

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

June 15, 2010

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Update on Plan to Promote Healthy Food and Beverage Choices

ORIGINATOR: D. Barrett, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE

STAFF: Jan Anderson, Brian Barclay, Gloria Chalmers, Sandy Forster, Monica Ellis, Ken Sanford, Don Zabloski

INFORMATION

This report provides an update on the progress the District has made to date with respect to the Plan to Promote Healthy Food and Beverage Choices brought to Board March 11, 2008. The plan is designed to reduce and ultimately eliminate less healthy foods and beverages sold in school environments. The plan is supported by Board Policy GBE.BP – Health and Wellness of Staff and Students which recommends a comprehensive school health approach.

Work on the actions identified in the plan (Appendix I) is ongoing. To date the emphasis has been on vending machines and, more recently, on school stores. Next year, the work will focus on school stores and high school cafeterias. For many reasons – changes in availability of product, variability in nature and quantity of community support and the fact that changing nutrition and fitness habits is a long-term process - the work required is long term. A description of the actions undertaken this year follow.

The collaboration among Purchasing, Curriculum and Programs and links with Alberta Health Services remain critical to the success of the implementation plan. Purchasing, working with legal counsel, developed a vendor contract that specifies that the District has sole control over the selection of school products. As well, vendors and suppliers continue to be required to complete a “Nutritional Template” developed by Alberta Health Services. As Purchasing continues to renew vendor contracts, the aforementioned conditions enable Purchasing to ensure compliance with the plan.

Curriculum, in collaboration with Programs, promotes the preparation and selling of food in compliance with food safety and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) requirements. Twelve junior and senior high Foods teachers completed “Food and Safety Training” Levels 1 and 2. Other staff, for instance Breakfast Club coordinators, have also been trained. Having trained staff and adequate food preparation facilities enables the school to apply for a “Food Handlers Permit,” which allows the school to prepare, serve and sell food to students. As well, both departments meet on an on-going basis with community partners who provide support related to selecting and serving nutritious local food and providing sustainable local sources. Such partners include Grow Alberta, Original Fare, Canadian Culinary Federation and City Farm.

Programs created a Health and Wellness website (<http://programs.epsb.ca/health-wellness>) to provide easy access to schools and partners regarding policies, regulations and related health and wellness information. The *Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth*, the supporting document *Steps to a Healthy School Environment: School Nutrition Handbook* and the newly created *Single Serving List* are documents available on this site. The department participated in the “Parents as Partners” evening on “Healthy Eating and Active Living” presenting on the *Plan to Promote Healthy Food and Beverage Choices*. Examples of exemplary practices in promoting healthy practices were provided by Ottewell and Beacon Heights schools. Programs and Purchasing continue to work closely with vendors and suppliers to increase the range of healthy product availability. As well, both departments have worked with Lillian Osborne High School to provide suggestions for lunch vendors at the site. The three departments met with two District chefs to begin discussions on purchasing local foods, centralizing purchasing and the possibility of high school cafeterias supplying food to junior highs.

Dietitians and environmental health officers from Alberta Health Services produced a brochure called *Food Safety in Schools*. The brochure is available on the health and wellness website. Programs in partnership with dietitians from Alberta Health Services offered an information session on “Running a Healthy School Store.” This was attended by representatives from 14 junior high schools. The three departments, with advice from Alberta Health Services, continue to assess products and reply to queries from schools about such things as nutrition, food choice options and healthy fund raising ideas.

Several times a year, schools are reminded through “Need to Know” news about the health and wellness expectations identified in the policy, regulation and plan.

A number of other district initiatives provide support to the implementation of the plan, the policy and the regulation. Some examples include:

- Consulting Services, in collaboration with Edmonton Catholic Schools, hosted a successful Comprehensive School Health Symposium this fall as a follow-up to the two hosted last year.
- Alberta Project Promoting active Living and healthy Eating (APPLE) schools promising practices have been shared with the district W8 schools (Athlone, Belmead, Brightview, Glendale, Inglewood, Prince Charles, Sherwood, Youngstown) and with administrators in Millwoods schools; other schools have indicated interest in being involved and future presentations are anticipated.
- Four district schools – Beacon Heights, Grace Martin, Sherwood and Westlawn – were successful in receiving a grant from Breakfast Clubs Canada. Beacon Heights began their program in January 2010 and others plan to begin providing breakfasts for their students in May 2010.
- Through our partnerships with the Edmonton School lunch and snack programs, nine schools provide a hot lunch and 18 schools provide healthy snacks.
- Through the Food for Thought Program, 10 schools provide lunches to students in need.
- Many schools are involved in various Alberta Milk programs. About 40 schools are involved in Power4Bones, a fun and innovative cross-curricular program for Grade 5 students based on multiple learning styles that teaches about bone health. Forty-nine schools are involved in Club Moo, a program that encourages youth to develop the habit of drinking milk daily. As well, a number of schools are involved in Power to Play, a

superhero-themes Grades 1 to 3 program encouraging healthy eating and physical activity.

The District is committed to continuing to work across departments and with partners, including parents, to support schools to educate and encourage students to make positive health and wellness decisions.

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APPENDIX I Plan to Promote Healthy Food and Beverage Choices: Progress to Date and Revisions

PLAN TO PROMOTE HEALTHY FOOD AND BEVERAGE CHOICES, PROGRESS TO DATE AND REVISIONS

Promotion and provision of healthy food and beverage options to encourage students to routinely make healthy choices

Timelines	Actions (Proposed March 11, 2008)	Actions Completed by March 2009	Actions Completed by April 2010
April 2008 to September 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate by April 30, 2008, the Health and Wellness Policy and Regulation, Plan and interim guidelines/criteria to promote healthy food and beverage choices. • In consultation with Purchasing, examine in greater detail the existing contracts with caterers, food suppliers and vendors; hold consultation meetings with schools (23) and vendors of contracts that end December 2008 by June 30, 2008 and establish a schedule to consult by June 30, 2009 with those schools (56) whose contracts end between January 2009 and August 2011. • Seek input by June 30, 2008 from principals regarding the interim guidelines/criteria prior to finalizing the criteria. • Using feedback on the interim guidelines/criteria and the assistance of health authority nutritionists, finalize criteria by September 30, 2008 for identifying <i>choose most often, choose sometimes</i> foods to enable schools to identify healthy choices • In collaboration with health authority nutritionists and vendors identify and lobby for product availability (Ongoing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved • Achieved • Achieved • Achieved • Achieved 	
October 2008 to September 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information sessions regarding the criteria and strategies for making the changes (as needed, October 2008 to June 30, 2009) • Maintain and expand partnerships with health authorities and other community organizations in support of healthy choices (Ongoing) • By August 2009, require 70% of food and beverages sold in schools to be in the <i>choose most often</i> or <i>choose sometimes</i> categories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in progress • Work in progress • Have involved legal counsel and Purchasing to finalize a contract template. 	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Ongoing work</p> <p>Vendor contract template finalized</p> <p>By September 2009, 100% of foods and beverages sold in school vending machines vetted through the District process were from the <i>choose most often</i> and <i>choose sometimes</i> categories.</p>

Timelines	Actions (Proposed March 11, 2008)	Actions Completed by March 2009	Actions Completed by April 2010
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue consultation with caterers, food suppliers and vendors whose contracts end by August 2011 (Ongoing) • Provide schools with information regarding healthy fundraising, special events and food safety guidelines. (Ongoing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in progress • Work in progress 	<p>Work ongoing with caterers, food suppliers and vendors</p> <p>On an ongoing basis respond to queries from schools</p>
September 2009 to August 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By August 2011, require that 100% of food and beverages sold in schools to be in the <i>choose most often</i> or <i>choose sometimes</i> category; at least 50% of items offered must be from the <i>choose most often</i> category • Require that foods sold or provided in schools from the <i>choose least often</i> category be eliminated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in progress. • Requirement remains the same. 	<p>Revised action: 80%:20% ratio in elementary schools, 60%:40% ratio in junior high schools, and 50%:50% ratio in high schools, respectively.*</p> <p>Purchasing assists schools to re-negotiate vending machine contents to reflect healthier choices.</p>

* Children require different levels of support for decision making at different ages

- In the youngest children, good decision making is encouraged by ensuring all available choices would be good choices.
- As children mature, it is important that they learn how to identify and make good choices on their own. Schools should offer a balance between recognizing at the need for young people to learn and practice good decision making, and modeling good life style choices.
- Note that the majority of foods available to children of all ages should be healthy, however older students can be given the opportunity for greater independence in decision making.