

## DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROJECT 2009-2010

### Rationale

- Obesity rates more than tripled in Canada from 1981 – 1996 (*Tremblay, CMAJ, 2000, 163 (11): 1429 – 33*)
- With younger Canadians who are inactive and becoming obese, we are going to see high blood pressure and Type 2 diabetes arising at earlier ages. Those conditions will result in more heart attacks and strokes. (*Dr. Andrea Wielgosz, Reader's Digest, February 2007: 104*)
- 1 in 3 children born in 2000 will develop Type 2 Diabetes. (*Center for Disease Control 2003*)
- Only 13% of Canadian children are getting the recommended 90 minutes of physical activity a day. (*2009 Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card*)
- Over 90% of Type 2 diabetes and 80% of coronary heart disease could be avoided or postponed with good nutrition, regular physical exercise, and the elimination of smoking. (*The Integrated Pan-Canadian Healthy Living Strategy*)

Over the past two years, schools in the Western School District have initiated a variety of initiatives to help get students more active and healthy: Daily Physical Activity, Active School Playgrounds, Nutrition Policy, Tobacco Free Schoolyards, and monthly school wide activity programs. It is hoped that schools will continue to build on the momentum that has been created with these efforts.

This project is an 'active' school program based on a model delivered by The Thames Valley School Board in Ontario and subsequently implemented in all K – 6 schools in central Newfoundland by the Nova Central School District and in many K – 6 schools in eastern and western Newfoundland. Participation for schools in the Daily Physical Activity program is voluntary. Those schools that choose to get involved agree to provide 180 minutes of physical activity for students in a six-day cycle. This typically amounts to twenty minutes or more on non-gym days. Sessions are led by classroom teachers and are linked as much as possible to regular classroom curriculum. Teachers will receive training in how to facilitate DPA (Daily Physical Activity) and will also receive ongoing support to make changes in their instructional strategies and include new activities. Each classroom teacher will receive a resource kit containing props that can be used to get students moving such as bean bags, juggling scarves, no-bounce balls, music CD's, move cubes, and rubber chickens.

The Daily Physical Activity project is spearheaded in the western region by a local Active Living Committee. The Committee is made up of various stakeholders who have come together out of concern about the lack of physical activity and poor nutrition among adults and children, which is leading to high rates of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

In the 2007 – 2008 school year, six K – 6 schools in the Western School District participated in a pilot program and were trained in the Daily Physical Activity model. Seven more schools implemented the program in the 2008-2009 school year. In a recent survey of school principals, twenty K – 6 schools requested training and support for DPA for the 2009 – 2010 school year.