

Ministry of Education

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Ministère de l'Éducation

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Toronto ON M7A 1L2



MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Supervisory Officers and Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities
Director of Provincial Schools

FROM: Marg Connor
Director
Learning Environment Branch

DATE: September 26, 2012

RE: Healthy Schools and Student Well-Being Support and Monitoring Plan

The Ministry of Education is committed to making schools healthier places for students and establishing the conditions needed for students to reach their full potential. A healthy school environment contributes to improving student learning and enhancing students' overall well-being. Research shows that "health and education success are intertwined: schools cannot achieve their primary mission of education if students are not healthy"¹.

The Ministry's healthy schools and student well-being initiatives, as well as Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, provide opportunities for students to establish healthy behaviours that will last a lifetime. The Ministry has developed a number of policies and programs impacting the health and well-being of students, these include:

- Daily Physical Activity (PPM138), 2005
- Sabrina's Law – An Act to Protect Anaphylactic Pupils, 2006
- Foundation for a Healthy School framework, 2006
- Healthy Schools Recognition Program, 2006
- Support for the Life Saving Society's Swim to Survive Program
- School Food and Beverage Policy (PPM150), 2011
- Trans Fat Standards Regulation, 2008

To support implementation of these policies/programs the Ministry has provided school boards with funding, resources and training. For more information about the Healthy Schools and Student Well-Being policies/programs visit www.ontario.ca/healthyschools

Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, the Ministry of Education will be initiating a support and monitoring plan, in order to assess the uptake of student well-being programs within schools. The objectives of the support and monitoring plan will be to:

- increase the understanding and awareness of the healthy schools policies/programs and the resources available to support implementation;

¹ M. M. Storey, M. S. Nanney, and M. B. Schwartz, "Schools and Obesity Prevention: Creating School Environments and Policies to Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity", *The Milbank Quarterly*, 87(1), (2009), p. 72.

- work closer and more strategically with school boards to identify current successes and challenges with implementation;
- provide supports to assist with implementation; and
- establish a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of the healthy schools policies/ programs at the school board and school level and identify opportunities for linkages between student well-being initiatives in support of student achievement.

The plan will include three distinct components:

1. **School Board Visits**

Each year Ministry staff will identify two school boards per region to participate in school board visits (one face-to-face meeting with designated school board staff and visits to one elementary and one secondary school). Regional office staff will contact school boards to confirm their willingness to participate, once confirmed, Ministry staff will coordinate details for the visit with identified school board staff, including an outline of the questions for the visit. The visits are intended to be a starting point for continued discussions to support implementation of healthy schools policies/programs.

2. **Adobe Connect Webinars**

The Ministry will be offering three Adobe Connect webinar sessions on various Healthy Schools topics. The sessions will be targeted to individuals responsible for the school board implementation of healthy schools policies/programs. The sessions will provide information about the policy and resources to support implementation, strategies to assist with challenges, opportunities to interact and share promising practices, and research evidence to support the linkages between academic achievement and well-being.

- Week of November 27th and 28th, 2012 – School Food and Beverage Policy
- Week of January 29th and 30th, 2013 – Physical Activity
- April – topic TBD

Additional information will be sent to school boards for registration for these sessions.

3. **E-Newsletter**

An e-newsletter will be distributed to all school boards and schools across the province in January and May. The e-newsletter will provide updates on healthy schools policies/programs, share exemplary practice from the field, and provide updates on key student health and well-being initiatives.

If you have any questions please contact your Regional Office or me at 416-325-7645 or by email at marg.connor@ontario.ca.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to making schools healthier places for students to learn.

Marg Connor
Director

- c. Kathy Verduyn, Director, Field Service Branch
Regional Managers, Ministry of Education Regional Offices.
- Barry Finlay, Director, Special Education Policy and Programs
- Barry Pervin, Assistant Deputy Minister, Instruction and Leadership Development Division