

## HEALTHY SCHOOLS: Middle Schools

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**GEORGE BONNER MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**#79 Cowichan Valley**  
**4 Years in the Network**

**School Question**

Will the enjoyment and quality of experience, as indicated by participation levels, during monthly 'School Move for Health Days' improve as a result of peer health leadership teaching programs?

**Leadership Team**

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**School Context/Community**

George Bonner Middle School is a school of 679 students. The population of our middle school is composed of grade six, seven, and eight students. George Bonner is located in the Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island and is surrounded by both agricultural land and forest. Students come to our school from three different elementary schools as well as a variety of private schools. We have a number of focus areas in our school but two specific ones are increased health through active living and improved writing skills through school wide writes. We have a supportive PAC that consistently embraces the many initiatives that staff and students undertake each school year.

**School Inquiry and Action: HEALTHY SCHOOLS**

**Focus of Inquiry**

As a staff we met and completed the assessment table. After analyzing the data we found that a number of elements that had similar results. Therefore, we decided that we would develop a question that would encompass as many of those elements as possible. We also decided to include a number of other categories that fit logically into our inquiry. The categories were: Physical Education; School Connectedness; Active Living and Community Partnerships.

**Strategies**

Our discussion then focused on how we could best encompass the categories that we had chosen and decided that our monthly move for health days would be a logical way to accomplish our goal. The goal of the monthly move for health days is to have all students and staff, participate in a 5 km walk or run. We have found that there is a group of students who do not do not put forth their best effort or simply do not attend school on those days. Therefore, we decided to frame our inquiry question around our goals of improving the success levels of student completion of the move for health events.

We started working on improving student understanding of the benefits and importance of Physical Education and Active Living. We emphasized these concepts through a variety of methods including implicit teaching of those benefits. Further, a school wide write was organized in which students wrote persuasive paragraphs outlining the benefits of participating in move for health events. Finally, students went on the PA to present a variety of facts about the benefits of participation. In doing all of the above, we believed that we had successfully included concepts from the categories of Physical Education and Active Living.

To develop the element of School Connectedness, we decided that the inclusion of the student leadership group as organizers of the monthly events necessary. We believed this would bring the school community together in a joint staff-student undertaking. Some of the strategies employed by the students have been presented above. In addition, the students were in charge of organizing

end of event activities. Other activities included theme days, bringing both students and staff together in developing an awareness of an issue or joining together in celebration of a seasonal event. For example, April's theme was based on global health. To further promote the activity as a school community event, we began each move for health day by having all students and staff, meet in the gym and work through a warm up together, We also had end of run activities such as at the end of the Peace Run, each student and staff lit a candle.

The final element to be addressed was that of Community Partnerships, which we addressed in a variety of ways. First, we included the community neighbouring our school as our event moves along the same 5 km route each month. We have been fortunate in that the community has embraced this event. Another community partnership that we enjoy is with the local RCMP in that an on duty officer sometimes joins us as support for safety on the road.

### **Focus on Formative Strategies**

As indicated above, we employed a variety of strategies in order to achieve our goals. We endeavored to make sure that learners were the owners of their own learning by, as described above, having students create persuasive writing based on their understanding of the benefits of participating in the event. The writing activity served as a formative assessment in ensuring that students were developing their knowledge on the topic. In addition, having the students participate, to the best of their ability during the move for health event also provided an opportunity for students to be owners of their own learning. We found that this strategy made a difference in that the students were able to utilize the information in making a decision regarding how they would participate in the move for health event.

From the writing, we were able to develop the next strategy of co-developing with learners the criteria for success. Specifically, the writing activity was the starting point from which the goal of participating in the event successfully became the ultimate criteria for success. The criterion was co-developed in that, students, through the writing and follow-up discussion that occurred, were able to make completion of the event a personal criteria for success. This strategy was perhaps not as beneficial in making a difference to all the students as sometimes, the final decision for encouraging students to finish the event on time rested with staff.

Finally, the third strategy of putting learners to work as learning/teaching resources for each other was accomplished initially through the writing process, described above. In addition we also had student leaders develop messages to share over the P.A. system before the run. The goal of this was to have the students provide the educational and motivational messages of the importance of the run. This strategy was important in making a difference, as students were often more willing to listen to a message provided by peers.

### **School Findings**

To provide us with information, we decided to collect data based on successful completion of the event. Success was measured by arriving at the turn around point within the allotted time therefore completing a 5 km run or walk. We organized the data by taking the percentage of successful walkers/runners per event day.

Move for Health Event by Month	Successful completion of Event
January	81%
February	86%
March	83%
April	89%

While this data is both limited and preliminary, it does indicate a gradual improvement in our percent of students successfully completing the move for health event. It is interesting, however, that the percent for February actually was higher than March and January.

#### **School Plans for 2009-2010**

- Continue to have students be the driving force behind organizing and running the events
- To continue to build a school culture that encourages and embraces a healthy lifestyle
- Connect more with the parents in encouraging their children to participate fully in this endeavor.

#### **Reflection and Advice**

The choice to focus on improving our move for health event was a worthwhile undertaking. While we would have preferred to see more substantial growth in our completion rates, we feel that we have made a positive step toward achieving our goal of having 100% of our students completing the move for health event.

**GLENROSA MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**#23 Central Okanagan**  
**2 Years in the Network**

**School Questions**

1. Will we increase the nutritional knowledge, level of participation and active living skills of grade 9 girls using journals, fitness logs, and dialogue in conjunction with physical activities and holistic fitness programs in a non competitive environment?
2. Will the introduction of holistic fitness programs, journals, logs, and the quick scale healthy living performance standards rubrics be effective assessment tools of health and wellness learning, thus helping Life Fitness 9 students develop a stronger understanding of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle?

**Leadership Team**

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**School Context/Community**

Glenrosa Middle School is located in beautiful West Kelowna, BC, overlooking Okanagan Lake. We have a population of 675 students attending grades 7, 8 and 9. We have an involved parent group and supportive community. GMS has a commitment to developing programs and curriculum, which allows for students to take leadership for demonstrating their own learning, as well as, being leaders in school and community activities – such as ‘Where Everybody Belongs’ (WEB) where grade 9 students assist grade 7 students with the transition to middle school, and ‘Active Community Education with a focus on Service’ (ACES) program for students who have an interest in community leadership. Our school also houses unique programs which services the needs of our community including: TRANSITIONS – an educational program for at-risk students; ‘Critical Student Intervention’ (CSI) – a mandatory learning assistance program targeting students failing their subjects; and ‘Educating Different Genders Equally’ (EDGE) – same gender classes that focus on specific teaching styles for each gender. During the past 3 years, GMS’s Healthy School Committee has been working on developing a healthier school environment by working with our vending machine supplier to ensure that they meet the provincial guidelines over and above; and have worked with CAPP and Home Economic teachers to strengthen existing nutrition teaching and learning curriculum. The next step was to focus on the introduction of a new PE course targeting the female participant.

**School Inquiry and Action: HEALTHY SCHOOLS**

Our area of focus will be on Teaching and Learning, within the element of Physical and Health Education, and more specifically, Active Living and Healthy Practices.

**Focus of Inquiry**

All grade 9 students must complete PE 9, but maximum participation of females in traditional PE classes has not been achieved at GMS. Some female students have expressed their lack of participation comes from not wanting to compete against boys, insecurities that affect adolescent girls and a disinterest in traditional sports. They have expressed the desire and willingness to explore and increase knowledge of healthy practices, healthy eating and active living in a non competitive environment. Life Fitness 9 is a new course offered as a PE option for females. It is a course that meets all the learning outcomes for PE 9 in a holistic training environment, designed for the female participant who is interested in lifelong fitness and health. The course provides students with classroom lectures combined with the opportunity to apply what they have learned, and train for their health and personal wellness during practical training sessions at school. Students set personal fitness goals and work towards gaining enough practical skill and

theoretical knowledge to allow them to develop a yearlong health and fitness training program for themselves.

### Strategies

I used many strategies to facilitate and support my question.

- The girls were given a health and wellness survey/questionnaire at the start of the year and again in April. It asked 13 questions related to health and wellness in which the girls needed to indicate whether they agreed, did not agree, or strongly agreed.
- I administered 3 series of fitness tests at the start of each term, (similar to those I use in the gym with my personal training clients), testing core strength, balance, flexibility, upper body strength, lower body strength and cardio vascular endurance.
- The students were expected to complete workout logs in which they logged all physical activities done in class and out of class, and were expected to comment and reflect on each session. They were also expected to set a weekly goal related to health, wellness and fitness that they had to evaluate on a weekly basis.
- Nutrition and Health Pre and Post Assessments were done.
- The students participated in every type of group fitness class and group training sessions led by myself, a certified fitness instructor and trainer.
- Local Dance teachers were brought in for a variety of dance class, including modern, hip hop, street, jazz, and salsa.
- The students participated in a series of workshops covering nutrition, body image and stress.
- The students participated in relaxation exercises, (guided, unguided, basic meditation).
- The students were expected to take one type of workout/activity presented in class, and complete a session outside of school on their own time, which they included in their weekly workout logs.

### Focus on Formative Assessment

The students were given a modified version of the healthy living performance standards quick scales in the fall and then the spring, in the areas of physical activity and healthy eating. The use of these performance standards allowed the girls to clearly understand the learning intentions for the course, targeted students who were in need of assistance, and regular thoughtful feedback helped students move forward in their journey to personal health and wellness. The performance standards, workout logs, fitness testing, weekly journaling and health goal setting were also used as a means of self assessment and immediate feedback, resulting in the students being owners of their learning and serving as summative assessments. The students had pre and post Health and Nutrition Assessments and Health and Wellness Surveys administered as summative assessment for health and nutrition learning. Our body image, nutrition and self care workshops, question and discussion sessions were forms of formative assessment for the students as well. These activities provided an opportunity to present new information, affirm or correct past knowledge of health and wellness.

### School Findings

	Emerging		Developing		Acquired		Accomplished	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Physical Activity								
Fall 2008	15	4	50	13	23	6	12	3
Spring 2009	4	1	15	4	62	16	19	5
Healthy Eating								
Fall 2008	35	9	58	15	4	1	4	1
Spring 2009	8	2	27	7	42	11	23	6

Above findings were taken from the Quick Scales – Healthy Living Performance Standards. The scales were modified for ease of understanding and used by the students as a means of self assessment. The data shows major improvement over time in both areas. Both quick scales were effective assessment tools for evaluating student development and learning in these areas. All Life Fitness students improved their fitness level, increased the amount of physical activity completed in and out of school time during this year and increased their health and nutritional knowledge. This group showed an increase in work habits, work ethic and participation in PE this year compared to last year. The journal entries also demonstrated evidence of broader holistic health leaning such as increased confidence within PE class and the school; sense of control over learning; taking responsibility for one’s health, wellness and life; fun while participating, learning and being active. The use of the reflections and journals facilitated the overall suitability and success of this type of non competitive holistic PE class.

### **School Plans for 2009-2010**

Glenrosa Middle School will continue with offering Life Fitness 9 as PE 9 elective. The number of students that are requesting the course have doubled. We will make more use of community experts and local fitness and health facilities, thus providing more opportunities for students to experience health and wellness in their everyday lives. It will also continue its involvement with the HSN.

### **Reflections, Advice**

Overall I was quite pleased with what has been accomplished with these students during this course. The project was a powerful testament that physical activity and PE can be fun. Hearing the students exclaim on a daily basis that “this was the first year they actually did anything in PE” is spectacular. Hearing from parents that their child seems happier and that knowledge is being shared with all family members at the dinner table is very rewarding. Hearing from teachers that attitude and effort is not just improving in PE but translating into these student’s other courses, is evidence in the value of this type of class. The students found their PE experience fun and found learning relevant and worthwhile. Students made the following suggestions for next year – have a health and wellness day or fair where they could share what they have learned with other students, and allow for community experts to present to various students and classes; partner with Glenrosa Elementary School for health and wellness buddy activities. I felt the reflections and journals were effective in providing some great insights into what teens know and how they experience health, wellness and physical activity. My hope is that the enthusiasm and growth I have witnessed in these girls enables them to make the commitment to lifelong health and fitness.

**HILLCREST MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**#43 Coquitlam**  
**1 Year in the Network**

**School Question**

If teachers and staff promote student awareness of active living by encouraging all students to participate in various school and community-organized, physically active events, will this increase the daily physical activity of those who are not already actively participating in active living activities?

**Leadership Team**

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**School Context/Community**

Hillcrest is a grade 6 – 8 Middle School in Coquitlam (SD#43) with a student population of approximately 518 students and 58 teaching and non teaching staff. Approximately 40 minutes from downtown Vancouver, Hillcrest is located on the south side of Coquitlam, in a predominately middle class area. Approximately 1/5 of our students are bussed to school and all eat lunch on campus. The Hillcrest School Community is committed to providing educational opportunities in a safe and respectful environment that encourages students to become responsible life-long learners, both individually and cooperatively. The school is a highly functional learning community with a dedicated staff and a passionate focus on academics. A strong Parent Advisory Council (PAC) has been developed that has actively supported the school for many years. Parents of Hillcrest students value education and their involvement in all aspects of the school is appreciated. High attendance at school functions including student led conferences and parent / teacher interviews, and assistance with extra curricular activities are just a few of the ways parents demonstrate their support. Other highlights include an award winning music enrichment program, numerous student leadership opportunities and an athletic program that offers all available middle school sports. We are the home of the Hillcrest Highlanders and our school Motto is “Take the High Road”.

**School Inquiry and Action: HEALTHY SCHOOLS**

**Focus of Inquiry**

We hope to increase the number of minutes of physical activity for each student at Hillcrest Middle School in order to improve their health and well-being.

**Strategies**

The following strategies were undertaken to help students recognize, maintain and improve their Daily Physical Activity over the course of the 2008/2009 school year:

- The development and implementation of a survey for the entire student body to get baseline data
- A school wide professional development session to train staff with Action Schools! BC; also the purchase of Action Schools kits to be used in classrooms and teams
- Active Fieldtrips in the community – walking to and from venues, swimming, ice skating
- Informational presentations from the Health community offering lessons such as the Sip Smart Program
- The development and Implementation of School wide Healthy Living days and assemblies – Terry Fox Run (September), Highlander Games (October), Highlander Hockey (December), Get Active Day, (April) and Activity Day (June)
- Walk and Ride to school promotions

- Daily physical activities for all students including PA DPA
- A wide range of school sports (basketball, volleyball, swimming, rugby, track and field, cross country, badminton, floor hockey, intramurals, wrestling, 3 on 3 basketball)
- Completion of Daily Physical Activity journals
- Dance Revolution available at lunch as an indoor physical activity
- Development of an Equipment sign out program for nutrition break and lunch times
- Publication of registrations for community sports in our monthly school newsletters
- Partnerships with local Parks and Recreation centers whereby representatives come to our school to promote current community activities (e.g. Coquitlam's own version of the Amazing Race)
- Dance lessons provided during physical education classes by professional dancers for all students
- Four school wide Dance afternoons provided throughout the year

**Focus on Formative Assessment**

We provided feedback to staff, students and parents from our collection of school wide survey data and from our sampling of various students' Daily Physical Activity diaries. Daily Physical Activity dialogue was ongoing.

**School Findings**

A large sample of grade 6, 7 and 8 students were given a pre (January 09) and a post (April 09) survey about their level of daily physical activity. The data below reflects our students' self-reported average number of minutes per weekday of physical activity **during the school day (i.e., before, during, and after school)**. We acknowledge that students involved in before- and after-school activities are engaged in community- as well as school-sponsored activities. Our data did not separate community- from school-sponsored activities. The Ministry of Education has mandated that schools will provide 30 minutes of daily physical activity. We have therefore set 30 minutes as our standard for "Acquired". The January data sample represented 422, or 81%, of our school population, 520. The April sample was 131, or 25%

.

	<u>Emerging</u> Less than 20 minutes per day		<u>Developing</u> Between 20 and 30 minutes per day		<u>Acquired</u> 30 to 45 minutes per day		<u>Accomplished</u> More than 45 minutes per day	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Fall 2008 N=422	1.2	5	1.7	7	4	17	93	393
Spring 2009 N=131	0.8	1	2.2	3	2.2	3	95	124

**School Plans for 2009-2010**

- Continue to utilize the Healthy Schools Network Assessment Tool as a guideline for further inquiries.
- Continue to provide opportunities for students, staff and parents to improve overall health and fitness.
- Continue to increase staff involvement in Healthy School initiatives.
- Build an adventure playground on our school site for physical activity
- Adopt a student playground leadership program to teach and lead games
- Establish a designated area in the school where a fitness circuit, TV/DVD with workout

videos, mats and skipping ropes can be permanently set up and available for classes to use. We will explore the establishment of a weekly timetable in order to provide each class with an opportunity to use this Fitness Center.

- Have teachers consistently meeting the government mandate of providing at least 30 minutes of daily physical activity for all students through the use of the fitness center, gym, classroom and outdoors.
- Maintain all extra curricular programs currently offered.

### **Reflections, Advice**

Successes:

- High student participation in all extra curricular activities
- Staff and student dialogue about Daily Physical Activity has increased
- New physically active offerings and equipment were introduced, such as three-on-three basketball teams, action schools kits, and work out videos
- The development and implementation of our school wide Wellness Conference called Get Active Day! This was a highlight of the year for many of our students. It provided an opportunity for teachers to work together and share ideas. Overall, it was one of our greatest successes and we hope to make it a tradition at Hillcrest Middle.

Challenges:

- Our middle school is a busy place and we found it challenging to find time to help all teachers implement and maintain programs such as the action schools kits
- The collection of useful data in an ongoing manner. Many teachers experimented with tools such as daily physical education journals but it was not consistent throughout the school
- Getting all staff to buy in to programs and initiatives
- Space! With only one gymnasium, 19 classes and a fixed 6 block timetable, it was difficult (especially in inclement weather) to find the space for daily physical activity
- Equipment – more physical education equipment would have been beneficial

**ÉCOLE KLO MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**#23 Central Okanagan**  
**2 Years in the Network**

**School Question**

Will involving Grade 9 students in the process of assessing student feelings of connectedness build capacity for a healthy transition between middle school and high school?

**Leadership Team**

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**School Context/Community**

École KLO Middle School is a dual-track French immersion / English program school located in the urban center of Kelowna in the Central Okanagan. It is the only middle school in our district offering the French immersion program for students in Grades 7 - 9. Immersion students make up forty percent of our current enrolment of approximately 820 students. École KLO Middle School has a small but active and involved Parent Advisory Council who provide input on school programs, assist with clubs and coaching, organize fundraisers, and coordinate workshops relevant to parents of adolescents. In addition to curricular opportunities, there are many sports, clubs, spirit activities and leadership opportunities offered for students. These opportunities are a result of the commitment and dedication of the KLO teaching staff and parent community. For the past six years we have had a school-wide goal related to healthy living.

**School Inquiry and Action – Healthy Schools→School Environment → School Connectedness**

**Focus of Inquiry**

After completing the B.C. Healthy School's Network assessment package with staff and some students, the Healthy Schools Team used the results to develop its question: Will involving Grade 9 students in the process of assessing student feelings of connectedness build capacity for a healthy transition between middle school and high school? We were concerned with the low result of "To what extent does our school consistently assess students' feelings of school connectedness".

**Strategies**

1. Develop a survey that addressed successful transition to grade 10. Use questions that were researched and developed by our principal, Carol MacWilliams.
2. Train the Leadership Action Team (LAT) to invigilate survey. Joan Ewing, our LAT teacher trained her students to invigilate the survey.
3. All grade 9's take survey.
4. Student leaders (LAT) and the KLO Healthy Schools Network (HSN) Team gather results and make spreadsheet.
5. Have KSS administrators and counselors complete their articulation with our students.
6. Grade 9 students complete survey #2.
7. Student leaders and HSN Team gather results and make spreadsheet.
8. HSN Team to teach student leaders how to read data. Student leaders come up with strategies to address student concerns found from data. Implement strategies prior to last survey.
9. Implement student driven strategies. These were: KSS Website Worksheet activity, Assembly with KSS administration to answer questions from students making sure the main questions were asked. All grade 9 students take survey for final time. A tour of the school

- will be implemented following submission of this case study.
10. Student leaders and HSN Team gather results and make spreadsheet.
  11. Compare data and see if what we did made a difference with feelings of successful transition to high school.

#### **Focus on Formative Assessment**

Provide learners with clarity about and understanding of the learning intentions of the learning with which they are engaged.	All students understood the purpose of the surveys.
Provide to and co-develop with the learners the criteria for success.	The Leadership Action Team developed the criteria for success. (Assembly, Website Worksheet)
Provide regular, thoughtful feedback that moves learning forward for the individual learner	Ongoing
Design and use thoughtful classroom questions to lead discussions that generate evidence of learning.	LAT class was taught to look at results and their thoughts were used as strategies.
Put learners to work as learning/teaching resources for each other.	LAT class invigilated surveys.
Do everything you can think of to make sure that learners are the owners of their own learning.	Ongoing – discussion of survey results will take place following submission of this report (June '09).

#### **School Findings: sampling of survey results**

I am most concerned about:	Survey 1 %	Survey 2 %	Survey 3 %
Finding your way around the school *	14%	34%	22%
Longer or more exams	23%	21%	8%
Exams/Provincial exams	23%	18%	20%
Course selections	80%	18%	11%
Keeping grades up and staying organized	0%	7%	1%
Confusion with the timetable	15%	6%	10%
Consequences of missed classwork/incomplete homework	9%	0%	2%

#### **School Plans for the 2009/2010 Year**

We will submit the complete survey information to our feeder school, Kelowna Secondary School. It is our hope that continued proactive communication between us will enable students to feel ready to transition to KSS and help us to find the students that will need more assistance with connection. Link Leaders, a student transition group, will also work with the new grade 10's in September.

#### **Reflections, Advice**

1. It was definitely worth it to let the students voice their feelings and concerns regarding a healthy transition to high school. Students appreciated being heard and being helped. It is hoped that this added knowledge and confidence was sufficient to enable students to have a deeper connection and thus a more successful transition to KSS. \*KSS Tours for students will take place following this study.
2. That a change in percentage in 'the negative' is normal.
3. Take a course on advanced Excel.
4. The survey was an excellent length and manageable for students and statisticians.
5. Make sure to use bubble sheets.
6. Try to begin early enough to finish by early May.

**MEI MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**Independent - Abbotsford**  
**3 years in the network**

**School Question**

Will students perceive the implementation of our new Small Group Advisory/Intramurals program to positively impact healthy relationships and school connectedness?

**Leadership Team**

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**School Context/Community**

In its fifth year of existence, MEI Middle School is part of the MEI Schools community in Abbotsford BC, which offers a Pre-school to Grade 12 curriculum to over 1600 students. MEI Middle School is a school of 400 students, spanning Grades six through eight. Our school motto is “Making a Difference in Abbotsford and Beyond”, and we work in partnership between home, school and church. We are a Christian school, so we openly discuss and value the emotional, physical, social and spiritual health and development of our students. We emphasize student learning and academic progress and also offer a number of strong athletic, fine arts, technology and service/leadership opportunities to our students.

Although MEI is familiar with and using the writing and numeracy performance standards in our school, joining the Healthy Schools Network three years ago marked MEI’s first active involvement in the Network of Performance Based Schools. In an effort to become a healthier school, we have undertaken several initiatives over the past years. We became a School in Motion after the school’s inception in 2004 and joined Action Schools B.C. at the end of that year. In our third year, we began a school-wide milk program and installed hand sanitizing stations throughout the school as part of our Healthy Schools involvement. Last year we addressed our vending machine choices and focused on healthy student lunch choices at school.

Our school website is [www.meisoc.com](http://www.meisoc.com).

**School Inquiry and Action: HEALTHY SCHOOLS**

**Focus of Inquiry**

This year, MEI Middle chose to examine school connectedness after compiling data from a couple of sources. Our school annually surveys parents to get the heartbeat of our parent community. Survey results from 2008 encouraged us to further address the developmental needs of students socially and to ensure that there is at least one staff member who has a close, supportive relationship with each student. Our Healthy Schools Network Assessment Tool also challenged us to look at School Environment – School Connectedness. This became the focus for our inquiry.

**Strategies**

MEI Middle School developed a comprehensive strategy this year to further build school connectedness for our students. We first re-structured our Advisory program. Typically our Advisory Program runs within the regular classrooms with a student/teacher ratio of 30:1. Now, one day a week, we hold small group cross-grade advisory groupings. Groups of 12 students in Grades 6, 7 and 8 meet with a teacher or member of our support staff for fifteen minutes each Wednesday morning. This time is used to interact in positive ways, to get to know students in other grades and to form a significant relationship with the adult who oversees the small group.

MEI also linked our Small Group Advisory groups to our Intramural program and began to emphasize wider program participation. Each Advisory group has also been assigned to a colored Intramural team. On the first day of school, every student and adult in the school was given a t-shirt indicating which colored team to which they belong. These groups are now scheduled into weekly intramural activities. The colored teams comprise our school house teams which compete for quarterly prizes.

We also initiated a couple school-wide events that required the colored Advisory/Intramural groupings to compete together. At the beginning of the year, students participated in **Middle School Madness**. At Christmas, teams competed in the **Elf Olympics**. At these events, Advisory groups participate together, earning points for their house teams. Our spring production, *Fiddler on the Roof* was another school-wide place of inclusion as we encouraged all students to become involved and had large groups of students coming forward.

We then surveyed our Advisory groups in October to see how they perceived school connectedness. Our Healthy Schools committee reviewed the results and noted several emergent themes:

- Small Group Advisories seemed to be achieving their goals.
- The Grade 6's had transitioned well and felt comfortable at MEI Middle
- Of all three grades, the Grade 7's expressed the lowest level of comfort in going to an adult.
- The highest sense of feeling accepted was expressed by Grade 7's
- Our Grade 6 and 7's felt that they did not have the skills to problem solve that the Grade 8's felt they did.
- 10-12 students in each grade expressed that they felt that they had been or were being picked on.
- Teachers expressed that some Advisory groups had come together and were functioning more effectively than others.

With this information and using the draft of the Healthy Schools Performance Standards – (Quick Scales), the Healthy Schools committee decided to target one month of School-wide Advisories on topics that emerged from the survey and topics related to the Healthy Relationships Quick Scales.

The first school-wide Advisory topic created awareness and opened discussion regarding survey results.

Each Small Group Advisory was then asked to come together to produce a project promoting a positive message in regards to the issues that emerged from discussions. These projects were to be displayed around or to be presented to the school. In May, we divided the color Small Group Advisory groups into two larger groups and one morning held two separate assemblies concurrently. Every student and staff member in the school was involved in presenting their poster, song, or skit around a positive message.

### **Focus on Formative Assessment**

The Healthy Performance Standards were used in discussion and in formulating the Advisory topics and then the big strategies of learning intentions were also employed:

In developing April's focused month of Advisory topics, the committee sought to employ three key formative assessment learning strategies: **Providing learning with clarity about and understanding of the learning intentions of the work being done**. The second assessment strategy used was: **Designing and using thoughtful classroom questions to lead discussions that generate evidence of learning**. One Advisory period was devoted to discussing the survey

results, student perception and reaction to the results and what we as a school wanted to target as we sought to improve school connectedness. Finally, the third formative assessment strategy used was: **Put learners to work as learning/teaching resources for each other.** This was accomplished through the Advisory group projects. We wanted students to work together to produce the teaching/messages behind the projects, so each Advisory group was commissioned to produce a positive message in regards to an issue that emerged from their group's discussion. The result was students had a clear understanding of what we were trying to achieve, took ownership for the perceptions about issues in our schools and then sought to address them through discussion and through their projects.

Finally, we re-surveyed our students in June.

## School Findings

### Grade 6

	<b>October</b>	<b>June</b>
Do you feel accepted and respected at this school?	YES 94%	YES 96%
Do you know someone who is struggling to get a friend?	YES 25%	YES 21%
Would you say that you struggle to make friends?	YES 14%	YES 10%
Are you involved in a conflict with another student at our school right now?	YES 15%	YES 14%
Do you feel that another student is picking on you all the time?	YES 13%	YES 11%
Do you feel that you have gotten to know a lot more people at MEI Middle since school started in September?	YES 88%	YES 91%
Would you say that you've made any new friends since September?	YES 84%	YES 92%
Have you ever said hi to someone from your Small Group Advisory (SGA) in the halls?	YES 89%	YES 90%
Would you say you've met people you didn't know before because of your Small Group Advisory?	YES 83%	YES 84%
Do you feel connected with the teacher who leads your advisory group?	YES 80%	YES 85%
Would you go to an adult at school if you were facing something difficult in your life?	YES 52%	YES 52%
Would you go to an adult at school if you were being bullied?	YES 80%	YES 87%
If your friend had a problem, would you report it to an adult?	YES 73%	YES 65%
Do you normally spend your free time at lunch with others?	YES 18%	YES 92%

**Grade 7**

	<b>October</b>	<b>June</b>
Do you feel accepted and respected at this school?	YES 98%	YES 98%
Do you know someone who is struggling to get a friend?	YES 42%	YES 59%
Would you say that you struggle to make friends?	YES 8%	YES 9%
Are you involved in a conflict with another student at our school right now?	YES 20%	YES 16%
Do you feel that another student is picking on you all the time?	YES 9%	YES 8%
Do you feel that you have gotten to know a lot more people at MEI Middle since school started in September?	YES 84%	YES 95%
Would you say that you've made any new friends since September?	YES 85%	YES 97%
Have you ever said hi to someone from your Small Group Advisory (SGA) in the halls?	YES 84%	YES 84%
Would you say you've met people you didn't know before because of your Small Group Advisory?	YES 82%	YES 83%
Do you feel connected with the teacher who leads your advisory group?	YES 65%	YES 65%
Would you go to an adult at school if you were facing something difficult in your life?	YES 38%	YES 45%
Would you go to an adult at school if you were being bullied?	YES 63%	YES 63%
If your friend had a problem, would you report it to an adult?	YES 57%	YES 67%
Do you normally spend your free time at lunch with others?	YES 87%	YES 95%

**Grade 8**

	<b>October</b>	<b>June</b>
Do you feel accepted and respected at this school?	YES 90%	YES 92 %
Do you know someone who is struggling to get a friend?	YES 27%	YES 42%
Would you say that you struggle to make friends?	YES 10%	YES 15%
Are you involved in a conflict with another student at our school right now?	YES 10%	YES 20%
Do you feel that another student is picking on you all the time?	YES 8%	YES 10%
Do you feel that you have gotten to know a lot more people at MEI Middle since school started in September?	YES 84%	YES 95%
Would you say that you've made any new friends since September?	YES 89%	YES 92%

Have you ever said hi to someone from your Small Group Advisory (SGA) in the halls?	YES 87%	YES 87%
Would you say you've met people you didn't know before because of your Small Group Advisory?	YES 81%	YES 85%
Do you feel connected with the teacher who leads your advisory group?	YES 78%	YES 82%
Would you go to an adult at school if you were facing something difficult in your life?	YES 41%	YES 34%
Would you go to an adult at school if you were being bullied?	YES 58%	YES 58%
If your friend had a problem, would you report it to an adult?	YES 57%	YES 53%
Do you normally spend your free time at lunch with others?	YES 86%	YES 98%

Overall, we saw an improvement in our students' sense of connectedness. We wondered if re-surveying immediately after students hearing a number of presentations on bullying and treating people with kindness may have impacted their own awareness of grade level interactions and their response on these surveys. The number of students in Grade 7 who would seek adult support increased while it decreased in Grade 8, which is probably to be expected as they strive to greater independence and are on the verge of moving to high school.

### **School Plans for 2010-2011**

We intend to continue intentionally pursuing school connectedness at MEI Middle School. We work with an age group that craves this connectedness and requires a safe place with a place to belong. We hope to build elements of character development and kindness into our school theme and Advisory program next year as well.

### **Reflections and Advice**

Being a part of the Healthy Schools Network has been a very positive experience for MEI Middle. We have seen that taking small initiatives can have a positive impact on a large number of students.

As an Independent school, we have welcomed the opportunity to network with other schools. We have learned about the inquiry and network process and have been able to brainstorm and interact with schools across British Columbia. It has also been great to interact with our parents and to strategically target areas to improve our school health

**MONTGOMERY MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**#43 Coquitlam**  
**2 Years in the Network**

**School Question**

If we teach to the Healthy Relationship aspect of the Healthy Living Performance Standards tool, will we see a change in the results for the way students evaluate themselves when comparing data for November and May?

**Leadership Team**

Crystal Redlich, Leigh Bolli, Sheila Hutchinson, Taj Reel, Diane Champion-Smith,

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**School Context/Community**

Montgomery Middle School is a grade 6 to 8 middle school situated in a middle class neighbourhood of Coquitlam (about 20 kilometers east of Vancouver in the lower mainland). We have a population of approximately 430 students. The school was previously a junior high school and thus the structure of the building is unique from other middle schools with large lockers, spacious hallways, unique rooms such as a photography dark room and a weight room. The atmosphere is warm and inviting. Our fabulous caretakers keep the building impeccably clean despite the age of the building. Monty R.O.C.K.S. is the catch phrase we use to encompass our values and school wide expectations. Respect, Organization, Cooperation, Kindness and Safety are the key ingredients of Monty ROCKS and we use this language in all settings of the school. We are fortunate to have a very active and supportive PAC, which among other areas, has provided support for our healthy living initiatives this year. The mission statement of the school is as follows: "Montgomery Middle School is a community of learners and leaders, focused on the nature and needs of young adolescents as they prepare for a lifetime of learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." Positive connections, learning for a lifetime, care and respect and thriving young adolescents are the 4 pillars of our middle school community.

**School Inquiry and Action: HEALTHY SCHOOLS**

**Focus of Inquiry**

Healthy Living Goal: To help students attain and maintain a healthy, balanced lifestyle.

- Increase the number of social and emotional health initiatives in 2008/2009
- Maintain consistent focus on physical health initiatives from previous years.

**Strategies**

**The following is a comprehensive list of strategies related to our healthy living goal:**

Wellness Conference	Food Hampers
Fitness Friday	Roots of Empathy
Action Schools	Friends Program - Maritime
Clubs and Sports Teams (Crew)	Student Leadership (ROCK)
BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Program	Sports Council
SIP Smart	2x10 strategies
Games Room	The Breakfast Club
Birthday Club	Team Time
Tree of Memories	School Dances
Team Recognition Assemblies	School Based Team Meetings

**Strategies specific to the school year 2008/2009:**

1. Wellness Conference for students. We held our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Wellness Conference on April 1, 2009. All students participated and staff members helped with supervision and other duties. We secured 32 guest presenters on a variety of wellness related topics. The emphasis this year was on social/emotional health. Sixteen presenters gave workshops on important social and emotional health topics such as personal empowerment, self-esteem, relaxation, choosing role models, overcoming peer pressure, and standing up for yourself without violence. The remaining workshops were on physical health topics such as ultimate Frisbee, soccer, mountain biking, hip hop and Capoeira dance.
2. iWalk to Breakfast Day. This year, students who walked to school on Walk to School day, received a healthy breakfast including an apple and a homemade breakfast cookie.
3. BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Program. Montgomery Middle School was fortunate to receive acceptance into this provincial program which provides a nutritious fruit or vegetable snack to every student in the school twice a week for every other week. Students are enjoying their fruit and vegetable snacks like never before.
4. Creation of lessons for staff to share based on the performance standards related to healthy relationships.

**Focus on Formative Assessment**

1. **Put learners to work as learning/teaching resources for each other:** students were a demonstration of health and wellness by performing their unique forms of self-expression as a finale to the Wellness Conference. Performances were given by high school musicians, dancers and the cheer team from Monty.
2. **Learners are the owners:** All students were given choice of 32 different workshops to participate in during the Wellness Conference. The diversity of the workshops catered to the diversity of interests and learning styles of our students. Each student attended 3 sessions during the day – a minimum of one session promoting social/emotional health and a minimum of one session promoting physical health.

**School Findings**

We gave each student in the school a 15 question survey in the month prior to the Wellness Conference and again in the month after the conference. The last two questions of the survey were open ended questions, thus are not included here. The survey asked them to tell us how much they agree with the following statements about healthy living. For example, the first question was “Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is important”. Students were asked to choose from the categories: strongly disagree; disagree; neutral; agree; or strongly agree. The results on the chart below indicate a before/after comparison of the “strongly agree” selection. The blue is the results prior to the Wellness Conference; the red is the results after the Wellness Conference.

Significant findings from the survey of students who selected “strongly agree” before and after the Wellness conference are as follows: in response to the statement “Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is important” the percentage of students who selected “strongly agree” after the conference increased by 8 percent in comparison to the response before the conference. In addition, the percentage of students who selected “strongly agree” increased by 9 percent after the conference in response to the statement “Eating a diet containing all the food groups is important.” These findings may not be conclusive evidence; however, they suggest a positive impact that the Wellness conference had on the attitudes towards the importance students’ place on these statements about health. The pre and post conference surveys were conducted within

one month of each other and the major significant event that took place during this month was the Wellness conference.

After reviewing the students' responses to this survey, the healthy living committee observed that the response to two questions "I am interested in coming to school" and "I feel connected to others at school" indicated a low frequency of students selecting "strongly agree" compared to other questions. The committee reflected on this finding and determined that this area would be a suitable focus for our next year's healthy living goal – namely: Connections.

Healthy Living Performance Standards Results for November 2008 (student self-assessment)

Aspect	Emerging	Developing	Acquired	Accomplished
Healthy Eating	3	20	90	49
Active Living	1	15	77	72
Healthy Relationships	0	11	97	62
Healthy Practices	1	16	90	58

Healthy Living Performance Standards Results for May 2009 (student self-assessment)

Aspect	Emerging	Developing	Acquired	Accomplished
Healthy Eating	0	19	88	49
Active Living	0	11	70	75
Healthy Relationships	0	16	88	52
Healthy Practices	2	7	92	55

### School Plans for 2009-2010

The following plan was created in year one of our healthy living goal. Next year will be year 3 of this 3 year plan.

Year 1 – Awareness (to plant the seed about healthy living; increase awareness & understanding)

Year 2 – Balance (to create greater balance between health of mind and body; continue to maintain initiatives around physical activity and nutrition, but emphasize social/emotional health with the Wellness Conference 2009)

Year 3 – Choices (to increase the frequency of healthy living choices students incorporate into their daily lives. Measure the choices students are actually making!)

(The **ABC**'s of healthy living!)

### Reflections, Advice

Having reviewed the results of the surveys from students and made observations as a healthy living committee, the committee recommends the following changes be made to the 3 year plan.

Replace the "C" for choices in the three year plan with a "C" for connections. Emphasize the importance of school connections, community connections, student to student connections, student to teacher connections, student to family connections and brainstorm with students all types of connections. Consider taking the best 5 or 6 workshops from the Wellness Conference and bring them to each and every classroom in the school. Hold a Wellness Wednesday one day each month. On this day, the guest presenters visit each team and bring their unique message of the importance of connections to each student. Have a focus group of students in the fall work with the healthy living committee in creating a way for students to have direct input about strategies and focus for the year. Begin initiatives for connections in September to create a solid foundation for the year!

**MOUNT PREVOST MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**#79 Cowichan Valley**  
**5 Years in the Network**

**School Question**

Will students learn about their identity by analyzing characters in literature circles and other strategies and through direct reference to the Identity rubric adapted from the Healthy Relationships Performance Standards?

**Leadership Team**

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**School Context/Community**

Mount Prevost Middle School is a grade 7,8,9 school located in a suburban area of Duncan, Vancouver Island, bordering on a rural agricultural setting. The diverse population of 530 students includes French Immersion students from across the district and represents a variety of cultures including a large population of First Nations students. Our school goal for this year is to strengthen the advisor system, entrenching it into the culture of the school. Our family of schools goal is to improve the achievement rates of students in literacy. We have been involved in the Network of Performance Based Schools for five years in the areas of Numeracy and Social Responsibility. This is our second year with a focus on Healthy Schools and our second exploring Connectedness and the importance of relationships to the success of our students.

**School Inquiry/ Action: HEALTHY SCHOOLS – SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS – HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS**

**Focus of Inquiry**

Healthy schools are characterized by healthy relationships and connections. Relationships in middle school are of the utmost importance to students, staff, and families. The understanding of relationships begins with an understanding of who we are. With that base established, we can progress to understanding the factors that influence who we are. Our team introduced a study of characters in literature circles to grade 7 students, using a variety of powerful strategies. Using a rubric that described identity, students explored the beliefs and attitudes, knowledge and skills, relationships and experiences that influence their sense of self. Our underlying premise has been that human relationships are complex and the understanding of them begins with an understanding of identity.

**Strategies/Structures**

Students in two grade 7 classes were involved in the study. After assessing initial understanding of identity, students rotated through learning stations about First Nations culture and art to develop background knowledge for the novel studies. They worked in fluid literature circle groupings to study a variety of novels and picture books with First Nations stories and themes. The ‘Say Something’ strategy was used throughout the unit to build accountability and to ensure that each voice was heard. Double-entry journals were used to record quotes from novels and related significance, connections or predictions. Students then worked individually to create final assessment concept maps, demonstrating their grasp of identity and of the factors influencing it for characters in the novels and for themselves. Special recognition must be attributed to Catherine Feniak and Melanie Hansen of the Vancouver School District for developing a substantial part of this lesson sequence.

### **Focus on Formative Assessment**

Our strategy was to provide students with clarity and understanding of the learning intentions of the tasks with which they were engaged, especially the understanding that they would be analyzing characters in literature to develop an understanding of identity. Students used 'I can' statements such as 'I can use a concept map to demonstrate my understanding of identity'.

### **School Findings**

% of students who have a strong concept of Identity

	Not Yet (At Risk)	Meets (Basic)	Fully Meets (Solid)	Exceeds (Wow!)
Before Unit	18	52	21	9
After Unit	4	33	47	16

### **School Plans for 2009-2010**

Our plan is to continue the 'identity'-literature circles unit with all grade 7 classes. Utilizing the expertise of our district Aboriginal Curriculum Coordinator and our Literacy Specialist, we expect to conduct the unit over a longer period of time, specifically in Term 2. Term 1 will be used to establish proficiency in making connections, predictions and establishing significance of text. The foundation for the unit is for students to understand themselves in order to understand relationships with other people. It is our hope that we will expand the unit into a broader and deeper context for grade 8 and 9 students in the following year. We feel that the richness of the learning experience deserves much attention and as many learning outcomes are satisfied in this unit, considerable time and focus can be directed towards this goal.

### **Reflections, Advice**

The learning in this unit has been rich and meaningful with relevance to our school goal of improving relationship connections through advisory and to our family goal of literacy. We developed a rubric defining identity because it was felt that it was difficult for students to understand the complexity of human relationships without a basic understanding of who they are. The team decided that the unit would be most effective if delivered in second term, giving students first term to learn about connections and strategies used in the unit. It might be useful to limit the selection of books so that more students can be involved in the literature circles at the same time. We were surprised by how many learning outcomes could be met in this sequence of learning activities.

**NEILL MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**#70 Alberni**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Year in the Network**

### **School Question**

Will promoting physical activities such as regular school wide walks/runs along with integrating learning opportunities into Physical Education classes and grade wide assemblies help students acknowledge the link between physical activity and learning?

### **Leadership Team**

Sean Toal, Lauraleah Jeffery, Donna Shannon, Heidi Homan, Cindy Hewitt, Janick Lenormand, Irene Densmore

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### **School Context/Community**

AW Neill Middle School is a grade 6-8 school of about 400 students located in the Alberni Valley, on Vancouver Island. We draw from a primarily rural area with the majority of our

students being bussed to and from school. Our students come from a variety of backgrounds and bring with them a variety of learning needs, strengths and backgrounds. Our school has a strong social conscience that sees our school community come together for a number of local and global causes. We are particularly proud of our efforts to raise money for the Variety Club through our annual coin drive and our efforts to raise money and awareness of child poverty issues through our Vow of Silence. This spirit of organizing and assisting pervades the community at large where we often see the community come together to organize big events such as the World Under-17 Hockey Challenge and BC Summer Games. We have an active staff that brings energy and enthusiasm to a number of school initiatives.

**School Inquiry and Action: HEALTHY SCHOOLS**

**Focus of Inquiry**

In our second year in the network, we decided to make the shift from Healthy Eating to Active Living to coincide with our implementation of DPA. We have maintained our promotion of healthy eating choices for students by taking part in the Fruit and Vegetable program and replacing our vending machines with more affordable, healthy snacks for students that align with ministry guidelines. Over the past year, we have been sharing activities that can be done as part of promoting DPA, and this year, we wanted to focus on students making the link between their learning and their level of physical activity as teachers moved towards offering physical activity as part of every student’s school day.

**Strategies**




- Formation of a Healthy Schools Committee
- Monthly meetings and reports to staff at staff meetings
- Participation in school wide physical activity days – Terry Fox Run, Water Relay, Track and Field Day, etc.
- Implementation of Daily Physical Activity initiatives – Action Schools activities, daily runs, etc.
- Promotion of extra-curricular activities and healthy eating initiatives
- Clubs’ Days activities with Active Living theme
- Healthy Schools assessment tool
- Classroom project connecting physical activity and learning
  - Using pedometers as a measure of activity at school
  - Reflective journals
  - Student assessment rubric
- Classroom discussions
- Team members attending Healthy Schools Conference, workshops, network meetings

**Focus on Formative Assessment**

After giving students a modified version of the assessment tool, the committee determined that according to our students the main areas of concern surrounded the issue of acknowledging the link between physical activity and learning. We used class discussions and a class project that involved students using pedometers to measure physical activity and then reflecting on the correlation between their activity level and attitude towards learning.

**School Findings**

	Minimally	Moderately	Thoroughly
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Our school acknowledges the link between student learning and physical activity by integrating physical activity opportunities throughout the school day...	21% - Fall 4% - Spr	58% - Fall 30% - Spr	21% - Fall 66% - Spr
Our school acknowledges the link between student learning and physical activity by promoting walking/cycling to school...	40% - Fall 19% - Spr	34% - Fall 24% - Spr	26% - Fall 57% - Spr
Our school promotes and supports student participation in extra-curricular activities...	18% - Fall 4% - Spr	51% - Fall 32% - Spr	31% - Fall 64% - Spr

With our classroom project, students used pedometers as a measure of their activity level and how they felt about learning. They then graphed and analyzed their data to make some conclusions around linking activity and learning. Here are some of the student conclusions:

- “I think that having P.E. everyday is great and it makes a difference to me. It helps me focus more in class. I see a small pattern in the days of May. The pattern is that I’m happier and can focus more when the number of steps I’ve taken is higher.”
- “Usually the more activity I did, the better I felt. I did not notice any difference in my concentration. I felt completely normal every day.”
- “I see that when I have low steps, I have a worse mood. I think and know that if I have DPA/Gym then I am happier and more active.”
- “I think that the more amount of steps that I took the more I could focus and concentrate because most of my energy is out. The less amount of steps that I took I could concentrate and focus less.”
- “I thought that I worked better when we did DPA.”
- “I think that if you take more than 7000 steps you can concentrate way more.”
- “I do see that the more activity and steps I take, the better I feel. I think activity does affect your focus because when I took more than 7000 steps I felt really concentrated and focused.”
- “The conclusion that I have about activity and staying focused is that when we ran the dyke I was able to focus very well.”

### **School Plans for 2009-2010**

We plan on continuing with our Healthy Schools Committee initiatives around healthy eating and expanding our Active Living activities to involve more core teachers. We will continue our mandate to provide 30 minutes of physical activity to every student each day, and continue to foster a school wide approach to promoting healthy living for our students. Similarly, we will work on expanding the level of education we can provide as a committee to inform students, parents, and staff on ways to make healthy lifestyle choices. We would like to explore the notion of how rigorous physical activity can be part of our school culture and what impact that will have on learning.

In terms of our classroom project, we thought that instead of focusing on steps taken in a day as a measure of physical activity, we should focus on heart rate and vigorous activity and see what impact that has on learning. We plan on having at least one class engage in physical activity first thing in the morning (on Day 1 of our 2 day timetable) and follow it with Mathematics. Students will keep track of their heart rates, moods, and performance in math class. On the alternate day, they will have DPA and math class as per normal routine, and also keep track of moods and performance. Once students have gathered sufficient data, they will graph and analyze results to see if there is a correlation between their activity level and performance.

### **Reflections, Advice**

As this was the first year with our committee/team approach to being part of the network, we worked through the challenge of finding a focus through using the assessment tools and finding the time to create teacher friendly ways of incorporating our ideas. We also face the challenge of manifesting sustainable changes that accomplish the goals of healthy living we have for our students. For example, DPA exists in a variety of forms in our school, and our challenge is to help students and staff realize the link between physical activity and learning. We will need to bring more tangible things to staff (things that can be used in classes) in conjunction with the rich discussion we have on this topic. With our new found understanding of the process involved, we will be able to find a focus area much sooner in the school year, which will alleviate some of the challenges we had with getting our project going.

**QUALICUM BEACH MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**#69 Parksville/Qualicum**  
2 Years in the Healthy Schools Network

**School Question**

If we develop meaningful partnerships (students, staff, parents, outside agencies such as Vancouver Island Health Authority, Heart and Stroke Association, Parks and Recreation, local businesses, etc.) will the school community be motivated to make healthier lifestyle choices?

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**School Context/Community**

The school population has been declining from a high of 468 in 2004/05 to its current projected population of 310 students for the 2009/10 school year. The current student population consists of 118 grade 6 students, 100 grade 7 students and 114 grade 8 students. The diversity of the schools population also includes International Students, First Nations Students, and Indo-Canadian Students. As the school is situated on the outskirts of town, 80% of our students ride the bus to school. We have 21.425 FTE Teaching Staff, 9 Educational Assistants, 1 Child and Youth Care Worker, 1 First Nations Liaison, 6 PAC members, 2 Secretaries and 3 Custodians.

Qualicum Beach Middle school is part of School District #69 Parksville/Qualicum, located on the east side of Central Vancouver Island. The area enjoys a mild climate with average temperatures between 7-15 degrees Celsius. As the community is situated between the ocean and the mountains, people enjoy many outdoor activities offered in the natural setting. Organized community sports and activities are also abundant offering: hockey, indoor and outdoor volleyball, gymnastics, dance, curling, track and field, kick boxing, martial arts, yoga, swimming and triathlon training.

**School Inquiry and Action: HEALTHY SCHOOLS**

**Background**

Building on the idea that it takes “a whole community to raise a child”, this year’s Healthy Schools Committee decided that they wanted to get more members of the Qualicum Beach Community involve in the raising of our children. As there are a large number of retirees in the area, students have said that they feel “disconnected” from the community. They did not feel that there was anything for students to do other than Friday night swims at the Ravensong Pool. As well, when students were asked about “what wellness meant to them” they could only mention healthy eating and getting active as components of wellness.

**A Shift in Thinking**

As a result, the QBMS Healthy Schools Committee decided to hold a Wellness Fair and to invite local agencies and businesses to present. The intent was to make students aware of the resources in the community. Committee members pounded the pavement to make contact with members of the community and invite them to present. To our amazement, almost everyone who was invited was thrilled at the idea to pass on their information or knowledge of expertise to children at the middle school level. Recognizing that **prevention** is the new way of thinking, participants were enlightened. Although the timing did not work for all those who were contacted, we still had a successful turnout and most have requested an invitation for next year’s event.

## **Strategies**

- Participants in the Wellness Fair included: Laughter Yoga, Pharmasave (Body Mass Index, Sports Injury, Skin Care), Regional District of Nanaimo (Parks and Rec), Vancouver Island Health Authority, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Brain Injury, The Hand – Youth Group, Karate, One on One fitness, REPRESENTED but in absentia – BC Cancer foundation, Raw food Restaurant, student’s research projects.
- Although the QBMS team created a Quick Scale to measure students self awareness of wellness, the results did not reflect the outcome of the Fair. Instead it was the student’s reflections that proved to be evidence of success.
- Wellness Wednesday – fruit was sold for a quarter in the front foyer.

## **School Findings - Results**

- Observation and pictures show that students were engaged with the presenters.
- Members of the community are enthusiastic and motivated to promote wellness to teenagers.
- Students could write about wellness as something greater than just food and exercise.

### **Some quotes about the Wellness Fair:**

- “That was Awesome”
- “We loved the Boot camp”
- “It was neat to see QBMS students do Karate.
- “I’m definitely going to wear sunscreen from now on”

### **Some quotes about Wellness:**

- “I think wellness means healthy eating, being active and being drug free. It is important to be healthy in all different ways.”
- “I need to have a positive attitude towards being healthy.”
- ... to prepare goals to limit my unhealthy behaviour and work towards preparing a healthy fun day!” “...a healthy balance equals a healthy life!”
- “I learned about how to take care of your body and your mind, controlling emotions and to be safe while enjoying fun activities.”
- “I know that you can’t be a couch potato and still be healthy; get active!”
- “I stay well by exercising, eating portions of fruit and vegetables every day. I learned wrinkles can be caused by the sun and that you should exercise for 90 minutes everyday.”
- “To me Wellness is being the healthiest you can be in every aspect; social, mental and physical.”
- “Wellness means setting goals for your self and accomplishing them.”
- “Wellness means staying fit and improving my future before it comes.”

## **School Findings – summary**

In our opinion the fair was so successful that we have already begun planning for next year’s Wellness fair. Members of the community are motivated and excited to be involved in educating and helping youth to be well in their future. They have asked to be invited to next year’s event and some have offered to present in more detail throughout the year. Students have reported that they have signed up for Boot Camp and other classes in the community and through Parks and Recreation Nanaimo. They have also attended community games, dances and activities organized by “the hand” a community youth organization.

## **School Plans for 2009 – 2010**

- Develop a culture of wellness through student leadership and involvement.
- Students training teachers in the fitness center, students teaching students to dance in the dance studio

- A focus for next year will be to use the quick scale at the beginning and end of the year.
- Throughout the year many of the wellness awareness programs will continue such as; QDPA, Fitness Centre, Jump Rope for Heart, Wellness Wednesday's, ....
- Train students to be become personal trainers for teachers.

**Reflections/Advice**

- It's amazing what kind of a response you get when you just ask.
- Sometimes it's all about timing.
- Change takes time and every little step counts.

**SUMMIT MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**#43 Coquitlam**  
**2 Years in the Network**

**School Question**

Can we increase the number of Summit students that fully meet or exceed expectations for the Health Living explorations course, where students learn different physical activity in a variety of settings and how to evaluate their exertion levels?

**Leadership Team**

Karen Elkan , Devon Ross, Careen White

**Contact/s**

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**School Context/Community**

Summit Middle School is located in the Westwood Plateau area of Coquitlam and a part of School District 43. We are a middle school of 720 students comprised from three grades (6, 7 and 8). Most of the families are professionals, self-employed, and in the upper middle or higher income group. Summit Middle is a culturally diverse school with sixty percent of the Summit population being Asian, with the majority being Chinese and Korean. Farsi is one of the fastest growing languages in our school community, representing several cultural groups that attend Summit Middle.

**School Inquiry and Action: HEALTHY SCHOOLS**

**Focus of Inquiry**

Summit Middle School is a school who that is committed to increasing students' knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for attaining and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

**Strategies**

Summit Middle School has offered a healthy living explorations course for three years. The grade 8's at our school have had the privilege of completing this course for 3 years. We ensure that each year we take a different focus with the course depending on the needs of our cliental. The Healthy Living Course is completed by all students in the school every other day, over a seven week period. Students were asked to complete journals, personal reflection, fitness testing (Sport Fit), self assessment and goal setting. We used a variety of sources from Action Schools BC, ActNow, Activ8 and from Life in Action. These resources allow students to reflect and self assess how the information they are given impacts their learning.

**Focus on Formative Assessment**

Summit has been focusing on formative assessment for the past three years. It has become a way of teaching at our school and the six strategies are regularly used. Students are given clear learning intentions at the beginning of the course as well as at the beginning of each lesson. The criteria is clear and developed with the students. During the healthy living course, there is time for feedback, questioning, reflection and self assessment. By having students involved with creating the criteria for the course, time for reflection and self assessment, students have taken ownership of the course and their own learning.

**School Findings**

Example:

	NY		A		M		E	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Spring 2008 Gr 6/7	1	4	14	74	34	180	51	273
Spring 2008 Gr 8	0	0	13	27	42	93	45	99
Spring 2009 Gr 6/7	0	0	6	23	36	130	56	201
Spring 2009 Gr 8	0	0	4	5	30	35	67	79

### **School Plans for 2009-2010**

This year we revamped our healthy living goals to include be more of a physical fitness goal based on the results from HASAC. Our goal for 2009-2010 is to continue to promote healthy and active lifestyles with our students. We would like to continue to focus on physical education and making our students aware of the choices they have to stay active. Our main goal for next year is promoting DPA in the classroom along with healthy snack choices. We have applied for the Fruit and Vegetable program. Along with having students try these fruit and vegetables, we plan on using part of our Healthy Living budget to provide snack choices for students to explore. We will continue to comply with the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools and assess what our cafeteria and vending machines offer.

### **Reflections, Advice**

We are pleased with our schools accomplishments this year. We have many of our staff on board promoting healthy lifestyles. We have seen a change in our students' attitudes towards active living, as well we are starting to see changes in our parents attitudes. Through teacher and community observation, it is clear that our students are starting to make healthy snack choices as well as staying active. Our new sports courts have really helped. We would like to involve our PAC and community more in our healthy living initiatives. It is clear from our results that offering the healthy living course is starting make positive changes with our students' values. We know that change takes time and every little bit counts.

