

Report on Education

from the Deputy Minister of Education

May 7, 2010

Daily Physical Activity (DPA) in Secondary Schools

"It is remarkable how ones wits are sharpened by physical exercise."

- Pliny the Younger (61 AD – 112 AD)

At City Park Collegiate, an inner-city high school in Saskatoon, SK, Allison Cameron introduced a groundbreaking physical activity pilot program for her grade 8 students in the spring of 2008. The students, many of whom contended with a wide range of behavioural issues, engaged in sustained aerobic activity each day in class using treadmills. Pre and post measurements were taken in behaviour and academics, and the results (over a four month period) were remarkable:

- 27% improvement in reading
- 33% improvement in writing
- 17% improvement in mathematics

In BC, a number of secondary schools have created innovative opportunities for students to fulfill their Daily Physical Activity (DPA) requirement:

- At Fort St. James Secondary (SD#91), the school has timetabled a daily double block for grades 8 and 9 classes to include scheduled DPA. Teachers are in-serviced by PE teachers and the school has purchased extra equipment to support staff. School administrators are excited about the response from students and staff, and the results being obtained.
- At Alpha Secondary (SD#41), school staff use a cross-curricular approach (Math, PE, English) to support the importance and relevance of DPA. Students in the Fitness Leadership program work with classmates to provide school wide activities, and mentor staff as personal trainers.
- At J.V. Humphries (SD#8), the school has introduced a new one-hour block for grades 8-12, in addition to linear PE for grades 8 and 9. The new block rotates through a variety

of activities, including ballroom dance, Pilates, skateboarding, curling, and active drumming, in addition to seasonal snow shovelling and gardening for local seniors. School administrators report excellent gains in connectivity between students and teachers, and significant benefits with respect to new links with the community.

Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide

The new *Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide* is now available on the Ministry of Education website at http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/fdk/professional/resources.htm

The *Full Day Kindergarten Program Guide*, an addendum to the *Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching*, was developed to support teachers, principals and others in creating high quality full day programs for Kindergarten. It sets expectations for full day Kindergarten programs in British Columbia, summarizes current research findings, and suggests effective practices that can be put to immediate use in schools and Kindergarten classrooms. This guide is intended to help educators ensure that Kindergarten students benefit from experiences that reflect current knowledge about children's learning and development.

The Ministry of Education gratefully acknowledges the contribution of many individuals involved in the development of the addendum, including Dr. Marilyn Chapman (University of British Columbia), teachers and school district staff.

Literacy 2.0

The Ministry is looking forward to receiving the third annual district literacy plan from each school district, due by July 15, 2010. District literacy plans represent a community literacy planning process

that includes every British Columbian living in the geographic area of your district; they are also a rich source of information about how to support literacy development. We encourage you to make yourself familiar with the goals, strategies, and resources found within them.

If you have any questions about the district literacy plan for your district, please contact your superintendent, district literacy contact, or literacy outreach coordinator. You may also contact the Literacy Branch at EDUC.Literacy@gov.bc.ca about the plans or for any literacy-related queries.

Through the provincial literacy action plan, [ReadNow BC](#), the ministry endeavours to coordinate the multiple ways of supporting literacy. We have compiled a list of some of our [literacy partners and recommended literacy sites](#); we encourage you to take advantage of the expertise and services offered through these organizations.

Literacy happens everywhere: at home, at school, in the community, at work, and in play. For individuals, literacy is the foundational skill on which all other learning depends. For organizations, literacy can be a strategy on which the successes of all other strategies depend. If you have any ideas or comments to share with us about literacy in your school or community, we look forward to hearing from you!

21st Century Learning

As part of the ministry's ongoing shift towards 21st Century learning, and as a follow-up to John Abbott's visit to the ministry on March 24th and 25th, ministry staff had the pleasure of engaging in a thought provoking dialogue with Jeff Hopkins, Superintendent, SD# 64 (Gulf Islands), James Thiebault and Abbie Sherwood. James graduated last year from Gulf Islands Secondary School and the Saturna Ecological Education Centre program. He is currently attending UBC. Abbie is a current GISS student. SD# 64 has put many of John Abbott's principles into action and certainly challenged our thinking within the ministry.

The following video will give you a flavour of the work happening on the Gulf Islands (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1M59h--CpE>).

We were also privileged to have Valerie Hannon and Tony Mackay join us in the ministry on May 5th and 6th. Valerie is a director on the Board of the Innovation Unit from the United Kingdom and specializes on education and children's services in the non-profit, government sectors. Tony MacKay is co-chair of the Innovation Unit and is the Executive Director of the Melbourne-based Center for Strategic Education - specializing in system improvement, leadership and innovation.

The Innovation Unit is a not-for-profit social enterprise with an experienced team of partners and senior associates. The Unit enables leaders in public education to create innovation that is disciplined, radical, scalable and sustainable.

Valerie and Tony met with various groups of ministry staff and the staff as a whole to help us continue our exploration of 21st Century learning. They challenged our thinking and assumptions on a number of 21st Century related issues especially personalising learning and its implications around assessment and curriculum.

We plan to engage Valerie and Tony in future conversations as we continue down this exciting path as well as other BC educators who are incorporating exciting aspects of 21st Century learning into their educational programs.

Regards,



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Deputy Minister
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