

Sustaining Comprehensive School Health: Keeping Schools Motivated

Comprehensive School Health (CSH) is a whole school approach that supports students' health and educational success (Figure 1). Many schools in Alberta use this approach to create healthy learners and healthy school environments. CSH is meant to be an ongoing process, rather than a time-limited project. It is important that schools and school districts build the capacity to maintain this approach on a long-term basis to sustain improvements in school health.

To build capacity and sustain CSH schools can:

- Involve all school community members to create buy in.
- Improve skills and knowledge among staff and students.
- Connect to information, experts, tools and funding options.
- Celebrate and share successes within the school and broader community.
- Form partnerships with community groups.
- Embed health into the culture of the school through changes to policy and practice.

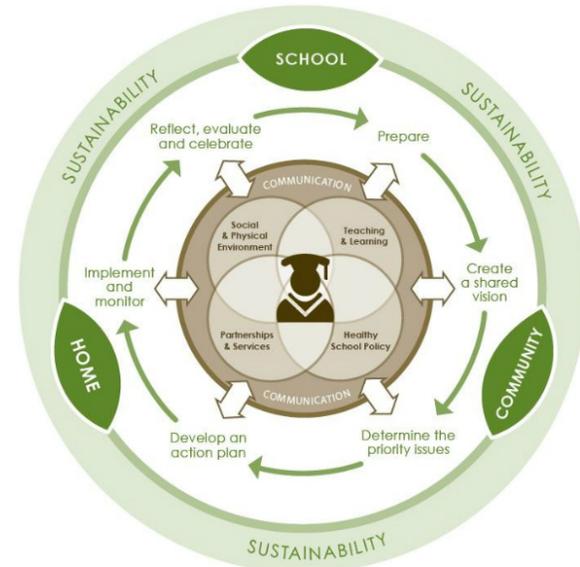


Figure 1: Process Model for Building Healthy School Communities using the CSH Approach (The Alberta Healthy School Community Wellness Fund)

Involving students, teachers and administrators supports the sustainability of healthy school communities. Here are some ideas of how to engage these groups:

Students can:

- Provide input on changes they want to see happen in their school through surveys or forums.
- Organize and run wellness events, such as physical activity tournaments and healthy fundraisers.
- Contribute to school newsletters or websites by writing about health topics that they find interesting.
- Plan and lead celebrations of school health successes. Examples could include: smoothie parties, games in the gym, or opportunities for different student teams to get together and share their school successes.

Teachers can:

- Model healthy actions and encourage others to do the same. For example, bringing a healthy lunch models good nutrition practices.
- Get community partners and families involved. This could be done by hosting a healthy family fun night or meeting with the parent council to gather their ideas.

- Connect with health champions from different schools to share successes, challenges, tips, and offer support for the schools implementing CSH initiatives.
- Recognize students, staff or community members who have played a major role in maintaining or improving the goals of the CSH action plan.

Administrators can:

- Plan professional development (PD) and training sessions for teachers and school staff. This could be formal PD or just a 10 minute time slot at a staff meeting to share school health success stories or ideas on a specific topic (e.g. providing physical activity ideas to settle an excited class).
- Consult with school stakeholders to keep them updated on plans or ways they can help.
- Find funding to support an initiative goal that may require financial assistance.
 - o For funding opportunities, visit: <http://www.wellnessfund.ualberta.ca/>

For more information on the CSH approach and resources to motivate your school, please visit www.albertahealthservices.ca/csh.asp or contact HealthyWeightsTeam@albertahealthservices.ca