

Layer up, folks! Winter Walk Day provides a wonderful opportunity to explore our school communities on foot. Register through Shape AB.

www.shapeab.com/

TEACHERS' CONVENTIONS

February-March, 2020 | Multiple Alberta Locations

Ever Active Schools and our provincial partners will be presenting at all nine Alberta Teachers' Conventions this year! Look for our School Health and Wellness Symposia and Health and Phys. Ed Institutes at a convention near you.

www.everactive.org/professional-learning

REGIONAL FORUMS ON RECESS

April 24 | Grande Prairie — April 28 | Red Deer — May 19 | Calgary A day of learning, sharing and new ideas for all who are interested in redefining recess.

www.everactive.org/events/recess-forums

HPEC CONFERENCE

April 30 - May 2, 2020 | Lethbridge College

The Health and Physical Education Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association is excited to host the 20/20 Vision Towards Wellness Conference, featuring keynote speaker Laval St. Germain.

www.hpec.ab.ca/

Visit www.everactive.org to discover other Ever Active Schools events and projects.





IN THE COMMUNITY

PAINT THE PAVEMENT

Written by Krystal Lamb

"A community united by the ideals of compassion and creativity has incredible power. Art of all kinds — music, literature, traditional arts, visual arts — can lift a community." - Martin O'Malley

In May of 2017, the Copperfield-Mahogany Community Association (CMCA) in Calgary launched an initiative to create art within the communities. Because the CMCA had heard from numerous residents concerned about pedestrian safety, specifically during school drop off and pick up times, it chose to focus on painting strategic areas with bright, fun images to encourage active travel within the community. These areas would provide engagement for children and youth while walking, and also illuminate legal parking areas within a short walk from the schools to encourage parents to park farther away and walk their children the rest of the way!

In partnership with the City of Calgary, Alberta Traffic Safety Fund and a number of other sponsors, the CMCA created Paint the Pavement, a day-long event that took place in August 2019. St. Isabella School held a school-wide art contest where the winner's art was painted onto the sidewalk. More than 100 volunteers came out to paint! Choosing to paint on the sidewalks versus the roads allows children to engage with the art while walking to school, with areas to hop, jump and skip throughout the paintings to make the journey to school more fun and active. The completed Paint the Pavement site also acts as a meeting site for a Walking School Bus — wherein adult volunteers walk a group of students to school to get active, make new friends and cut down on the number of cars in the school area.

In spring 2020, when the second half of the Paint the Pavement event takes place, the completed art will connect one side of the community to the other, encompassing both community schools and encouraging active travel along the vibrant sidewalks.

RUNNING INTO RESILIENCE

Written by Scott Bailey, Ever Active Schools

The Alberta Medical Association (AMA) Youth Run Club was honoured to join more than 150 elementary school students in Siksika Nation in October 2019 for a fun run with Olympic legend Billy Mills.

Mills, originally from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, won a gold medal in the 1964 Olympics for the 10,000 metre run. He shared his story of hope and inspiration with the students.

"I'm going to win, though I may not cross the finish line first," was the thought Mills remembered from the final turn of his shocking Olympic victory. To this day, he is the only American to ever win the 10,000-metre race.

The SN7 program, which began in 2015 after a team of Siksika youth travelled to Nike's annual N7 Summit in the United States, organized the event as one of their many outreach projects in Siksika and across Alberta. SN7 now provides programs both in- and after-school at the Deerfoot Sportsplex.

"Our program is best described as peer-to-peer mentorship," said SN7 coordinator Jody Labelle.

"Sport and activity are powerful tools for supporting mental health and overall well-being. SN7's mentors build relationships and resilience through activity."

"There are good runners here, though running is sometimes overlooked for the main sport of basketball," said Braden ManyBears, an original SN7 member.

Rilee ManyBears is one of those talented runners. He has won gold medals in the North American Indigenous Games and World Indigenous Games, and he is an ambassador for the AMA Youth Run Club. The program provides coaching and fun run supports for registered clubs, so as an ambassador, Rilee reached out to Billy Mills in hopes that a visit from the Olympian could help students.

In his time with the students, Mills urged them to "take the virtues and values of

your culture, tradition, and spirituality and put them into your head, educational systems, and friendships." While confronting challenges, Mills encouraged the students to "heal and reach the heights of our dreams".

"Find your dream and share your dream for the betterment of your community and the world."







JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED!

NEW GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICIANS CAN HELP TEACHERS PROMOTE HEALTHY SCREEN USE

Written by Justine O'Leary & Madelyne Porter, Health Promotion Facilitators, Alberta Health Services

Like many educators, Grande Prairie-based junior high teacher Mrs. Stewart knows there are benefits to digital media use for her students — it provides amazing opportunities to engage with and showcase their learning — but she worries that too much screen time is a problem in the classroom, and beyond.

"My students are easily distracted by notifications on their cell phones," she says. "I'm competing for their attention."

Practical advice for teachers like Mrs. Stewart is now available from The Canadian Pediatric Society. In June 2019, the organization released new guidelines about how to promote healthy screen use in school-aged children. Although designed for physicians, the guidelines have been gaining traction among educators and parents alike. They recommend approaching screen use with four 'essential Ms': model, meaningful, manage, and monitor.

With the help of teachers like Mrs. Stewart, we've tailored the four 'essential Ms' to teachers.

MODEL: As a role model for your students, monitor your screen habits and encourage them to do the same. Suggest screen-free time at school and at home, especially during meals and when socializing.

MEANINGFUL: Talk with students about their screen use. Aim for open conversations that are not one-sided (discuss both benefits and risks).

MANAGE: Be present and engaged when screens are used in the classroom, and advocate for a school media plan. Discourage students from media multi-tasking during homework.

MONITOR: Watch for signs of problematic screen use in students. Share concerns or talk to them if you are worried that screen use could be affecting sleep quality, school work, or face-to-face interactions.

Screens are a useful tool in education and a reality in the lives of most school-aged children and youth. As teachers, it's important to be aware of both the potential benefits and risks to physical and mental health.

According to the new guidelines:

- Screen time has potential benefits for example, it can boost physical activity levels in kids who use active video games, and improve sense of belonging among teens who keep in touch by text, instant message, and social networking.
- Screen time has risks it has been linked to changes in working memory, attention span, and impulsivity, as well as shorter sleep duration and increased sedentary time.

The potential benefits and risks are influenced by age, context, and a variety of other factors. **Learn more at https://www.cps.ca/en/documents/position/digital-media**

LET'S PLAY OUTSIDE!

Written by Adrian Xavier, Ever Active Schools

The research on nature connectedness is deep and broad, connected by a common understanding of the restorative capacity of natural environments over artificial environments^{1,2}. Schools across the province are doing many things to creatively engage and educate the school community to be outside and find a sense of belonging in the outdoors – see some examples below!

LOOSE PARTS PLAY

Items we are keen to throw away or recycle can be repurposed for outdoor play. Loose parts are low-to-no-cost, child-centred, self-directed and intrinsically motivated natural play spaces. They offer imaginative, constructive, and role play experiences, while helping develop fine and gross motor skills as well as problem solving and social skills.

GARDENING & LANDSCAPING

Many students express their joy for the hard work involved with creating and decorating garden beds. Digging up the earth, adding and turning over new soil are authentic physical activity experiences. Finding and repurposing fallen branches to use as stick fences around the garden bed or as signposts to identify what is growing in the garden invites an artistic touch to the experience too.

WAYFINDING

Wayfinding can be described as an active means of navigating the physical space around you, moving from location to location. Examples of wayfinding are geocaching, discovering and re-placing painted rocks with positive messages, or taking a picture book, page by page and mapping it out along a designated route, creating a moving story.

FORT BUILDING

Similar to loose parts, if families in the school community have natural Christmas trees around the holidays, collect the trees at the end of the season. Cut off the branches and use the wood and brush for winter fort-making. And if a community member happens to have access to a woodchipper, branches can be repurposed in the spring for your school garden beds.

Visit Ever Active Schools' YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/user/EverActiveSchools) for more information about loose parts play and watch for an upcoming resource on Nature Play! ■

1) Berto, R (2014). The Role of Nature in Coping with Psycho-Physiological Stress: A Literature Review on Restorativeness. Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4287696/

2) Kaplan, S (1995). The Restorative Benefits of Nature: Toward an Integrative Framework. Retreived from https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/0272494495900012?via%3Dihub

Photo: A student shows off a worm she found in the dirt during a Nature Play Workshop at École James S. McCormick School in Lacombe on May 6, 2019.



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Ever Active Schools offers professional learning opportunities across the province that support healthy school communities through a research-to-action approach. Sessions are hands-on and active, providing practical ideas and tools for all types of classrooms.

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STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS

Written by Dana Fulwiler, Ever Active Schools

"When we seek for connection, we restore the world to wholeness. Our seemingly separate lives become meaningful as we discover how truly necessary we are to each other." - Margaret J. Wheatley

In the Fall 2019 issue I introduced the field of positive psychology and the research-based PERMA model of well-being: positive emotion, engagement, *relationships*, meaning, and achievement. Relationships have emerged as a key factor in building and maintaining well-being. This also means that a lack of connection, or negative connections, can take a toll on us.

Positive connections contribute to positive mental health. Best practice research suggests we move beyond problem-focused approaches to mental health (addressing risk factors and what's going wrong) to a strength-based approach (building protective factors and what's going right)¹.

In a social ecosystem like a school, High Quality Connections (HQCs) can be life-giving oxygen that nourish the people and practices within it². HQCs involve a mutual energy, responsiveness, and positive regard between people; low-quality connections go through the motions of communication, but can be draining (i.e. toxicity in staffrooms, or passive small talk). Strong relationships, and even the perception of emotional support at work, correlate to a longer lifespan³ and improved creativity, resilience, and learning outcomes⁴. Active Constructive Responding (ACR) is one way

TIP FOR MONDAY MORNING:

Instead of making small talk, start conversations with "big talk" — what are you excited about right now? Proud of?

to build HQCs. It is an active, authentic, quick and positive way of responding to others' good news, rather than destructive or passive responses⁵.

ACR helps dilute negativity and prolong positive psychological benefits by capitalizing on the positive emotions through savouring. Research suggests it can strengthen our sense of belonging, life satisfaction, relationships, and even memory⁶.

The chart below illustrates 4 types of responses to others' good news (ACR is the top left).

	Constructive	Deconstructive
Active	Savouring Champ! Shows authentic interest in the news or event, and asks positive questions about the experience. Active engagement! "Congrats! How did it feel when "	Savouring Thief Minimizes or undermines the positive event or news by focusing on the negative aspects. "Oh wow, that's a lot to add to your workload"
Passive	Conversation Killer Quiet, distracted, uninterested, no questions. Not necessarily negative, but disengaged. "Oh, interesting - good for you" (goes back to work)	Conversation Hijacker Barely acknowledged the event/news, or ignores it completely, and then shifts conversation to be about them or a different topic completely. "Well I remember when I was asked to do "x", I"

ACR is a well-being skill that contributes to a strong school culture. The way we respond to others matters, and vice-versa! Encourage colleagues to share their good news without fear of it being minimized or viewed as "braggy". We need to celebrate each other - for everyone's well-being benefit!

Adapted from Venn Leader (2017) and J. Saltzberg (personal communication, March 29, 2019)

¹⁾ Morrison, W., & Peterson, P. (2013). Schools as a setting for positive mental health (2nd edition). Charlottetown, PE: Pan-Canadian JCSH. Retrieved from http:// www.jcsh-cces.ca/upload/JCSH%20Best%20Practice_Eng_Jan21.pdf

²⁾ Dutton, J. E., & Heaphy, E. D. (2003). The power of high-quality connections. Positive organizational scholarship: Foundations of a new discipline, 3, 263-278. 3) Holt-Lunstad, J., Smith, T. B., & Layton, J. B. (2010). Social relationships and mortality risk: A meta-analytic review. PLOS Medicine, 7(7), e1000316; and Shirom, A., Toker, S., Alkaly, Y., Jacobson, O., & Balicer, R. (2011). Work-based predictors of mortality: A 20-year follow-up of healthy employees. Health Psychology, 30(3), 268-275.

⁴⁾ See #3 above.

⁵⁾ Gable S. L., & Reis H. T. (2010). Good news! Capitalizing on positive events in an interpersonal context. Advances in Experimental Social Psychology. 42, 195-257 6) Gable S. L. et al. (2004). What do you do when things go right? The intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits of sharing positive events. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 87(2), 228-245; and Gable, S. L., Gonzaga, G. C., & Strachman, A. (2006).



If school is for all, school sport is for all¹.

Think back to your own time in school sports: was the above statement true? Did school sports provide an equal opportunity for every student to participate and reap the benefits of playing on a team? In too many cases, the answer will be no.

A group of teachers, administrators, researchers and school health professionals are taking that idea and turning it into something tangible. Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools (RDCSD), Edmonton Catholic Schools (ECSD), the University of Alberta and Ever Active Schools (EAS), with funding from Makadiff Sports, created a project to re-imagine the school sport model to provide solutions to common barriers to sport.

In the typical school sport model, coaches have to cut students from teams because there is a focus on winning, meaning only the best players are selected; teacher-coaches are limited as they volunteer their time; and facilities and funding are limited². How, realistically, can schools overcome these obstacles?

In RDCSD, multiple schools addressed these barriers through in-house Sports Development leagues separate from competitive level teams: some ran after-school with mandatory games and practices, some were drop-in programs held at lunch, and others tiered students by development level rather than age. St. Francis of Assisi Middle School increased its coaching staff by nine and was able to serve an additional 45 students, while St. Patrick's Community School saw an additional 20 students participating and a high population of English Language Learners showing up to play.

Keeping students active is a goal of educators and coaches. Consider alternative mindsets to the average school sport model to achieve this goal. Try a model in which teams are tiered based on ability and competitive levels, where the top tiers compete interscholastically, and the lower tiers compete against one another; perhaps your context can support two (or more!) interscholastic teams to compete in different division levels – this can reduce transportation costs when you can fill a bus; or consider simply expanding the size of your teams to accommodate more students.

Although alternatives may not be viable for every school and cutting students from teams may be unavoidable, research has shown there are best practices for the process that will help to keep students engaged and willing to try again. Set clear expectations of students ahead of tryouts, offer feedback as quickly as possible, maintain privacy when making cuts, and encourage all athletes, even those who don't make the team². Direct and clear face-to-face conversations that provide athletes with specific, actionable feedback in writing can encourage students to improve and try out again. •

References:

- 1. Säfvenbom, Geldhof & Hauge, 2014: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19406940.2013.815255
- Gleddie, Sulz, Humbert & Zajdel, 2019: https://www.shapeamerica.org/publications/journals/joperd/JOPERD_articles/2019/february-2019-free-access-article.aspx

THE POWER OF LIBRARIES IN SUPPORTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Written by Casey Scheidegger, Palliser Regional Schools

Students often love physical activity and their physical education classes, but when they live in rural areas with limited access to recreation facilities and equipment, how can you encourage students and their families to be active?

At Barons and Carmangay Schools (both rural schools serving students of a Low-German Mennonite background in the Palliser Regional School Divison), we participated in the Ever Active Schools (EAS) Physical Literacy Mentorship in 2018. After much brainstorming on how to increase physical activity among our students and their families in this rural setting, we landed on a Physical Activity Library.

With support from the Physical Literacy Mentorship project, we purchased equipment and games for students to "rent" from our library for use on weeknights and weekends. We wanted activities to get the whole family moving and playing together! Our staff decided on games and equipment like Spikeball®, washer toss, ladder golf, Frisbees®, a volleyball and badminton set, and Jenga® GIANT™.

Once we compiled our library, we needed to teach students how to play the games. We started by playing several of the games in our P.E. classes. We took students outside for "lawn game" days, where they would rotate through stations to play the games. For equipment like Frisbees®, we taught them games they could play with their families, such as Frisbee Golf® and Ultimate Frisbee®.

Next, we introduced the games to siblings and parents to get everybody on board. The older students at Carmangay School ran a Fun Field Day in Barons for the younger students, where many of the stations included our Physical Activity Library games. When spring came around, we set up the games at parent events at the school: parent council meetings, parent teacher interviews, and any other event where parents would be stopping by. This gave parents and students the opportunity to play the games together before we started lending out the equipment.

"Our Physical Activity Library has been a fantastic addition to our school," said Principal Fred Jack of Carmangay School. "Students and their families are now being exposed to a wide variety of games, sports and activities that they previously had limited or no exposure to. Feedback from parents has been very powerful.

"Students' parents have shared that creating time at home during the evenings and on weekends has enhanced their quality family time, while promoting activity and exercise in an enjoyable and positive way."

Interested in starting your own Physical Activity Library?

- Find out what your students and their families like to do!
- Showcase the games and teach students how to play them before renting them out. Rules aren't necessarily important, but equipment can be broken if not used properly.
- Use every opportunity to have students playing the games with their families at school! This can help increase excitement around the games and might get siblings and parents asking for games/equipment to be brought home.

Casey Scheidegger is a full-time teacher and also an elite curler. She has represented Alberta at the last two Scotties Tournament of Hearts, skipping for her team in the national championship. Casey is a role model and champion for living an active and healthy lifestyle in her school and across the country. You can connect with her on Twitter @kcdigs7.



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The Healthy Active Schools Symposia (HASS) are events designed to provide Alberta school communities with the knowledge, skills and resources to enhance student wellness.

In the fall of 2019, teams from 30 schools in the Medicine Hat area attended a recess-focused HASS event. Students were trained as 'recess leaders': upper-elementary students that plan and lead activities for their peers and the younger students on the playground during recess time.

Local schools were eager to attend following a cross-divisional Professional Development event in May, during which they were introduced to research around the impact of a recess leader program on the sense of belonging of all students.

Each school brought 8-10 students, who had the opportunity to work through leadership skill-building activities in the areas of communication, conflict resolution, and role playing. Students were asked to reflect on their play experiences. It became evident that the research emphasis of sense of belonging was paramount: some expressed that their favourite parts of recess included hanging out with friends, getting fresh air, free time from work, free play games, and a break from school to talk to your friends about your troubles. Conversely, some said that the hardest parts of recess included feeling left out, fighting with friends, and making new friends. We asked the leaders-in-training what they could do to make recess better for all kids:

"If a kid falls, you can help them up."

"If a kid is sad, you can help them feel better."

"Be a friend to lonely kids."

"Include little kids." "Play with the kids who are left out."

One student even said, "Recess would have been a lot better with a big buddy because if you were having a bad day, they would lift up your spirit."

Once students really understood what makes a great leader and the impact of their role as recess leaders, they were sent off to begin planning with their school team. While each school has implemented the recess leader model in their own way, it is exciting to see so many schools taking action on creating a safe and inclusive recess where all students can feel a sense of belonging. •

GEL ACTIVE

BACK TO BASICS: How land-based learning can support your classroom

Written by Chelsea Cattroll, Ever Active Schools

What is land-based learning (LBL)? Simply put, it is removing the walls of a traditional classroom and returning to an authentic, experiential outdoor learning environment. Before formalized school structures were created, learning was experienced out on the land. The land was the teacher and learning occurred only when the student was ready to acquire knowledge. Learning was further shaped with guidance from knowledge holders when the student would come forward with a question.

Today, land-based learning is happening across Alberta, in Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities alike. Communities are beginning to recognize how engaged students are in a non-traditional classroom, especially our exceptional learners. In communities with First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, LBL can be used to bridge western and traditional knowledge in efforts to

reclaim traditional teaching methods and ways of knowing.

Land-based learning is more than just bringing students out on the land to explore. Lessons in a land-based classroom are experiential, multi-sensory, tactile and tailored to the needs of, and existing knowledge that is unique to, each community. Learning also occurs in a non-linear fashion. Oftentimes the facilitator is not always the "teacher" — anyone can fit that role. It might shift to another teacher, Elder, student, or education assistant. It's a beautiful dynamic where you see students become engaged in learning.

The overall goal of land-based programming is to inspire learners who are inquisitive about the natural world and to reignite a passion for learning overall. We are building learners that feel confident to ask questions, who are not afraid to take risks with learning beyond the LBL classroom. We are bridging the knowledge acquired in the classroom with the hands-on and lived learning opportunities to solidify learning. Through this process, we are creating a sense of attachment to local natural spaces that ultimately result in students feeling compelled to take care of their community.





TIPS TO CREATE POSITIVE FOOD MESSAGING IN SCHOOL

Written by Alberta Health Services Registered Dietitians and Mental Health Promotion, Health Promotion Facilitators

The foods students choose to eat are based on many things. This includes classroom education, practices at home, and many messages in the media. Schools can play an important role in influencing students' choices by using a whole school approach within and beyond the classroom:

Create positive meal environments

- Provide a comfortable space, enough time to eat (20-30 minutes), and limit distractions so students can focus on eating.
- At lunch, create a relaxed atmosphere and encourage positive conversations. Avoid comments about students' lunches and snacks.
- Avoid food rewards. Use praise for effort, reduced homework, or free time instead.

Understand influences on food choice

 What is considered "healthy food" and what students bring from home is influenced by family circumstances such as finances, cultural backgrounds, food preferences, food allergies, or other contributing factors. Seek ways to understand food choices and support challenges faced by families.

Include a variety of ways to learn about healthy eating

- Talk about the ability of food to improve brain health and body function, and to provide energy.
- Encourage listening to the body's hunger and fullness cues, rather than eating because of emotions or behaviour.
- Encourage a balanced approach to eating all foods without shame, fear or guilt.
- Use learning experiences to build food skills and connect to food in a variety of ways (e.g., school garden, grocery store field trip, vegetable and fruit tasting).

Role model

- Talk about accomplishments, strengths and qualities. Avoid talking about body shape, size, diets, weight or weight loss.
- Let your students see you eat and enjoy a variety of foods.
- Use "everyday" and "sometimes" to describe foods instead of "good", "bad", "healthy" or "unhealthy", as this can lead to shame, guilt and body image dissatisfaction.
- Accept all body shapes and sizes.
- Focus on body ability and function rather than appearance.
- Reflect on your values, biases, and attitudes towards food. Do you make size comments about yourself or others? Do you feel guilt or pride eating certain foods?

NANÂTOHK MÎCIWIN

Written by Ashley Dennehy, Communications Coordinator, Maskwacis Education Schools Commission

Nanâtohk Mîciwin, meaning Universal Food, is the Cree name of our universal school food strategy in Maskwacis Education Schools Commission (MESC). This strategy provides every student with healthy meals while at school. It directly addresses diet-related issues that our students face, such as hunger, malnutrition, obesity and diabetes. It also works to solve issues surrounding classroom engagement, overall student success, overall student health and wellness, student community development, the marketing of certain foods to children, and fostering healthy habits. On top of it all, the strategy provides culinary training and career pathways for students involved in school food service operations.

Students are vital to the day-to-day operations. High school students work in the kitchen daily in a skills-based CTS learning environment. Food is prepared from scratch using whole ingredients and is served by students and staff to all students from K-12. We use salad bars for increased healthy food exposure; menus are developed centrally and are used by all 7 kitchen locations where food is prepared and 4 satellite locations where prepared food is delivered; food is sourced as locally and sustainably as possible; and we operate a central food procurement and distribution system, ensuring food security and more control over nutrient density.

I can't claim all these indicators as solely the result of Nanâtohk Mîciwin, but in conjunction with the whole of MESC, we have seen increases in classroom engagement, overall student health and well-being, decreases in violent incidents, increases in enrolment and attendance, and positive reinforcement from the community regarding the vision and mission of MESC. Our students are healthier, safer, more engaged, more inquisitive and prouder than ever of their language and culture.

The idea behind Nanâtohk Mîciwin is an extension of the Cree value of **Wakohtowin**. Generally speaking, schools are obligated to provide an environment that is safe and caring for all. Since young people are legally obligated to receive an education, the basic needs of the learner must first be met, and this is certainly not guaranteed in the context of the world we live in today. The outcome of our community prioritizing the basic physiological needs of students has resolved many of the upstream struggles we faced historically as educators.

Long before I was hired by the Maskwacis community in 2013 to grow a universal school food program, the education authority itself prioritized feeding the children. Despite struggling with implementing different models of conventional institutional food service over the years, the important thing is that the community identified the value in feeding students, and they didn't give up. It may sound basic, but if the community does not prioritize feeding students, then the efforts of school food champions may be at odds with community leadership.

Food in Maskwacis is inextricably linked to tradition. The people of Maskwacis enjoy regular feast days throughout the year, in which community members assist in the preparation of traditional dishes. Students and staff engage in the fall bison harvest, berry picking in the summer, the winter festival in February, pow-wows, wakes, commencements and graduations, round dance, award ceremonies, and more. The school food strategy, in many ways, is an extension of the community's traditional value of **Miyo Wakohtowin**, meaning caring for one another in community. This community paradigm shift, away from capitalistic models of institutional food service to traditional models of community food sharing, was vital for the success and viability of our universal school food strategy.



VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF SUNCHILD FIRST NATION SCHOOL'S SPIRIT

Written by Kjeryn Bateman, Sunchild School

For some schools, athletics is the main rallying point for school spirit. For others it could be a drama program, or a logo or chant that can be enough to invigorate a crowd. For Sunchild First Nation School it is a combination of all of our amazing school programs that develop our school spirit, excite our community, and develop our identity.

Teachers run fantastic programming in their classes, taking students on outdoor trips to explore new places and develop a sense of adventure. The school acts as a hub, hosting community events and deepening relationships among the entire community. The impressive athletics program rallies students around our multiple sports teams – our senior high volleyball girls won first place at the Treaty 6 tournament this November! The after-school recreation program provides opportunities for all students to stay and take part in fun activities every evening, continuing the connections with one another. Our cultural program of inviting Elders into classrooms every week and teaching about traditions strengthens the cultural identity of all students.

On top of all of that, our senior high Leadership Council hosts monthly team events for the whole school! Every student from Kindergarten to Grade 12 is placed in a multi-aged team named after animals in the Cree language. The teams then circulate to different stations and work together to win points for their team. The activities are typically themed around the holidays. There is always a balance of activities, from physically active to literacy-based to artistic, in order to ensure that everyone has a good time. During these activities, older students mentor the younger; teachers bond with students outside of their typical class; and our school spirit increases.

William Cowper once said: "variety's the very spice of life, that gives it all its flavor." At Sunchild School, variety is the backbone of our school and it gives us all our school spirit!







MAPPING HIGH SCHOOL CREDITS TO UNIQUE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Written by Melissa Tierney and Katie Mahon, Ever Active Schools

High schools across Alberta are exploring unique learning opportunities for students to be change-makers in wellness, leadership and culture at their schools. For the past few years, Ever Active Schools has supported Indigenous school communities to develop culturally rich learning experiences for students such as bow hunting education, traditional Indigenous games and land-based learning.

Students participating in the In Good Health program, who face barriers within the traditional school setting, are deeply engaged in unique learning opportunities, including theatre-based leadership development, community volunteerism workshops, and Be Fit For Life's Move and Play (http://befitfor-life.ca/resources/move-and-play-the-inclusive-way). While these are just a few examples of dynamic and meaningful learning opportunities being afforded to students through the good work of school communities and community partners, we know that this work is blossoming across the province in many unique ways. Such occasions as field trips, student leadership events, participatory and hands-on learning experiences, and community-led programs are all good examples.

Ever Active Schools wanted to lend our support by beginning to map how teachers might help their students gain extra credit for attending and participating in these kinds of opportunities. We want to make clear that the learning opportunities schools and teachers are creating for their students are incredibly worthwhile, even for those who do not desire to earn credits. We know that adding this extra layer may feel like too much for a school or for individual students. As well, we know that many teachers have already innovated to attach credits to unique learning events for high school students.

However, since we know that some students could benefit from gaining extra credits or be incentivized to participate if there were credits attached, we have outlined a sample process for awarding credits to high school students for their participation in unique learning opportunities. The sample covers the 2019 Resiliency Summit in Calgary, where students of all backgrounds learned Dene, Inuit and Blackfoot traditional games in a fun outdoor setting – more than 200 students from 24 schools were trained in the games and able to take them back to their own schools! You can find this example of mapping a high school credit to a unique learning opportunity on the Resilient Schools website (http://bit.ly/2OhHVOQ), which we hope that you can use as a starting point to ignite your thinking. •



CREATING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES AND PLAY

Written by Rebecca Rubuliak, Masters Intern, Ever Active Schools

The City of Edmonton announced plans to build an inclusive playground, donated by Canadian Tire Jumpstart charities. The playground will be accessible to children experiencing disability and will serve as a platform for the Promoting Inclusive Play in Alberta project led by the Steadward Centre for Personal & Physical Achievement (TSC).

In support of these projects, we want to share ideas from research, so that together we can continue to reimagine ways in which we foster inclusion within our communities!

Inclusive communities celebrate difference in respectful ways, foster interdependence, value community, and focus on building understanding and relationships¹. During childhood, feelings of inclusion provides a sense of belonging and self-worth, which later influences attitudes towards participation and citizenship².

Empower children

Whose voices are currently not represented in conversations about inclusive play? Inclusion is also a subjective experience, placing significant importance on individual's perspectives³. Seeking the perspectives of children who experience exclusion is critical to understanding what is essential in creating inclusive play opportunities. When working with children and families we should foster mutual respect, meaning equal attention and appreciation is given to the needs, wishes, expertise and experience of all those involved⁴.

Value everyone as playmates and community members

Are there procedures that limit children's play choices? Have they gone unquestioned? Who informs them? Validate the way all children belong within the community. Value children's play choices and acknowledge multiple perspectives, experiences, and identities. What do we mean when we use the word 'inclusive' and demonstrate how we are inclusive? What can and will we actually do? Inclusive to who⁵?

Awareness of social context

Social interactions and relationships play an important role in experiences of inclusion in physical activity for children experiencing disability³. Additionally, children experiencing disability and their families discuss how they experience barriers, such as social attitudes, often more than physical access issues^{6,7}. Changing the social settings that surround children influences their in->

DEFICIT IDEOLOGY IS ABOUT FIXING MARGINALIZED PEOPLE. **EQUITY IS ABOUT FIXING THE CONDI-**TIONS THAT MARGINALIZE PEOPLE."

- @HowWeTeach

teractions⁸. Unsupported or unchanged, difference remains a catalyst for negative social patterns such as exclusion⁹.

Give every child the opportunity to be challenged and experience risk

Evidence has demonstrated the value of outdoor play for children; however, recent decades have seen significant decreases⁹. There are several strong influences, one being societal attitudes around safety and risk, resulting in limits being placed on children's outdoor play opportunities⁹. These anxieties have been recast to emphasize perceived vulnerabilities of children experiencing disability⁶. Health and safety concerns, which have been termed 'polite discrimination', restrict children experiencing disability from participating in play due to fears of getting hurt⁷. We have to address assumptions and affirm that all children have a right to play⁷.

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Comprehensive School Health (CSH) is an internationally recognized framework for building healthy school communities in a planned, integrated and holistic way. It addresses the school community through four components—teaching and learning, social and physical environments, partnerships and services, and policy—to improve student health and educational outcomes.

Dr. Kate Storey and her team within the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta have worked to distill the conditions required for CSH to be successful. Through interviews with teachers, principals and school health facilitators, they determined core and contextual conditions that make up the essential conditions for implementing the CSH framework.

Core conditions were identified as factors necessary successful implementation. Contextual conditions were those that provided a strong influence over obtaining core conditions.

Core Conditions

STUDENTS AS CHANGE AGENTS

Students are the heart of any CSH initiative. Students have the opportunity to lead change not only in their school, but also at home and are an effective entry point to positively nudge parents with health promoting behaviours. Students who are bought in are more likely to promote successful CSH initiatives.

SCHOOL-SPECIFIC Autonomy

School autonomy includes customizing the initiative to what each individual school needs to be successful. Including all stakeholders in the planning process (parents, teachers, students, admin, etc.) allows for voices to be heard and inclusion of important cultural considerations (geographic, historical, and sociocultural).

DEMONSTRATED ADMIN-Istrative Leadership

Administrative leadership that is clearly seen and experienced was strongly emphasized as a condition for success. The principal is a key component in shifting school culture towards one of wellness. It's important that the principal is actively involved with the implementation process as their enthusiasm and action sets the tone going forward. Active leadership also creates time and space in the school's agenda to allow for more opportunity for growth. >

EVIDENCE

Administrative leadership is crucial, but a school health champion is imperative as the catalyst for CSH and for integrating it into daily practice. Principals felt that the work would not have progressed as far without the help of a dedicated champion, especially within a busy school environment. In addition to a dedicated champion, it was reported that the entire school community (students, staff, administrators, custodians, parents, etc.) need to play a role in shifting school culture.

Creating community support, whether through engaging parents or local organizations, leads to an overall strengthened program. Starting early may help as this step takes time. In terms of CSH initiatives like Loose Parts Play, fostering community support through inclusion of parents and community organizations can help with collecting parts as well as supporting the message that play is essential to healthy childhood development.

Evidence in the form of school specific data and in regard to a CSH initiative is important in planning, refining, and supporting implementation. Understanding your school's context will allow you to celebrate your successes later on. Evidence is also necessary when building credibility and sharing information with external stakeholders.

Both initial and ongoing professional development is beneficial in informing the school's CSH goals, objectives, and rationale. Professional development also builds the self-efficacy of participants by strengthening their knowledge and skills in addition to building their confidence around the initiative.

Contextual Conditions (read more about the contextual conditions at www.everactive.org/csh)









TIME

FUNDING & PROJECT SUPPORTS

READINESS & UNDERSTANDING

PRIOR COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

As you begin your CSH journey or reflect on what your school is already doing, use the essential conditions as a roadmap for who to engage and how to build successful implementation. Time and funding will be important, but gathering student buy-in, administrative support, and a dedicated champion on the ground level will contribute to strong action in your school context.

Storey, K. E., Montemurro, G., Flynn, J., Schwartz, M., Wright, E., Osler, J., Veugelers, P. J., & Roberts, E. (2016). Essential conditions for the implementation of comprehensive school health to achieve changes in school culture and improvements in health behaviours of students. BMC Public Health, 16, 1133.

COLD WEATHER RECESS PLANNING

Written by Chesa Peter, Ever Active Schools

Does your school have a cold weather recess plan?

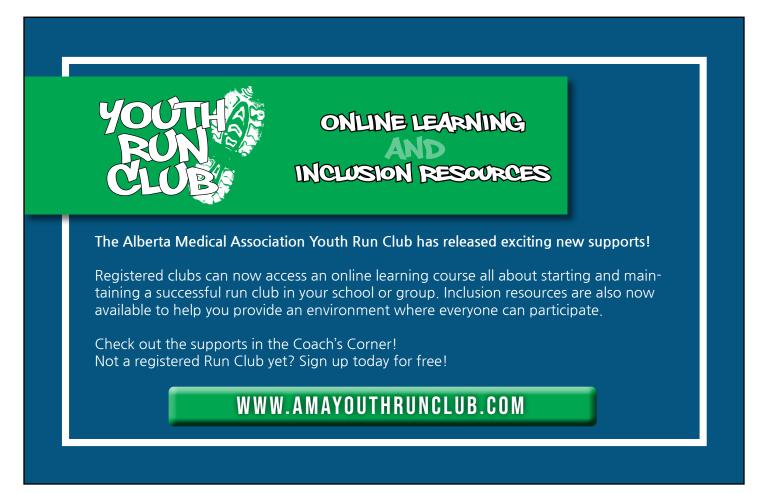
Ever Active Schools believes that recess is an important part of the school day and has the potential to positively influence students' health, wellness, and success at school. In Alberta, winter brings cold temperatures, and cold temperatures often mean indoor recess.

Many teachers and students report that indoor recess can be challenging, especially when they are forced to be inside for several consecutive days. Recognizing this, Ever Active Schools has created the Cold Weather Recess Planning resource. Inspired by schools around Alberta, this resource includes strategies and support for creating and implementing a cold weather



recess plan for your school. The strategies offered in the resource utilize both indoor and outdoor spaces, can be easily adapted to any school context and most importantly, can help make cold weather recess a positive experience for both students and staff!

Find it as a free downloadable resource at www.everactive.org/online-store



Healthy School Planner:

Use the Healthy School Planner to support your school in identifying areas of strength and areas of opportunity to inform your action planning.

https://healthyschoolplanner.com

Developing Healthy School Communities Handbook:

This Handbook has been prepared by the Alberta Healthy School Community Wellness Fund. The handbook supports practitioners in gaining an understanding of CSH. It provides practical ideals on the CSH process.

https://www.ualberta.ca/alberta-healthyschool-community-wellness-fund/ resources

Steps for Building Healthy School Communities Website:

This website is developed by Alberta Health Services and explores tools, templates and resources that can help school teams through the 6-step process for building healthy school communities.

https://albertahealthservices.ca/info/ Page7123.aspx

NEW TOOLS!

INTRODUCING "IDEAS FOR YOUR HEALTHY SCHOOL ACTION PLAN" AND "ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE"

Written by Katelynn Theal, Ever Active Schools

Comprehensive School Health (CSH) is an internationally recognized framework that supports improvements in student's educational outcomes while addressing school health in a planned, integrated and holistic way.

Creating a school health Action Plan is essential to the success of healthy school initiatives. In addition to serving as a road map, creating a plan can provide many benefits, such as strengthened communication, team camaraderie, clear roles and defined timelines.

Deciding what to include in your action plan can be challenging. Fortunately, educators and experts in the field have teamed up to identify some promising strategies and actions to support your efforts in building a healthy school. Explore the ideas captured in "Ideas for Your Healthy School Action Plan" then take some time to develop a quality comprehensive action plan using the brand new "Action Plan Template" which is linked on page one of the Ideas resource.

The Ideas for Your Healthy School Action Plan Resource can be accessed as a **free downloadable resource** on the Ever Active Schools online store: **https://everactive.org/online-store/**





BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Written by Kayli McClelland, Ever Active Schools

Youth leadership is a classic example of a symbiotic relationship: the younger student receives leadership and guidance from the example of the older students, and the older student leaders experience the joy of watching the impact they can have. Ideally, younger students will go on to be leaders themselves one day and the cycle will repeat itself.

That is the goal of the Indigenous Youth Mentorship Program (IYMP), an adaptation of a nation-wide successful program. Through IYMP, a group of older students – the leaders – are selected or volunteer to run an out-of-school-time program for younger students from their school. This program involves playing games and eating a healthy snack that the leaders prepare.

Over 2018 and 2019, with funding from Alberta Health, we worked with a number of Indigenous populations in Alberta to implement IYMP in their schools and communities, including Chief Jacob Bearspaw School (CJBS) in Eden Valley, south of Calgary.

"Due to the partnership with Ever Active Schools, our school was able to do quite a few things we had been unable to accomplish in the past," said Brendan Kelly, a teacher at CJBS.

"Some of our new programs [created thanks to IYMP] are student led movie nights, student led/guided Physical Education classes, girls' nights, and a year-end camping trip. Our camping trip was a huge motivator for all of our students."

Student leaders at the school attended a training alongside students from other nations, learning games they could play with the younger students, what constitutes a healthy snack and how to make one on a budget, and how to help young students regulate their emotions. Brendan noted the difference it made for his students in their willingness to attend school and to be there for each other.

"Besides building character and integrity through leadership-based activities like movie nights, after-school activities and having leaders in the gym during elementary PE classes, our focus is to improve the overall attendance of the school.

FEAI UR

"Throughout the school year I have kept attendance, and we have seen some nice improvements. The nights that we hosted the movie nights where our focus was elementary students, we saw an increase around 10-15 percent on average [on] the day of the movie and for a week following. With our sports nights in the gym, our high school attendance would go up as well. We would see about 25-30 percent more high school students when we had an open gym night or some sort of game in the gym, like volleyball.

"Earlier in the year, one of our leaders was injured. He required surgery and was laid up in bed for a couple weeks before he could walk again.

"I had heard from numerous high school students that his mental health had deteriorated greatly. He was upset with his family, mad at his friends for not visiting him enough, and wouldn't get out of his room, even though he had been cleared to start walking.

"My leaders and I brainstormed some ideas to get him back to school, [and we decided to take him out to dinner.]

"We met at the hospital in Black Diamond—it was a surprise to him and he was so excited to see all the guys had come to support him. He talked all the way to the restaurant about what had happened, about the recovery, the pain, the ups and downs, and everything in between.

"At this point, he had not been at school for over a month. The day after we went to dinner, he was back at school and has had over 80% attendance since the dinner. It was very rewarding for me and the students to see how much dinner meant to this young man and how special it was for all of us to get together and talk things through."

Brendan is excited to continue to implement IYMP in his school and thinks it would be beneficial for other communities struggling to find effective ways to support their students.

"The work we do with the younger generations will help shape trust, respect and honour between teachers, students, elders, parents and eventually, the rest of Canada," he said.

"For other schools just starting off, [don't] give up when something doesn't work the first time. Often, when we started something new, like girls' night, it took multiple attempts to get the program running

THE WORK WE DO WITH THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS WILL HELP SHAPE TRUST, RESPECT AND HONOUR BETWEEN TEACHERS, STUDENTS, ELDERS, PARENTS, AND EVENTUALLY, THE REST OF CANADA."

with the numbers we initially planned on. Continue to remain positive and to encourage your students to come."

When we provide opportunities for youth to thrive, we are reminded of how strong and resilient they are. Surrounding them with community and setting them up for success yields marked results. Little by little, these students will change the world. All we have to do is set them up for success. We are humbled by the incredible youth we've had the opportunity to work with to date and are thrilled to expand the IYMP program to more First Nations across the province.

To find out more about the Indigenous Youth Mentorship Program or to get involved, visit www.resilientschools.ca/projects/iymp

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