

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 11, 2004

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Obesity in School Age Children: Follow Up

ORIGINATOR: B. Holt, Executive Director, Instructional and Curricular Support Services

RESOURCE

STAFF: Gloria Chalmers, Elaine Decker, Dennis Huculak, Barbara Milne, Kevin Stevenson, Stuart Wachowicz, Stephen Wright, Don Zabloski

INFORMATION

This report provides an update to the January 27, 2004 board report entitled *Obesity in School Age Children*. All options for augmenting current practice reported in the previous report were reviewed. Some have been acted upon this year within current 2003-2004 budgets and others will be included in the 2004-2005 budgets and acted upon in the next academic year. A chart identifying the actions, staff responsible and timelines for completion is provided in Appendix I.

Because several of the proposed actions overlap and require coordinated action, it was decided to group them under themes and deal with them collectively. The themes are:

- Information sharing and professional development
- Policy and regulation
- Curriculum
- Parent involvement

With regard to information sharing and professional development, the majority of the work will take place in the fall of 2004. Information about best practices and effective resources will be distributed in various formats, including the Focus website. With regard to sample timetables for elementary and junior high schools, the plan is to provide them on an ongoing basis as the provincial requirements are established. Information from nutrition and active living initiatives in the City Centre Project will be disseminated this academic year.

With regard to policy and regulation, review of pertinent documentation such as the Action in Schools for Physical Education & Nutrition (ASPEN) report will be undertaken this academic year. If the review suggests that additional policies or regulations are required, this work would be undertaken in the 2004-2005 school year.

With regard to curriculum, some of the work is ongoing and the other actions will be undertaken in the fall of 2004. With regard to parent involvement, information sharing is an ongoing activity. However, a Key Communicators' session on nutrition and healthy living, to be developed in collaboration with Capital Health, is projected for 2004-2005. A copy of the article that appeared

in *Keynotes* as a follow up to the January board report on Obesity is provided in Appendix II. Appendix III provides a summary report and evaluations from a well-attended, well-received, parent meeting held in April on the topic *Healthy Lunches & Snacks for Kids*. Eighty parents attended, 50 completed evaluations and of those 35 indicated that they heard about the information session through their school council or school newsletter. Schools were advised of this information session by communications.

GC:ee

APPENDIX I: Action Plan
APPENDIX II: Key Notes: Board examines strategies for addressing childhood obesity
APPENDIX III: Summary Report and Evaluations: Healthy Lunches & Snacks for Kids

ACTION PLAN

Theme	Actions Identified Within Theme	Responsibility	Timeline
Information Sharing and Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investigate the feasibility of all schools having access to physical education and health expertise on staff. - Develop and distribute sample timetables for elementary and junior high schools that meet provincial and district requirements, including the phasing in of required physical activities. - Collect and share information regarding best practices in physical education and health, for example, Positive Playgrounds, <i>Ever Active Schools</i>, food and beverages available at school. - Collect and share information regarding effective resources, for example, Body Image Kits, Walking Tour of Canada and Capital Health Website. - Highlight strategies that demonstrate how physical education and health courses support the instructional focus work. - Encourage schools to use or seek healthy prizes from donors, for example, skipping ropes or balls instead of candy; providing milk and apples along with pizza - Continue to support and participate in “Activeedmonton” - Disseminate information learned through initiatives in the City Centre Education Project related to nutrition and active living. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stuart Wachowicz Stephen Wright Don Zabloski Barb Milne Don Zabloski Barb Milne Don Zabloski Barb Milne Don Zabloski Barb Milne Don Zabloski Karen Bardy Gloria Chalmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2004 Spring 2004 (junior high distributed) Fall 2004 Fall 2004 Fall 2004 Fall 2004 Fall 2004 Ongoing June 2004
Policy and Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pursue the Canadian soft drink industries commitment to eliminating carbonated drinks in elementary and junior high and support the introduction of water, juice and other nutritional offerings at all levels of schooling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dennis Huculak Kevin Stevenson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 2004

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Propose to Alberta Learning that there be a provincially coordinated initiative involving appropriate ministries and organizations to examine the issue of healthy nutrition and active lifestyles. - Follow up Action in Schools for Physical Education & Nutrition (ASPEN) report and determine implications for policy and regulation 	<p>Stuart Wachowicz Don Zabloski</p> <p>Dennis Huculak Gloria Chalmers</p>	<p>June 2004</p> <p>June 2004</p>
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide representation to Alberta Learning regarding the present health curriculum with the view of placing greater emphasis on food and food preparation and the possibility of offering practical arts courses at the junior high level, including home economics with an emphasis on food and nutrition. - Support a junior high school pilot with a locally developed course about Nutritious Food Preparation. - Re-evaluate, in collaboration with Alberta learning and surrounding districts, the use of summer school as a mechanism for offering physical education and CALM. - Follow-up provincial requirements regarding physical education & physical activity 	<p>Stuart Wachowicz</p> <p>Stuart Wachowicz Stephen Wright Stuart Wachowicz Kevin Stephenson</p> <p>Stephen Wright Don Zabloski</p>	<p>June 2004</p> <p>Fall/Winter 2004</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
Parent Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide information to parents about healthy, active lifestyles through the district's various communication vehicles and provide opportunities for consultation and involvement. 	<p>Elaine Decker</p>	<p>Ongoing Key Communicator Session 2004-2005</p>

Board examines strategies for addressing childhood obesity

In recent months, childhood obesity has become a hot topic in media reports across the country – and for good reason. In a fifteen year period, Canada’s childhood obesity rates tripled, rising from two per cent in 1981 to between 10 and 15 per cent in 1996. While the causes behind the jump in obesity rates are complex, and include everything from increased consumption of junk foods to a reduction in physical activity, the potential impact is frightening. For instance, Type 2 diabetes, which was traditionally considered a “middle age” disease, is now increasingly prevalent in school-aged children, many of who are also at greater risk for hypertension.

In response to a request from the Board, the administration recently completed a comprehensive report that detailed the policies and programs the district currently employs to promote a healthy, active lifestyle. “Our teachers address many of the issues through the curriculum, extracurricular activities and other collaborative initiatives,” explains Don Zabloski, physical education consultant. “More specifically, students at the elementary and junior high level should spend a minimum of 10 per cent of their time engaged in physical education and health instruction, which is an Alberta Learning instructional requirement.”

Although the current curriculum supports physical activity, the one area that the report identified as requiring additional emphasis was nutrition. “We realize we need to put more focus on the nutrition component,” says Zabloski. “In particular, we need to share additional information on healthy living with students and their families.” Zabloski is quick to point out that any effort to address childhood obesity issues must involve schools, parents and the greater community. “It’s a necessary partnership and we all have a part to play in helping students make healthier choices.”

To that end, a number of options for augmenting the current programs and services during the 2004-2005 year were discussed in the report, including providing opportunities for consultations with school councils and other stakeholders. A second report, outlining proposed district plans and implementation costs, will be brought to the Board for consideration in June.



Summary Report and Evaluations

Healthy Lunches & Snacks for Kids Parent Information Evening April 14, 2004

BACKGROUND:

The parent information evening was an initiative planned by school nurses from Bonnie Doon, Duggan, Westlawn and Mill Woods Public Health Centres, Community Health Services. It is part of a number of comprehensive strategies to address childhood obesity through promotion of healthy weights in children & youth. This particular session provided parents with information about what they can do to help their kids eat healthier. It was a partnership event including community dietitian, Edmonton Public Library (Whitemud branch), Alberta Milk, schools, parents from school councils and trustees.

ATTENDANCE: 80 parents participated and many brought their children to the Whitemud public library site. Of those attending, 28 came from Duggan area, 13 from Mill Woods area, 9 from Bonnie Doon, 4 from the Westend and 3 from North side areas.

EVALUATIONS (50 completed)

1. What did you find most helpful?

- Most of the topics
- The choices
- Almost everything I heard was helpful and useful
- The info on juice. The recipes for breakfast. The shopping suggestion. How kids can help set out ingredients
- Snacking hints were great. Changing things slowly. More Family involvement
- Handouts, recipes, displays were very informative
- Ruth West's food ideas for healthy choices, not only for kids but also for myself
- Very informative
- Tips for lunch, supper. Be a model for kids. Plan before shopping.

- Unsweetened orange juice education. That need to present foods 10 times before child will accept
- Nutritional information
- Fruits
- The recipes, the sugar comparison, the choice of alternative foods
- Handouts / Recipes ideas
- Centering discussion around actual grocery store products was very helpful. Backing up comments with real life examples
- Just having a refresher regarding this type of info is very helpful- a lot of the info I had heard before but it was good to be reminded!
- The alternatives to “unhealthy” choices (environment)
- All the sugars in juice
- Sugar samples. Lunch ideas
- The handouts and presentation. Quick and easy ideas – practical
- Excellent snack and lunch ideas
- Lunch ideas for kids – handouts. Ideas on providing fruit / vogs for lunch
- Sugar content in drinks. Idea of involving the whole family in the choosing and planning
- Overall great presentation
- Sugar amounts – Wow!
- Specific tips. Easy ideas
- Handouts –awesome! Especially Ruth’s and the idea of using it to frame her presentation. Real food and product container examples. Information was relevant, just enough, age appropriate, presented in a way that you could go out and do it right away.
- Good ideas on changes to make
- The way the presentation was organized
- Snacks for kids after school
- Know what’s healthy food
- Have more foods pre-ready (break the barriers)
- Very practical tips
- Bitterness of veggies. Cereal for snacks. Mini gos frozen. The more we eat, the more we want/crave it. Change your tastes.
- Prepare healthy lunch for my kid
- Food alternatives
- All
- 5 helpful hints for healthier kids. Recipe ideas / helpful handouts. Helpful hints on after school snacks
- Cut veggies / fruits into shapes. Tips for lunch/snacks
- The suggested alternatives to the norm
- Ruth is a credible source of information and that make my time to come to evening like this even more worthwhile.
- Ruth’s handout including recipes. The food boxes/packages on display -makes it real
- The presenter (Ruth) was amazing! The handout including recipes. Handout pickups at the beginning of the session
- Snack ideas and meal ideas

- Knowing what sugar content in juices and pop. After school snacks.
- Great presentation
- Know that low fat food are also appealing to kids

2. What changes do you think you will make as a result of this presentation?

- Serve more fruits and vegetables
- Eat healthier
- The lunchable pack for my daughter. Now she will take the healthiest lunch and snack
- More available veggies. Water in lunches. Buy red peppers/pretzels
- Just a touch too long. Very informative otherwise
- Do a kitchen makeover. Watch sugar intake in drinks more closely
- Reevaluate the foods I eat on a day to day basis
- Make a banana sandwich tomorrow morning. My son will be my helper!
- More variety for lunches and sending milk coupons instead of fruit juices
- No changes. Excellent presentation
- Serve kids under 3 years fruits and vegetables
- Less juice! I had no idea there was so much sugar. Move the healthy choices to a shelf in the fridge the kids can reach
- My kids will go to school with more varied lunches and the lunches will have a healthier flare (mine will too)
- Shopping lists
- Get my family involved – so that everyone can be helping with the choices
- The way I shop – what doesn't come in my home won't be eaten
- Cut healthy foods in small portions and freeze foods for snacking
- More milk, better snacks
- Reduce junk food at home and have fruits and veggies more available
- More ideas and variety for nutritious lunches/snacks. Ideas for increasing milk consumption
- More variety in lunch and supper
- Kitchen makeover. I like the idea of bringing in junk foods for special times only
- Already apply snacks, lunches. Will try some of Ruth's ideas
- Drinks and snacks at home
- Tighter rein on what I buy
- Role modeling. Intentionally providing more and better and more convenient after school snacks. So a "kitchen makeover". Develop a binder of recipes – with my family and give them a copy when they leave home
- The way I shop for food, and making them available
- Need to give more emphasis on vegs and fruits and less on drinks/junk foods etc.
- Juice and soft drinks has a lot of sugar
- Trying to cut the veggies in different ways
- Make foods more accessible to the kids
- More discussion at school about nutrition issues
- Cut apples in stars. Juice intake. Mini pizza. Be a better example. Offer more often and regular veggies.

- Variety food such as fruit, vegetables, meat – at same time let her to choose one of them
- Change my children/husband snack choices
- Less drinks other than milk. Freeze grapes and serve frozen veg as snacks
- Become a better role model with nutrition and kids. Become a more active parent with my kids. Monitor what I purchase at grocery store. Get my kids involved with shopping and cooking
- Drink more milk/more dairy products
- Make my own lunch box
- I will make and encourage more water consumption or even diet pop. Buy 2 4 liters of milk at a time, instead of 1. Inquire at school about a milk program!
- Plan weekly menu. More healthy food in home
- We eat pretty healthy right now and I'm blessed to be able to be home – I can prepare most of what goes in our mouths. A change I'll make is probably allowing myself more "good" fats i.e. found in dairy; cheese –dressings, etc.
- Make a more conscientious effort with planning meals and snacks. Be more of an example around the kids I work with daily
- Slicing peppers into the "fun" ring shapes. Preparing vegetables ahead of time and making them easily accessible to kids
- Having healthier food choices in the house for after school snacks
- Choosing foods that are nutritious rather than because my kids like it.

3. Other comments / suggestions

- Overall it was very informative
- It was very helpful. I gain more information in nutritious food.
- Thank you for an informative session.
- Excellent lecture
- Great presentation
- Print more handouts
- What a fantastic program. I have learned so much.
- Please include lunch foods (boxed convenience types) sold in grocery store ie. granola bars, fruit rollups, etc. It would be very helpful to know which ones are healthy
- Thanks for the great talk
- Ruth is a great presenter – good use of visuals and she is very knowledgeable and has good rapport with her audience. Thank you! Great evening!
- More supper ideas
- Do another presentation on teen foods an eating or repeat this one
- I send healthy lunches and snacks for my son-but the other kids in his class eat a lot of unhealthy foods (chocolate and pop). –so I was starting to rethink my healthy choices. After this talk I am going to stick to my healthy food options! Thank You!
- Very interesting and lots of great ideas
- I'll definitely try Milk 2Go on my kids. Tastes great ! Should go to schools and talk to students
- Come in to classrooms and do this presentation for kids. Thanks for the snacks
- Thanks for the great food snacks and I like that this was partnership venture.

- Ruth is so “down to earth”; approachable. Knows her subject obviously but also her audience (kids, parents, families). I loved her practical approach! A fantastic ambassador for dietitians!
- Get her to come again and this time focus on teens
- It’s great. Keep on do some more programs, like this
- Offering a session like this for breakfast ideas for kids
- Excellent presentation. A presentation on picky eaters
- Wonderful
- Go to elementary school talk to the students, please let them know healthy food is very important for them to grow
- Excellent presentation
- Presenting to schools may make kids thinking more about eating healthy
- Very good
- Have a table set up with low fat (i.e. cheeses) and whole grains for the kids that come to try and give us some feed back
- Very good. Good recipes
- Ruth is great. Good voice to listen to. Very energetic, positive and smiley
- I noted that you ran out of handouts and flyers early on...more copies needed next time perhaps.
- Ruth is amazing; loved her presentation and the positive outlook and energetic attitude she had.
- I would be interested in a session about picky eaters. I had 4 friends who were very interested in this session but couldn’t make it.
- This was a great presentation. It is always great to learn about new food choices and presentation ideas for kids

4. How did you hear about this evening?

- 4 Poster / Flyer .
- 5 School Council Meeting
- 30 School Newsletter
- 5 Friend
- 3 Edmonton Public Library
- 1 stated Twin Brook Health Clinic
- 5 Other