

LIVING HEALTHY

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SEPTEMBER, 2009

WESTERN SCHOOL DISTRICT

LIVING HEALTHY COMMOTIONS

The Departments of Education and Health and Community Services are pleased to announce that funding for the 4th annual Living Healthy Commotions has been approved. This day focuses on special activities to kickstart an increased focus in schools on healthy eating, physical activity, and smoke free environments. This year, TWO Commotions will be sponsored. The first Living Healthy Commotions will be held in the Western School District on the same day as the Terry Fox National School Run (Friday, Sept. 25). The second day for the Olympic Commotions will be held on Friday, February 26, which has been designated as Newfoundland and Labrador Day at the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games. In an earlier press release, Premier Danny Williams said that this day in February will coincide with celebratory activities in schools and communities throughout the province so an Olympic Commotions seems like a good fit here.

A package of resource materials is available on the provincial web site at www.livinghealthyschools.com. In addition, success stories from nine of our schools are featured there. Registered schools will receive the same financial support that they received the past three years and that will be based on your school population. **Please register your school for the September Living Healthy Commotion with me by Monday, Sept. 21. Registration forms will be emailed to each school and must be emailed or faxed to Bill Allan at 634-1828 to be eligible for funding.**

The Commotions is a great way to generate school spirit. Schools often have the Safe and Caring Schools Committee or the Living Healthy School Team co-ordinate this activity. Commotion ideas that have worked well in the past include:

- Organize a run or walk.
- Have a healthy snack or lunch for students.
- Launch a new healthy menu in the cafeteria. Arrange for taste tests of new items.
- Have an art contest. Students create and laminate healthy eating placemats for use in the school.
- During an assembly, have students lead a giant dance routine.

LIVING HEALTHY SCHOOL TEAMS

Over the past few years, schools with Living Healthy School Teams have made great strides in improving the health of students and staff. This team generally consists of members of the Safe and Caring School Committee and could include individuals with a special interest in health and wellness. The physical education teacher and public health nurse might form a solid nucleus of such a team. Living healthy teams could take responsibility for:

- planning the Living Healthy Commotions Day,
- posting wellness messages around the school,
- planning physical activity opportunities for students and staff (i.e. Terry Fox Run, Stepping Out activities, Kids Eat Smart Walk to Breakfast),
- monitoring menu items in canteen and cafeteria to see if they fit the School Food Guidelines,
- looking for health promotion opportunities with the community for students and staff.

On our web site at http://web.wnlsd.ca/student_health/, we have placed Posters, Displays, Presentations, and Educational Resources that could be used in schools. Feel free to use them.

HEALTHY FOODS TENDER

The Western School District has secured standing offer pricing for healthy foods for its schools. The Coleman's Group of Companies has agreed to continue this year. Coleman's will deliver on a weekly basis to 36 schools as far north as Cow Head. Schools may wish to order for their breakfast, lunch, or snack programs from the standing offer price list found at http://web.wnlsd.ca/student_health/ (follow link to Eating Healthy). Delivery will usually be made within two working days.

ACTIVE SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS

In May 2009, forty-eight K – 6 schools sent representatives to half-day training sessions for Active School Playgrounds. These schools agreed to implement an active schools playground in the fall of 2009. For the full implementation of this initiative, certain obstacles need to be overcome:

#1 In a survey of the inservice participants, the main obstacle for Active Schools Playgrounds is a **lack of equipment**. Participating schools were helped with a playground kit containing resources to get students active during recess and lunch, i.e. skipping ropes, flying discs, balls, bean bags, and more. Physical Education teachers could show students how to play the playground games in their physical education class (hopscotch, skipping).

#2 Another obstacle was a **lack of play space**. This was partially addressed when playground stencils were made available to schools to spray paint or mark school playgrounds to make them more attractive for active play (i.e. hopscotch, four square, math calculator, and map of Canada).

#3 To overcome the next obstacle, however, help from school administrators will be needed. 40% of teachers at the training sessions stated that a lack of time/ short recess was a major obstacle to the delivery of an active school playground. **27% of schools said they do not go out at all during recess because of a lack of time**. From a health perspective (especially with the oncoming H1N1 virus) and from a learning perspective, **students really benefit from fresh air and an active recess**. If a short recess keeps the students indoors, maybe a few extra minutes could be found to extend the recess break and allow students to go outside and be active. School administrators could discuss this with staff to see how this could be done. Please let me know if you come up with any creative solutions so I can share with other schools.

To help schools with this initiative, we have purchased additional resources for schools including two new playground stencils (Snakes & Ladders and Alphabet Hopscotch). We also have red Active School t-shirts to help identify student leaders on the playground. Let me know if you wish any of these. On our web site, we have placed a list of *Favorite Active Games* of our Physical Education teachers. See http://web.wnlsd.ca/student_health/ and follow link to Active School Playgrounds.

DISTRICT NUTRITION POLICY

All foods and beverages served or sold to students at all school-sponsored events must be in accordance with the Provincial School Food Guidelines. Last year, the following changes were approved to the District's Nutrition Policy found at http://web.wnlsd.ca/student_health/

Energy Drinks

1.7 Energy drinks are high in caffeine, sugar, and additives. As schools are concerned about their affect on students' health, these drinks are **strongly discouraged** on school property.

Special Occasions

1.9 At the discretion of the principal, some flexibility is permitted during special occasions to allow food to be served from outside the Provincial School Food Guidelines. **Special occasion foods can be served up to a maximum of three times per school year** and must be offered along with foods that do fit within the Food Guidelines so students can have a healthier option. If schools choose to exercise this flexibility option, principals are responsible for choosing the 3 special occasions per school year.

Outside Vendors

2.4 No vendor or outside group can sell food on school grounds without the approval of the school principal. If permission is given by the principal, foods provided to students must meet the School Food Guidelines.

Compliance

4.4 To ensure compliance with the Western District Policy, **schools are expected to identify an individual or a committee to promote healthy eating and monitor foods and beverages sold and served to students**. (The committee could be the Living Healthy School Team or the Safe and Caring School Committee.) This individual or committee will carry out a regular review of the canteen, cafeteria, vending machines, and breakfast programs to ensure compliance.

If you need help with the Healthy Students Healthy Schools initiative, please contact:

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