

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOL

June 10, 2008

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

ORIGINATOR: D. Barrett, Assistant Superintendent

SUBJECT: Plan for Comprehensive School Health Symposium

RESOURCE

STAFF"

Jan Anderson, Gloria Chalmers, Margaretha Ebbers, John Edey,  
Phillip Grehan, June Mielnichuk, Patti McLeish, Don Zabloski

RECOMMENDATION

That the following proposal and preliminary plan be approved for implementation.

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**Background:** At the April 29, 2008 meeting of the Board of Trustees, the following motion was approved:

*That Edmonton Public School's administration develop a plan for a one-day comprehensive school health symposium, in the context of the district's overall health initiative, and implementation timelines that would include staff and administration representatives from all district schools.*

This report provides a proposal, rationale and a preliminary plan within the context of the district's health and wellness policy and regulation, the plan for the promotion of healthy food and beverage choices and research currently being conducted in the district.

**Context:** Over the past year, under the direction of the Board of Trustees and with follow-up by the administration, a number of actions were undertaken that commit the district to provide leadership in the area of health and wellness. The significant actions include:

- in June 2007, the Board of Trustees approved a health and wellness policy for staff and students that supports a comprehensive school health approach
- in November 2007, the Board of Trustees approved a motion to eliminate the sale of junk food in all Edmonton Public schools
- in March 2008, to support and implement the policy and the motion to eliminate the sale of junk food, the superintendent approved a health and wellness regulation and presented a plan to promote healthy food and beverage choices

- by April 30, 2008, all schools were advised of the regulation and the plan, including interim criteria for identifying healthy food choices pending approval of provincial nutrition guidelines
- in May 2008, an information session regarding the regulation and the plan was provided by the district in partnership with a Capital Health nutritionist.

On the research side, in January 2008, the district embarked on a three and a half year, action research project being conducted by the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta. The research project, *Alberta Project Promoting active Living and Healthy Eating*, includes four Edmonton Public schools as well as six schools from a number of other school districts in and around Edmonton. The 10 schools, now commonly referred to as “APPLE Schools,” each were provided a 1.0 F.T.E. facilitator through the research project. The facilitators work with staff, students, families and community to assist the schools to incorporate a comprehensive school health approach. Lessons learned by the participating schools will be shared with all schools, thereby increasing the capacity of school districts to implement a comprehensive school health approach.

**Proposal and Rationale:** It is proposed that a comprehensive school health symposium be held in the spring of 2009. The rationale is based on the following:

- the provincial nutrition guidelines were announced June 3
- the district is in the initial stage of implementing the plan to promote healthy choices
- the comprehensive school health research is in the first six months of a three and a half year study.

Now that the provincial guidelines are available, the administration will review them, augment if required and advise schools of the final criteria in September 2008. This will further enable schools to establish plans and be in a better informed position to discuss the successes and challenges of implementing the policy and the plan. By this time, the APPLE schools will have some significant stories to share.

If the proposal is approved, work on a spring 2009 symposium would proceed according to the preliminary plan (Appendix I) under the joint leadership of Consulting Services, Curriculum and Programs. In addition to the three decision units identified, planning would include input from the APPLE schools, from elementary and secondary schools and representatives from Capital Health and other area health authorities. As well, University of Alberta School of Public Health researchers would be consulted and invited to participate in the symposium.

Because there is no allocation for a health symposium, the intent would be to keep costs to a minimum by having presenters from the district and partner organizations. The costs incurred for refreshments, venue, printing and such would be covered through a participant registration fee.

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Appendix I Preliminary Plan for Comprehensive School Health Symposium

**PRELIMINARY PLAN FOR  
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH SYMPOSIUM**

<b>Timelines</b>	<b>Actions</b>
September	Consulting Services convene a meeting of representatives from Consulting Services, Curriculum and Programs to serve as the leadership team, identify stakeholders and confirm roles and responsibilities of the three units.
October (beginning)	Contact other stakeholders and invite them to participate in planning of symposium
October (mid)	Convene first meeting of the planning committee, confirm roles and responsibilities of the participants
November	Confirm date of symposium, tentative program, book venue, inform Board of Trustees, inform schools
December	Identify possible presenters and extend invitations to them
January	Finalize presenters
February	Confirm symposium program, advise Board of Trustees and schools
March	Host symposium