



A CALL FOR ACTION
& URGENT GREEN LIGHT
INITIATIVE FOR OUR SCHOOLS

Healthy Schools Declaration

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HEALTHY AND ACTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS LEAD TO HEALTHIER STUDENTS

The Healthy Schools Declaration, in partnership with Go For Health Windsor-Essex, formalizes the commitment of the following school boards and partners to develop and promote healthy school environments for children and youth:

DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARDS

- Conseil scolaire de district du Centre-Sud-Ouest (CSDCSO)
- Conseil scolaire de district des écoles catholiques du Sud-Ouest (CSDESCO)
- Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB)
- Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board (WECDSB)

GO FOR HEALTH WINDSOR-ESSEX

Go For Health Education Sector Committee:

- Renu Khosla (Chair), GECDSB
 Sharon Seslija, GECDSB
 Theresa Marentette, WECHU
 Sylvie Cote, CSDESCO
 Elise Daragon, WECDSB
 Mary Lynn Biggley, Jump Start Student Nutrition Program
 Richard Phillips, Heart and Stroke Foundation
 Celso Oliveira, GFH



Healthy Schools Declaration

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THE GO FOR HEALTH WINDSOR-ESSEX STEERING COMMITTEE IS COMPRISED OF ORGANIZATIONS AND VOLUNTEERS, INCLUDING;

Canadian Cancer Society
 Canadian Diabetes Association
 Cancer Prevention Network,
 Erie-St. Clair
 City of Windsor, Leisure and Recreation Services
 District Stroke Strategy Windsor Essex

Erie-St. Clair Local Health Integration Network
 Erie-St. Clair Regional Cancer Program
 Greater Essex County District School Board
 Hargreaves Stewart Inc.
 Health Action Windsor Essex
 Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario
 Hôtel-Dieu Grace Hospital
 Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County

SWOntario *in motion*
 Town of Tecumseh
 United Way/Centraide Windsor-Essex County
 University of Windsor, Faculty of Nursing
 Windsor-Essex County Health Unit
 Windsor FOCUS Community, Teen Health Centre
 Windsor Regional Hospital
 YMCA of Windsor and Essex County



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VISION STATEMENT:

School boards in Ontario provide leadership in promoting student achievement by creating schools that model daily physical activity and healthy nutrition environments.

The Healthy Schools Declaration formalizes the commitment of:

- Greater Essex County District School Board
- Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board
- Conseil scolaire de district de Centre-Sud-Ouest
- Conseil scolaire de district des écoles catholiques du Sud-Ouest.

These school boards have partnered with Go For Health's Call to Action to support existing policies and develop new policies that support healthy and active school environments, thereby reducing the onset of preventable chronic health illnesses for children and youth.

Objectives

The goals in signing the Healthy Schools Declaration are:

1. To establish a partnership between the school boards to collectively advocate for and create healthy school environments in keeping with the Mission set out by Go for Health Windsor-Essex (A Call to Action, 2007).
2. To encourage and support communication between the school boards to develop and implement school board policies that address healthy eating and physical activity for children and youth in our area.
3. To support greater student achievement by all school boards by working together to share best practices and successes in creating healthy school environments.

Rationale

The Healthy Schools Declaration was initiated through the collaborative partnership between the education and health sectors of Go for Health Windsor-Essex and is grounded in the Mission and Values of A Call to Action (2007). The declaration supports the Foundations for a Healthy School (Ontario Ministries of Education and Health Promotion) and is based on the following four components in addressing health topics:

High-Quality Instruction and Programs: opportunities for learning and knowledge translation related to healthy living and includes professional development for school personnel.

A Healthy Physical Environment: promoting a safe and healthy physical environment (building, outdoor spaces, school routes).

A Supportive Social Environment: formal (policies, groups) and informal (free play).

Community Partnerships: outside agencies that support healthy schools.

Evidence

School Health Promotion and School Achievement

According to the report Promoting Health in Schools from Evidence to Action (2009), there is substantial evidence that education and health are 'inextricably linked'¹. World-wide, it is seen that healthy, active students learn more effectively. Promoting health in schools and the community can help schools attain educational targets in literacy and numeracy. Students who are connected to and feel good about their schools and are supported by caring adults are less likely to engage in risky health behaviors and have better learning outcomes. In addition, school health promotion can also meet many of the social goals outlined in Character Education and Safe Schools.

Education and Health Partnerships

It is increasingly evident that actively promoting good nutrition and physical activity in schools can improve both educational and health outcomes for students². Partnerships between health and education policy makers are an effective way to ensure health promotion strategies are implemented, monitored and evaluated.

A commitment by health and education organizations to dialogue, create common visions, goals and implement actions to promote healthy schools can be formalized by signed partnerships. In addition, recent policies and documents such as daily physical activity, school nutrition, and the revised health and physical education curriculum, demonstrate increasing partnerships between the health and education government ministries and public health mandates.

A Regional Approach Now

Twenty-first century students more than ever need to be effective learners. Preventable chronic disease is on the rise, resulting in poor health and learning outcomes. This Declaration is meant to focus and 'raise the bar' for all regional school boards and health agencies to take action together to support students in becoming physically active and properly nourished. Education and community health leaders can work together to implement comprehensive approaches to support students in developing the necessary knowledge and behaviours of healthy lifestyles to support their ability to achieve academically and reduce the risks of the onset of chronic health issues.

1. St.Leger, L., Young, I., Blanchard, C., & Perry, M. (2009). Promoting health in schools from evidence to action. International Union for Health Promotion and Education http://www.iuhpe.org/uploaded/Activities/Scientific_Affairs/CDC/PHiS-E&A_3Mar2010_WEB.pdf

2. Ibid

* Ministry of Education (policy) and Ministry of Children and Youth Services (guidelines).

Action Items

Signatories agree to work towards the following action items:

SCHOOL BOARDS AGREE TO:

1. Support the development of an Annual Summary Report that outlines current board policies related to Healthy Eating and Physical Activity.
2. Post relevant Ministry* policies and guidelines regarding healthy eating and physical activity.
3. Include statements in support of healthy eating and physical activity into school improvement plans, school effectiveness strategies and other documents and programs as relevant.

GO FOR HEALTH EDUCATION SECTOR AGREES TO :

- 1) Assign a key contact(s) from GFH, including representatives from the WECHU, to participate in a Healthy Schools Committee. This includes facilitating the opportunity to meet at minimum, on an annual basis to share progress, successes and challenges to date;
- 2) In partnership with the school boards, based on information supplied through the reporting template, produce an annual Summary Report on current Board level practices and progress on identified priority areas for action associated with healthy eating and physical activity;
- 3) Provide school boards with policy and program models from the Windsor-Essex District and Canada when requested;
- 4) Provide healthy eating and physical activity resources to School Boards when requested;
- 5) Facilitate increased connections between school boards, and Go for Health partners;
- 6) Link school boards to other complimentary physical activities and healthy eating activities for the school-age populations within the region.