



EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

Annual Report 2019/2020



Ever Active Schools
www.everactive.org

Alberta
Government



HPEC
Health & Physical
Education Council
The Alberta Teachers' Association



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OVERVIEW



Ever Active Schools is an established cross-ministerial provincial initiative in Alberta that helps to create and sustain active, healthy school communities. Ever Active Schools supports quality wellness education through a comprehensive school health approach and works to ensure schools have the resources they need to respond to the complexity of Alberta’s classrooms.

VISION

All Alberta students belong to healthy school communities that enable optimal health and learning.

MISSION

To provide provincial leadership that promotes and supports healthy, active school communities through a Comprehensive School Health framework.

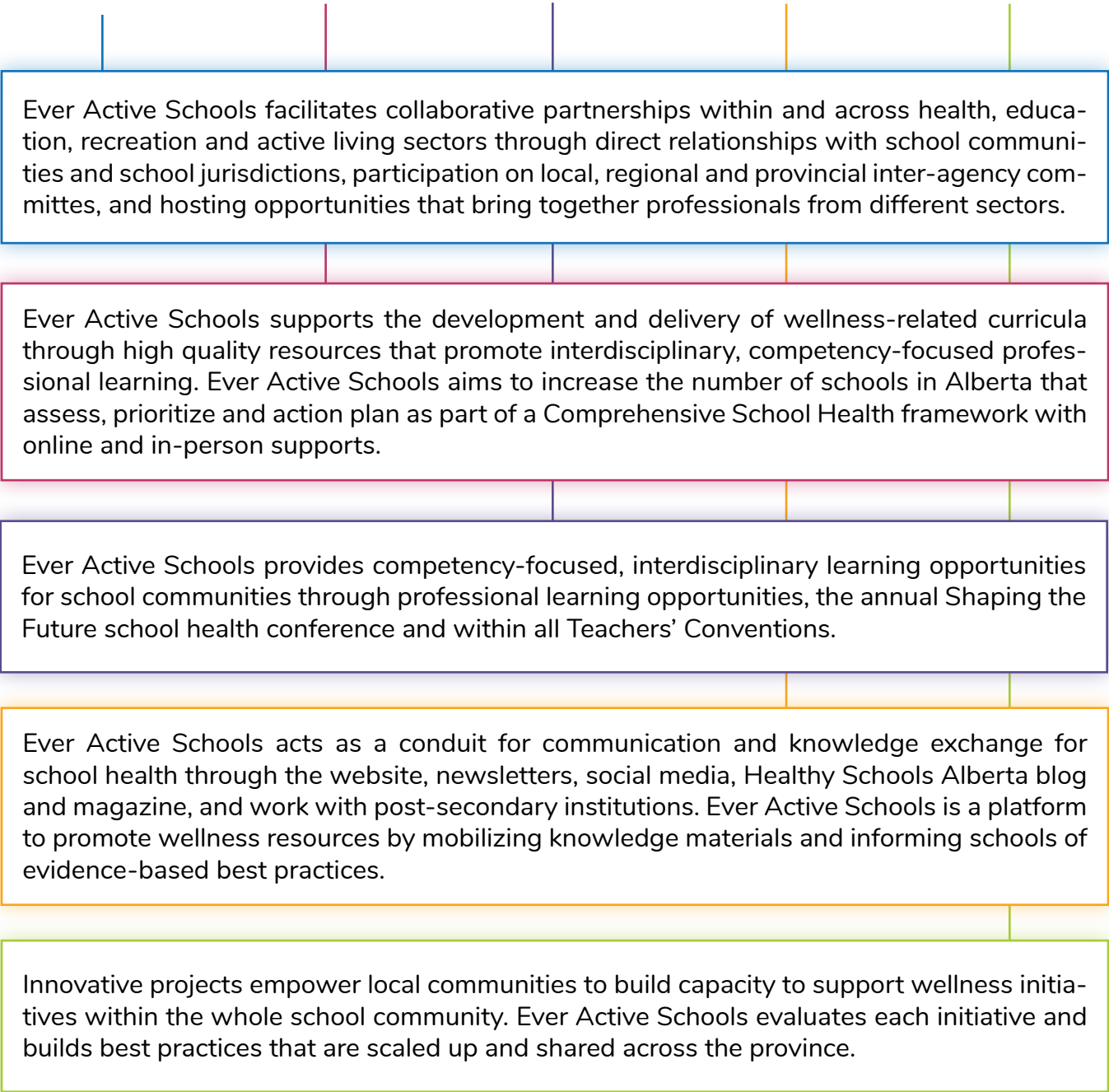
PRIORITY

Lead, support and connect work towards improved health and learning outcomes of children in Alberta.



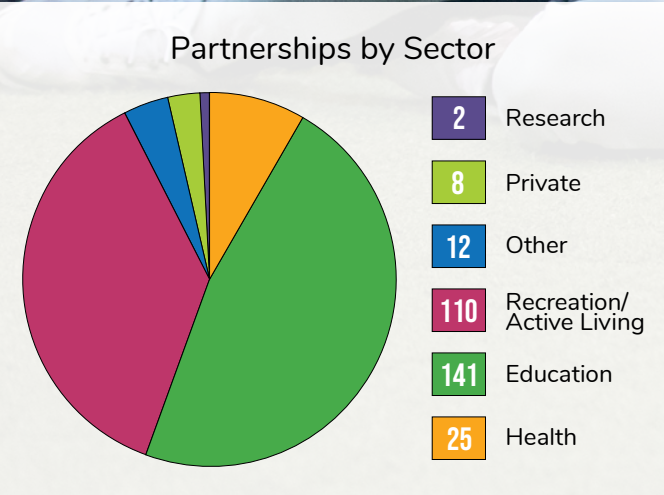
In 2019/2020, Ever Active Schools celebrated **19 years** of supporting schools to create and sustain healthy, active school communities.

Ever Active Schools implements **five core strategies** to advance the health and learning outcomes of Alberta students:



COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Ever Active Schools facilitates collaborative partnerships within and across the health, education, recreation and active living sectors. Established relationships with schools, communities and government uniquely positions us to strengthen partnerships and services, increasing sustainability of comprehensive school health at the local level.



Ever Active Schools engaged in **298 partnerships** in 2019/2020, up 12% from the previous year.

20% of these were newly established partnerships.

Ever Active Schools leads or participates on **60 intersectoral committees** on local, provincial and national levels.

Attending an Ever Active Schools event enabled each participant to develop or reinforce an average of **8 partnerships** that support the work of their healthy school community.

SUPPORT FOR WELLNESS EDUCATION AND COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH

Ever Active Schools supports school communities with tools for wellness education and with leadership through a comprehensive school health framework.

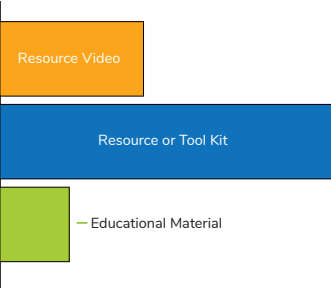
REACH

This year, Ever Active Schools interacted with **1,057 schools and community-based organizations**. 79% of these schools and 21% of these community organizations support school-aged children and youth.



RESOURCES

Developing and distributing resources offers a tangible support for school communities. **169 unique resources** were distributed a total of **73,358 times** in 2019/2020 to support quality wellness education and the implementation of comprehensive school health. **98** of these resources were developed within the 2019/2020 school year.



COLD WEATHER RECESS PLANNING GUIDE

Cold weather temperatures are a reality in Alberta! The Cold Weather Recess Planning guide encourages a proactive and holistic approach to the recess time period. The guide outlines **three strategies for cold weather recess**, inspired by schools in Alberta, along with materials to support the implementation of each strategy.

This resource grew organically from Ever Active Schools’ physical literacy mentorship work focused on re-defining recess. Recess in schools is often defined traditionally as outdoor physical activity. **Though we would all agree that physical activity, and even being outdoors, is critical to the growth and development of children and youth, in some cases it may not be meeting the rest, leisure and play needs of all students.** Further, what happens when policy requires students to stay indoors due to weather conditions?

In an effort to help foster a positive recess experience for all students, the mentorship emphasized students as change agents and co-creators of the recess time period. The Cold Weather Recess Planning guide includes a student leadership component which has older students lead safe, fun and inclusive activities for their peers during recess. The guide includes a training program, student leadership handbook and certificate of recognition for schools to use within their own context.

The resource is available for free on the Ever Active Schools online store, and was **downloaded 498 times** over the 2019-20 school year.



COMPETENCY-FOCUSED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

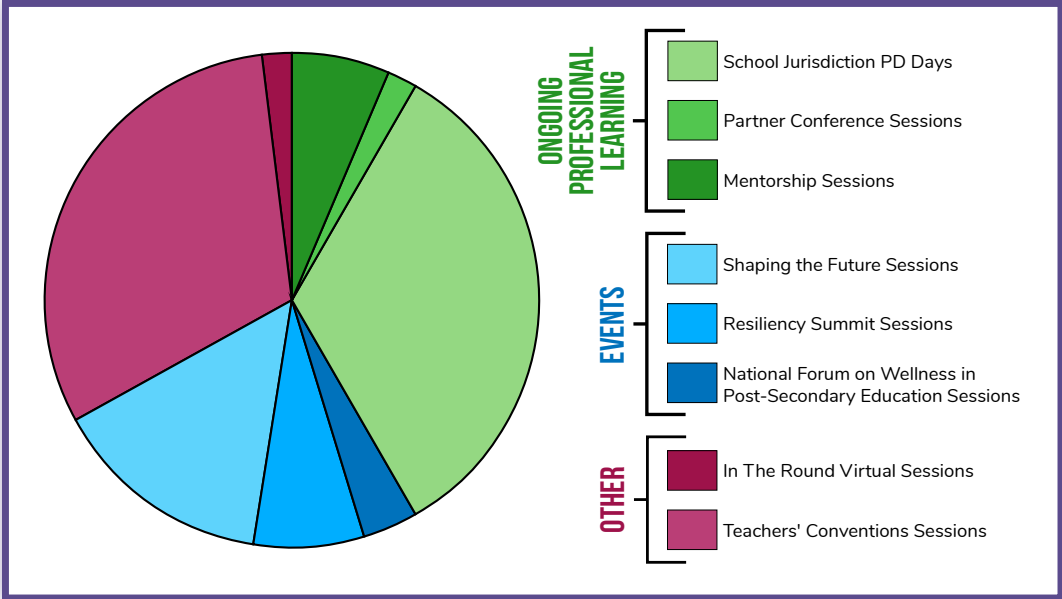
Ever Active Schools provides competency-focused, interdisciplinary learning opportunities for school communities through professional learning opportunities provided at school or jurisdiction professional development days, partner conferences, teachers conventions, through our mentorship projects, and at our major events. These opportunities address the needs of school communities today and help to develop competencies needed for learning, living and working in the 21st century.



10,167
professional learning
participants in
2019/2020

170,287
students reached
by professional
learning
opportunities

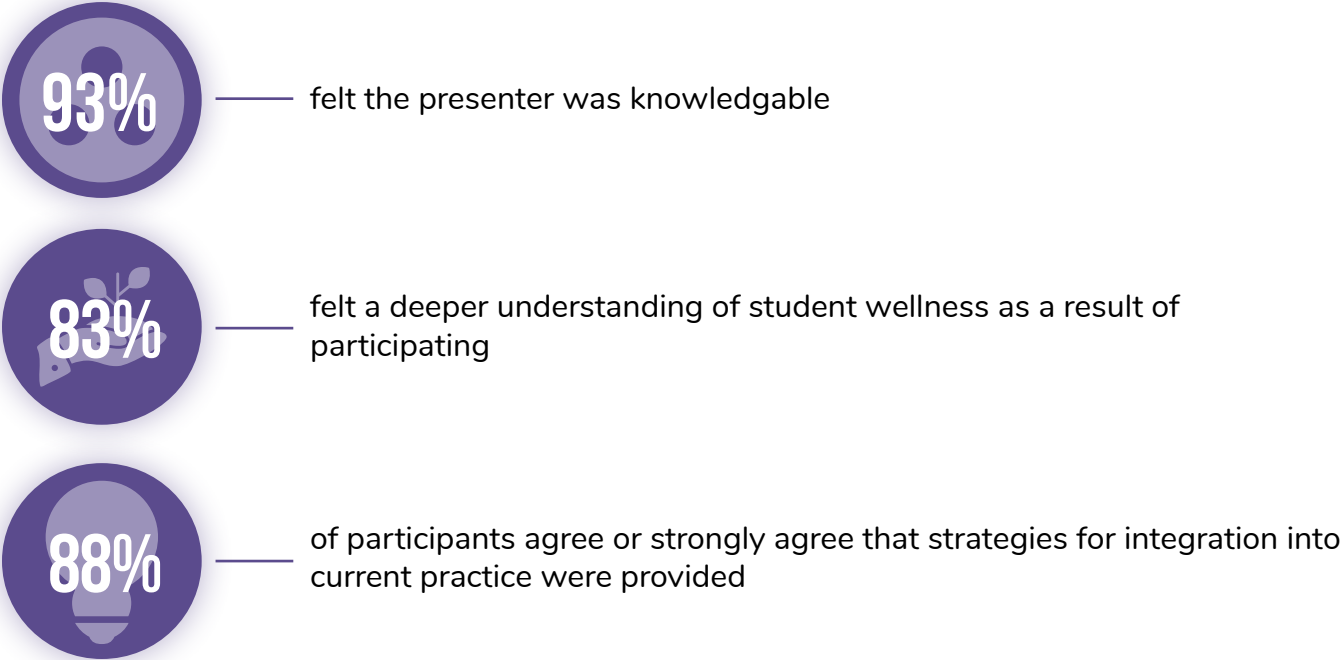
455
professional
learning
workshops
offered



- PROFESSIONAL LEARNING WORKSHOPS OFFERED IN 2019/2020**
- 455 total
 - 42% ongoing professional learning
 - 25% events
 - 33% other

ONGOING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IMPACT

Results are from 104 professional learning follow-up survey respondents.



EVENTS

Ever Active Schools convenes annual events to provide platforms to deeply engage stakeholders in learning about wellness in school settings.

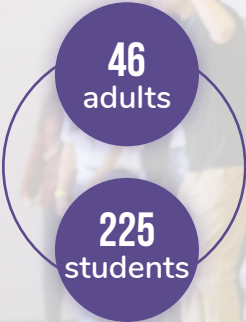
SHAPING THE FUTURE



“I LEARNED A LOT ABOUT MYSELF AND WHAT I HAVE TO OFFER AS A TEACHER TO MY SCHOOL. I CAME BACK WITH A NEW-FOUND CONFIDENCE.”



RESILIENCY SUMMIT



- 1 youth keynote
- 32 concurrent sessions
- 6 wellness break activities
- icebreaker and community building
- open mic night



“WE FEEL MORE LIKE A FAMILY AFTER LEARNING ABOUT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES. WE LIKE LEARNING ABOUT OUR ANCESTORS.”

“[IT] MADE ME BE COMFORTABLE SPEAKING WITH OTHERS AND MAKING CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER SCHOOLS.”

2019 NATIONAL FORUM ON WELLNESS IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Written by Taylor Del Bianco, Student Representative from the University of Alberta

The 2019 National Forum on Wellness in Post Secondary Education was hosted by the University of British Columbia, the University of Calgary, Werklund School of Education and Ever Active Schools. During this two-day event, **59 registered delegates** and **67 teacher candidates** from **five provinces** across Canada gathered to discuss wellness in post-secondary education. In total, **14 universities** and **nine partner organizations** were represented.

Unique to this conference was the focus on student voices from teacher preparation programs across the country. Student representatives were given opportunities to share their experiences with Comprehensive School Health through a student panel Q&A, poster session and presentations.

As a student representative for the University of Alberta, I had the unique opportunity to attend the National Forum on Wellness in Post Secondary Education. Not only was I able to attend multiple professional development sessions, I was given many chances to share my voice and the voices of my student colleagues surrounding the necessity of integrating Comprehensive School Health education into our programs.

My experiences of sitting on the student panel and participating in the Voices of Students presentations empowered me to use my voice to help make a systemic change where health and wellness is a foundational component to teacher education programs across Canada. I walked away with resources to use in my own classroom and to share with my colleagues.



2020 TEACHERS' CONVENTIONS

Ever Active Schools coordinated and led professional learning around Wellness Education at **all 9 Alberta Teachers' Association Teachers' Conventions** in 2020. Over the course of 6 weeks, Ever Active Schools and partners brought feature speakers and engaging sessions to **3,170 educators in Alberta**.



- In partnership with the Health and Physical Education Council (HPEC), Ever Active Schools provided provincial leadership in Health and Physical Education professional learning through:
- Health and Phys Ed feature speaker sessions, reaching 525 delegates
 - 25 Ever Active Schools professional learning sessions, delivered to 435 delegates
 - 11 HPEC professional learning sessions, delivered to 202 delegates over 8 conventions
 - Partnerships with 5 additional provincial organizations and 52 local speakers, delivering 82 sessions to 1,514 delegates

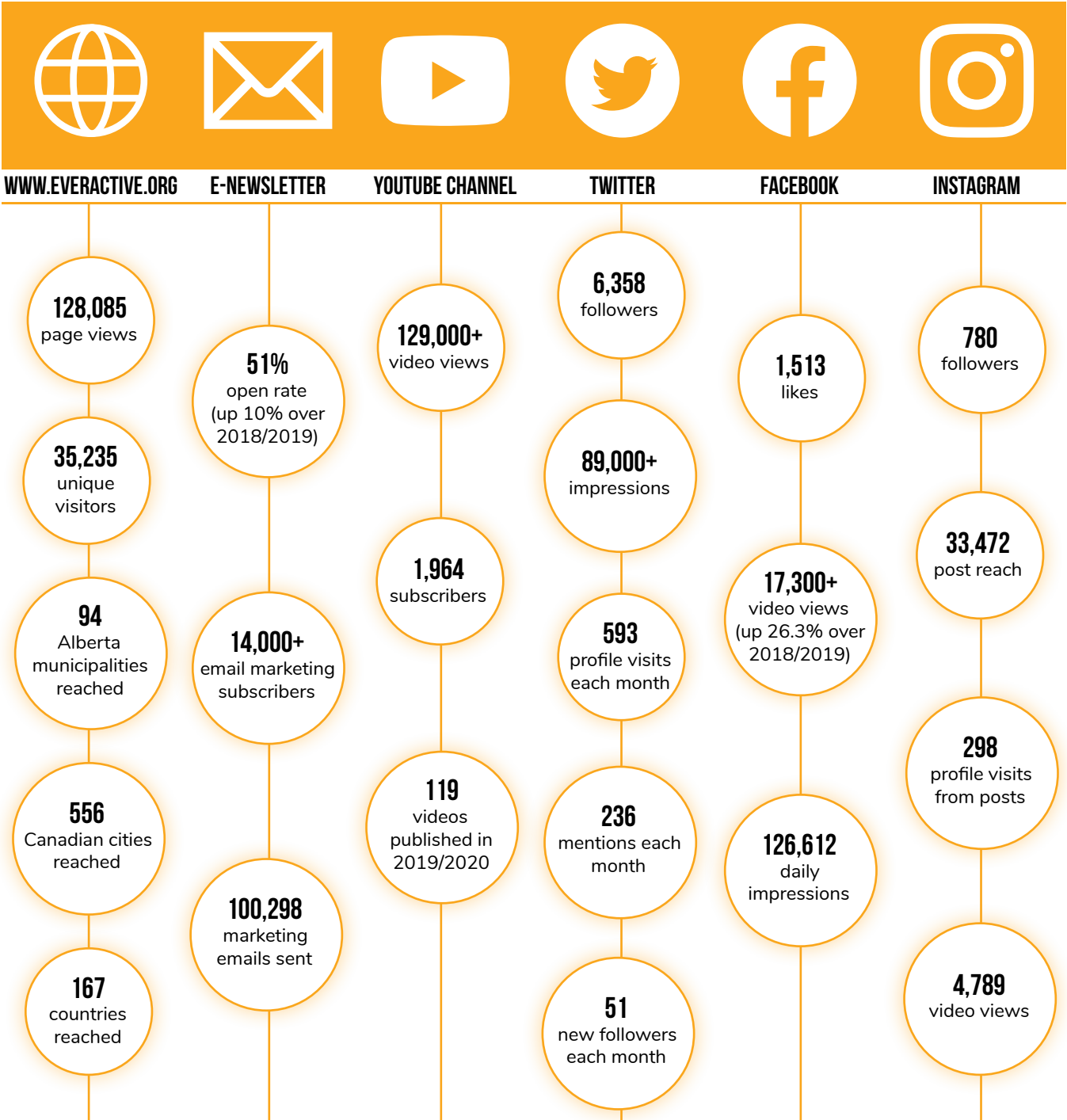
Together with Alberta Health Services and Be Fit For Life, Ever Active Schools offered coordinated Comprehensive School Health professional learning.

Ever Active Schools also provided practical teaching strategies, ideas and resources to increase capacity of all teachers to support school-wide wellness. We registered 75 new schools for the AMA Youth Run Club and featured 6 free downloadable and 3 low-cost resources to support social and emotional learning, physical literacy and DPA.



COMMUNICATIONS AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Ever Active Schools acts as a conduit for communication and knowledge exchange for school health through the website, newsletters, social media and Healthy Schools Alberta magazine. These serve as platforms to promote wellness resources by mobilizing knowledge materials and informing schools of evidence-based best practices.



NEWS

everactive.org/in-the-news

EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS MAKES HEADLINES AROUND THE WORLD

More than 36 articles written about events, initiatives and innovative project work.

LIGHTHOUSE AWARD NOV. 6, 2019

Ever Active Schools has received a CBE Lighthouse Award, for their role in supporting CBE students to learn the importance of leading an active lifestyle and understanding the benefits of physical wellness.



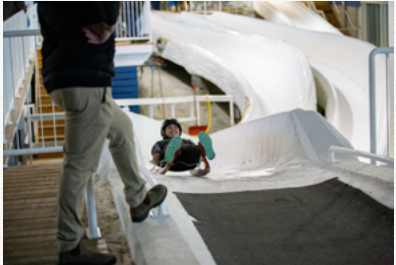
Ever Active Schools is a provincial initiative designed to create and support healthy school communities. It engages and supports schools, addressing health and education goals to improve the social outcomes of children and youth in Alberta. Within the CBE, it has helped support the integration of a Comprehensive School Health approach, which is a whole-school model to build capacity to incorporate well-being as an essential aspect of student achievement.

For nearly two decades, Ever Active Schools has positively impacted students by bringing wellness and physical activity into approximately 70 per cent of our schools. They have

INDIGENOUS STUDENTS ATTEND SUMMIT TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY RESILIENCE DEC. 2, 2019

More than 300 students, teachers, community members and Elders from First Nations and Métis communities across Alberta gathered at Winsport in Calgary Nov. 27 and Nov. 28 for a summit on health, wellness and resilience.

The two-day event began with host of active icebreaker activities that saw students interacting with new faces right off the bat. Then, 18-year-old keynote speaker Izaiah Swampy-Omeasoo, an aspiring politician of Samson Cree Nation, spoke to students about the importance of language in revitalizing culture.



"It's like losing a library," said Swampy-Omeasoo of the deaths of Elders. He reminded the crowd that their ancestors never spoke English, and in order to communicate through prayer and after passing on, they must learn their Indigenous languages.

CALGARY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS LAUNCH POSITIVE MESSAGE HOTLINE FOR SENIORS APR. 11, 2020

A group of Calgary high schoolers has launched a free positive message hotline for seniors.

Most notable in the media coverage is the Joy4All project, which made headlines around the world. Read more about Joy4All in the COVID-19 response section on page 20.

The project is run by students in the recreational leadership program by Ever Active Schools, an off-site course for Calgary Board of Education students.

"A lot of folks who are in isolation are really missing their families right now," teacher Jamie Anderson said.

"So we're just trying to fill in some of the gaps and bring them a little bit of joy and levity during these difficult times."

Learn respect, wisdom from elders: student Grade 12 student Jared Quinn said he feels it's important that youth support everyone in the

CAPACITY-BUILDING INNOVATIVE PROJECTS

Ever Active Schools is a catalyst for innovative projects enhancing student wellness through interdisciplinary learning. Our projects take a multi-sectoral approach to empower local communities to build capacity to support wellness initiatives both during and after school hours. Projects offer a way for Ever Active Schools to respond to emerging priorities and work in a deeper way on wellness issues of importance in school communities.

14
projects in
2019/2020

45,905
students directly
impacted by project
work.

7,942
of these students
are Indigenous.

592
schools and
community-based
organizations
reached through
projects

93
unique school
authorities
reached



PHYSICAL LITERACY MENTORSHIP

The Physical Literacy Mentorship Project is an initiative funded by Jumpstart and implemented by Ever Active Schools to build capacity in Alberta schools with high socio-economic need. The mentorship model uses the comprehensive school health framework to normalize physical activity across the school-day and foster physical literacy in youth.

In 2019/2020, Ever Active Schools delivered Physical Literacy Mentorship programming to **56 schools in Alberta**, reaching **17,209 students**.

In the 2019/2020 school year, the main focus of the physical literacy mentorship for the was **re-defining recess**. We chose to focus on recess this year because of the ever-present challenges with helping recess becoming a more meaningful space for students and school staff. Cold weather policies and prohibited outdoor time are common hurdles for Alberta school communities. Recess was also chosen as an opportunity to further the action and knowledge sharing around normalizing physical activity and movement throughout the entire school day, rather than emphasizing physical activity primarily during recess and physical education. By re-defining recess to something more akin to Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (e.g., rest, play and leisure), we can compliment the work by sharing ideas, techniques and strategies that can be employed during classroom/instructional time as well as the hours before- and after-school.

Our goal with the physical literacy mentorship is to normalize physical activity across a student's school day by increasing:

- Physical activity opportunities for students within the school community;
- Physical activity opportunities for students outside of standard school hours;
- Teacher knowledge and self-efficacy around physical activity and aspects of well-being.

2019/2020 ACTIVE PROJECTS

Ever Active Schools is a catalyst for innovative projects enhancing student wellness through interdisciplinary learning. Our projects take a multi-sectoral approach to empower local communities to build capacity to support wellness initiatives both during and after school hours. Learn more about these projects at www.everactive.org/projects

TEACHERS OF TOMORROW
AMA YOUTH RUN CLUB & GO! RUN
INDIGENOUS YOUTH LEADERSHIP
CULTURE AS A SOURCE OF WELLNESS
SPORT AS A PLATFORM FOR RESILIENCE
IN GOOD HEALTH
LEARN TO SKATE
CITY CYCLING STRATEGIES
STEPPING TOWARD A GREENER TOMORROW
ACTIVE AND SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL
WHEELING FOR WELLNESS
EXPLORE YOUR 2.4
HEALTHY ACTIVE SCHOOL CERTIFICATION
ALBERTA ACTIVE AFTER SCHOOL

COVID-19 RESPONSE

In March of 2020, life as we know it shifted in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. School and work moved to remote delivery models, public spaces were closed, and people went into isolation. For Ever Active Schools, this meant no more boots on the ground in schools and communities. Project work pivoted to best support the emerging needs of Albertans in many contexts.



For the students in Recreational Leadership, a Calgary Board of Education initiative and partnership with Ever Active Schools, the City of Calgary and Calgary Public Library that teaches employability skills, the pandemic interrupted many aspects of their classes, including a planned volunteer opportunity. Noticing emerging mental health priorities, particularly for vulnerable populations, the students found a new way to give to the community.

“We had this idea,” said Jamie Anderson, the Recreational Leadership teacher. To combat growing loneliness for seniors in isolation in Calgary, the students decided on a hotline—something accessible for the older generation—with pre-recorded jokes and messages.

Eager to make a difference, students got to work setting up the Joy4All hotline, website and social media accounts, and soliciting messages of hope from the community, for the community. Little did they know, the community was bigger than just their city.

Overnight, Joy4All went global, with media stories and requests trickling in from BBC, Huffington Post, and even the Late Late Show with James Corden. More than 25 news stories from around the world spread the word about Joy4All, and from April to June, the hotline received more than 30,000 calls. In that same time, more than 19,000 people visited the website and 275 families contributed content – including legendary comedian Billy Crystal!

“When I went on BBC, I was so shocked and almost completely lost for words that I was being interviewed for something we had worked so hard on from across the ocean,” said Jared, one of the students behind Joy4All. “It made me start thinking of what I want more on a global scale rather than within my close vicinity.”

Seeing the success of the student initiative, the partner organizations behind Recreational Leadership directed funding to create a summer internship. Nine students were hired as Youth Wellness Facilitators, both full-time and part-time, to support the Joy4All project.

Andrea, who graduated the Recreational Leadership program in the semester prior to the pandemic, said the employment opportunity gave her “a sense of purpose.”

Ali, from the Joy4All cohort, said he wanted to contribute to the project so everyone can experience joy. “The main goal of the Rec Leadership program was to give the students an accurate representation of the work environment, roles and responsibilities in a job and through this opportunity we are getting exactly what the program envisioned.”

When we set them up for success, students can achieve great things and give back so much. They live, they learn, and they grow, in good health.

1,971

books from the “Lucy Tries Sports” series by Lisa Bowes distributed at no cost to Alberta families

552

At-Home Activity Kits distributed to normalize physical activity at home. 111 kits distributed through after-school programs and 341 to Indigenous communities.

8

“In the Round” virtual chats hosted, with 23 feature speakers and 350 participants

100

pairs of running shoes given away to frontline healthcare workers by AMA Youth Run Club in partnership with Fast Trax Run and Ski Shop

761

participants in the Virtual Alberta Medical Association Youth Run Club from March – June

60

videos developed and shared for #DPAeveryday

Photo by Anna Shvets from Pexels

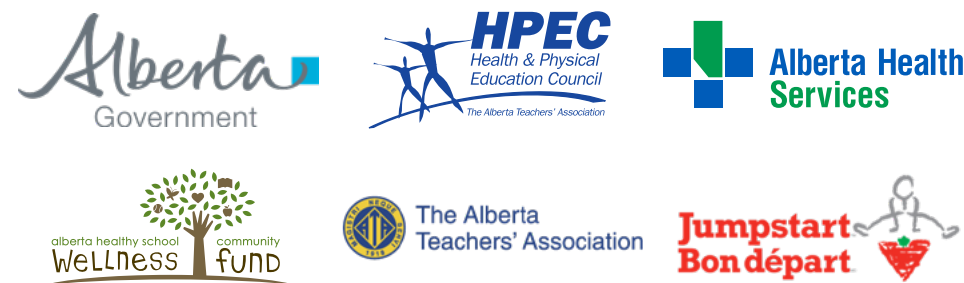
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ever Active Schools is grateful for the grant funding from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women.

We would also like to acknowledge our provincial partners - Alberta Health School Community Wellness Fund and Alberta Health Services in support of comprehensive school health in Alberta.

A special thank you to Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charity, who partner with us to suport child health and well-being through sport and play.

Lastly, thank you to the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Health and Physical Education Council for their guidance and oversight of Ever Active Schools.



Ever Active Schools greatly appreciates the additional support by our project partners:

- Active Healthy Kids Canada
- Alberta Blue Cross
- Alberta Ecotrust, EcoCity Edmonton Grant
- Alberta Environment and Parks, Community Enviornmental Action Grant
- Alberta Medical Association
- City of Calgary, Calgary Neighbourhoods & Liveable Streets
- City of Edmonton
- City of Leduc Healthy Hearts Committee
- Edmonton Community Foundation
- Fast Trax Run & Ski Shop
- J.W. McConnell Foundation - WellAhead Division
- Makadiff Foundation
- MD Financial Management
- Oilers Community Foundation
- Oilers Entertainment Group
- RBC Foundation
- Sport Canada
- University of Calgary
- University of Manitoba

MOVING FORWARD

Late in 2017, Active Healthy Kids Canada, a national charity active in Ontario, was acquired by a board of directors based in Alberta to be a platform for thought leadership, coordination, and awareness for the importance of upstream approaches to healthy school communities. In 2019, the board of directors filed a name change to Ever Active Schools and assumed governance of a special project of the Health and Physical Education Council of Alberta, operating as Ever Active Schools since 2000. The shift in governance enables the alignment of purpose between Ever Active Schools operations and Active Healthy Kids Canada charity for enhanced impact, as well as a greater range of possibilities for both strategic guidance and partnerships.

Our work prioritizes the well-being of children and youth, working through school and community settings. In the promotion of optimal health and learning outcomes, we emphasize the role of positive mental health and sense of belonging, equitable access to health and education opportunities, and students as leaders in advancing social issues.





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