



FOCUS ON HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Helping Students Learn, Grow and Succeed



Welcome to the Fifth Edition of *Focus on Healthy Schools!*

The 2014-15 school year is an exciting new time for education in Ontario as we work together on implementing *Achieving Excellence*, the Ministry of Education's renewed vision for education in Ontario. We invite you to read about this exciting milestone for our Healthy Schools community in this edition of *Focus on Healthy Schools*.

The completely revised *Foundations for a Healthy School* resource is also featured along with information about updates to the Student Nutrition Program. You can also read about promising work in injury prevention, active transportation, and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit student well-being.

We want to know how *Focus* can best serve you, so please share your ideas about this e-bulletin by writing to healthy.schools@ontario.ca.

Thank you for your ongoing work in promoting the well-being of Ontario students.

Fall/Winter 2014-15:

A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario	1
Updated <i>Foundations for a Healthy School</i>	2
Safety Matters: Preventing Injuries in Schools	2
Increasing Physical Activity through Active School Transportation	3
Student Nutrition Programs: Coming to a School Near You!	3
In Focus: Biwaase'aa - Supporting the Well-being of Aboriginal Children and their Families	4

A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario



Based on the input and advice of thousands of Ontarians the government released, [*Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*](#) in April 2014.

The renewed vision builds on the system's

past achievements and sets out four renewed goals for education:

- Achieving Excellence
- Ensuring Equity
- **Promoting Well-Being**, and
- Enhancing Public Confidence.

These four renewed goals are interconnected; success in one contributes to success in the others.

For everyone working on healthy schools, elevating well-being to one of four goals for our education system is recognition of its fundamental importance to our learners and their futures. This goal emphasizes the need to focus on the whole child – their cognitive, emotional, social and physical development.

We know that achieving success in this goal will require continued collaboration among all partners in education, from educators, students, parents and guardians to community organizations, service providers and many others.

For more information on the renewed vision, visit www.ontario.ca/eduvision.



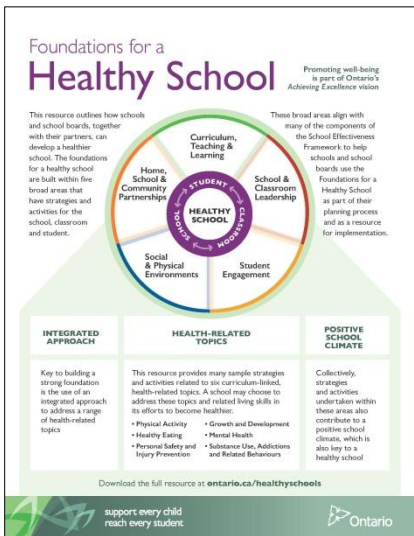
Updated Foundations for a Healthy School

The research is clear: healthy students are better prepared to learn, and student well-being is crucial to student achievement. The *Foundations for a Healthy School* resource has been completely revised and is designed to help schools and school boards establish a holistic approach to developing a healthy school.

The *Foundations for a Healthy School* resource aims to contribute to the work of schools to improve student achievement and well-being. To encourage greater alignment between healthy schools policies, programs and initiatives and the education system's planning processes, the revised resource connects with the K-12 School Effectiveness Framework (K-12 SEF). This resource now includes five interrelated areas that align with the K-12 SEF components:

1. Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
2. School and Classroom Leadership
3. Student Engagement
4. Social and Physical Environments, and
5. Home, School and Community Partnerships

Taking a comprehensive approach that includes strategies and activities from all five areas is key to developing and sustaining a healthy school. This resource outlines sample strategies and activities for use in the school, the classroom, and among students. It also illustrates an integrated approach, as well as ways of contributing to a healthy school in the context of



Download the full resource at ontario.ca/healthyschools

specific health-related topics (i.e., physical activity, healthy eating, personal safety and injury prevention, growth and development, mental health, and substance use, addictions and related behaviours). The resource provides strategies and activities to create a positive school climate – an important element of a healthy school.

For the *Foundations for a Healthy School* resource, visit www.ontario.ca/healthyschools.

Safety Matters: Preventing Injuries in Schools

An important part of supporting achievement and well-being as well as inspiring confidence in publicly-funded education is ensuring that our schools and classrooms are healthy and safe environments for students. Injury is the leading cause of death and disability for children and youth in Canada. With children spending a considerable amount of time at school, injury prevention strategies can greatly improve student safety and health.

According to the [Health Behaviours in School-Aged Children \(HBSC\)](#) survey, in 2010 one in four Canadian students missed a week or more of school due to injuries. Six to 10% of students reported missing five days or more of school due to an injury. The total number of days missed per year was as high as 2,592 per 1,000 students.

We are all partners in promoting the health and safety of students. Some of the initiatives the Ministry of Education has undertaken to that end include

Swim to Survive®

Learning to swim is a fundamental skill that benefits all students. Almost 500 people drown each year in Canada. Drowning can happen in as little as 10 seconds, often within 15 metres of safety, unexpectedly and without the victim signalling for help.

The ministry supports the Lifesaving Society's Swim to Survive program by providing funding to help the Society offer the program to Ontario's publicly funded schools. The Swim to Survive program was developed to help Grade 3 students learn basic survival skills and survive an unexpected fall into deep water. The program is designed to accommodate all abilities while reinforcing the essential survival skills.

The Swim to Survive program includes three in-classroom water safety lessons linked to the Ontario curriculum and three in-water lessons. The program provides training in three essential skills needed to survive an unexpected fall into deep water: rolling into deep water; treading water for one minute; and swimming 50 metres. On average, 67% of Ontario Grade 3 classes have benefitted from the program annually.

Learn more about Swim to Survive at the Lifesaving Society website. www.lifesavingsociety.com

Concussions

Concussions sometimes lead to lifelong negative effects, so it is important that everyone, including children, knows the symptoms and signs of a concussion and what to do if they have one. That is why the ministry supported the development of an educational YouTube video by Dr. Mike Evans. The video is a visual presentation about the signs of a concussion, and the importance of return to physical activity and return to learn plans.



Watch the new video on the Concussion portal.
www.ontario.ca/concussions

Anaphylaxis

The ministry, in cooperation with Anaphylaxis Canada, provides resources to help boards maintain anaphylaxis policies, as mandated by Sabrina's Law. These resources provide information to help schools ensure the safety and standard of care for all children.



Ontario is pleased to announce support of Anaphylaxis Canada's new bilingual e-learning course, Anaphylaxis in Schools: What Educators Need to Know. Access the course at www.allergyaware.ca.

Learn more about Sabrina's Law.
www.ontario.ca/healthyschools

Increasing Physical Activity through Active School Transportation

Physical activity has consistently been associated with children's physical and emotional well-being. Children and youth who walk, rollerblade or bike to and/or from school are more physically active than those who use passive transportation. Physical activity can improve students' attention in class, so active school transportation can get students ready to learn in the morning.

Many schools across Ontario are pursuing initiatives to increase active home-to-school transportation. Innovative projects include:

- incorporating active school transportation days into the school calendar (e.g., Walking Wednesdays or Walk and Roll Fridays);
- conducting group/community walks around the neighbourhood to identify safe routes;

- incorporating programs that actively engage or reward students for their use of active school transportation (e.g., walking school buses, "Golden Shoe" or "Sandal" awards); and
- partnering with other boards, schools or organizations such as Public Health Units to engage the whole community with walking clubs and pedometer challenges.

We invite you to try some of these innovative active transportation initiatives in your school.

Student Nutrition Programs: Coming to a School Near You!



In more than half of Ontario's elementary and secondary schools, Student Nutrition Programs (SNPs) help provide nutritious meals and snacks to children and youth. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services provides funding to 14 community agencies who work locally with community partners and schools to deliver these programs.

The goal of Ontario's Student Nutrition Program is to support learning and healthy development. For this reason, all students, regardless of socioeconomic background, can access the SNP. Positive outcomes associated with SNPs include improved student behaviour, reduced lateness, improved ability to stay on task and higher scores in reading and math.*

The SNP has recently received funding for two expansions. As part of Ontario's Healthy Kids Strategy, over 200 new breakfast programs are being created over two years (2013-14/2014-15).

Through Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy, an additional three-year investment will provide opportunities to enhance existing programs, create approximately 340 new breakfast programs and create First Nation-led programs in some on-reserve schools. Schools eligible for a new program or those affected by program enhancements will be contacted by local agencies throughout the fall. Stay tuned!

*For more information about the benefits of nutritious meals at school see: Feeding Our Future: The First- and Second-Year Evaluation, March 2012, Toronto District School Board.

Biwaase'aa – Supporting the Well-Being of Aboriginal Children and their Families

Biwaase'aa is an Ojibway name that speaks to the early part of the day when the sun is rising and there is a feeling of hope in people's hearts.

Established in 2004, Biwaase'aa (BIH-WAH-SAY-AH) is a culturally centred program that emphasizes the importance of enhancing the physical, cultural, mental and emotional development of urban Aboriginal children and their families.



Having access to nutritional and traditional foods and nutritional information supports the development and sustained health and well-being of children and youth.

Biwaase'aa helps students to feel included, build self-esteem, discover their identities and take pride in their communities.

Biwaase'aa's culturally responsive pedagogy, underscored by respectful relationships results in positive impact on student well-being which is critical to school and life success.

Programs like Biwaase'aa provide key supports to children, families and communities using a holistic approach to the well-being of Aboriginal students. For more information, visit www.shkoday.com.



Biwaase'aa offers structured activities and a food security component to elementary school children within high poverty neighbourhoods in Thunder Bay.

Following the Medicine Wheel paradigm, traditionally-knowledgeable Youth Outreach Workers deliver in-school and

after-school programs including mentoring, literacy/ numeracy supports, food security programs, life skills, and cultural awareness programs such as Powwows, feasts, and family literacy nights. Youth Outreach Workers provide an integral link between parents/caregivers and the school, to help ensure student success. This program nurtures relationships between families, schools and Elders and offers culturally relevant teachings that support the whole school community.

A fundamental component of Biwaase'aa is the Food Security Program, which improves access to healthy food, and teaches students about the consumption of nutritional and traditional foods

While many First Nation, Métis and Inuit students are excelling academically, data demonstrate a persistent gap in achievement levels between Aboriginal students and all students in Ontario.

Culturally relevant supports can have positive impacts on the academic achievement and well-being of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.

The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with school boards, schools, and First Nation, Métis and Inuit partners continue to focus on improving student achievement and well-being among Aboriginal students as well as raising all students' knowledge and awareness of traditional and contemporary Aboriginal histories, cultures and perspectives. Biwaase'aa is an excellent example of this.

To learn about Ontario's First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework, visit

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/policy.html.

Do you have a story to share?

Send your story for a *Focus on Healthy Schools* article to healthy.schools@ontario.ca.