

**STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE
PAN-CANADIAN JOINT CONSORTIUM FOR
SCHOOL HEALTH**

2015-2020



CONTEXT

In 2005, Canada’s ministers responsible for health and education pioneered a new approach to improving health and learning for school-aged children and youth: the Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health (JCSH). They recognized that, statistically, young people were at risk for a range of physical, psychological, and behavioural problems – and that these kinds of issues have major implications not only for learning, but also for health care costs.

Today, the JCSH comprises the Ministries of Education and Ministries responsible for Health and / or Wellness in 12 of the 13 provinces and territories¹. The federal government also supports the work of the Consortium, with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) serving in a funding and advisory capacity.

JCSH is uniquely positioned to facilitate and initiate collaboration across the health and education sectors. The Consortium provides leadership and support to its member governments, enabling the education and health sectors to work together more efficiently and effectively while building system capacity for the promotion and integration of health in the school setting. Among its provincial and territorial membership, it is considered a stable platform to which different jurisdictions and sectors can turn in the face of ever-changing priorities, agendas, and emerging trends.

The Consortium focuses on priority areas of FPT Ministers of Health, as well as the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada – all of which have key implications for the health and learning outcomes for students, such as healthy weights, mental health and academic achievement. This results in many efficiencies and enhancements that might not otherwise be achieved:

- knowledge exchange and mobilization;
- improved coordination of school health policy and research agendas; and
- development of evidence-based, user-friendly tools and resources.

The work of the JCSH promotes comprehensive school health: an internationally recognized framework for supporting improvements in students’ educational outcomes while addressing school health in a planned, integrated, holistic and sustainable way. The World Health Organization has concluded that school health programs designed using a comprehensive school health approach²

¹ While Quebec is not a member, it intends to contribute to the work of the Consortium through sharing information and best practices.

² World Health Organization website. Available at www.who.int/school_youth_health/en/. Accessed April 16, 2014



have been found to be the most effective³, demonstrating significant improvements in student achievement, behaviour and health outcomes⁴.

At the provincial and territorial levels, support for the comprehensive school health approach is being demonstrated in new ways. For example, Ministries of Education and Ministries responsible for Health and/or Wellness across the country are engaging in efforts to transform and renew education by incorporating what have traditionally been considered “health” objectives into core strategic and operational goals and planning, recognizing that students are best positioned to achieve academically when they are supported in environments that enhance their mental and physical health, their sense of self and belonging, and the skills to make positive choices.

³ Stewart-Brown, S. (2006). What is the evidence on school health promotion in improving health or preventing disease and, specifically, what is the effectiveness of the health promoting schools approach? Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe (Health Evidence Network report; <http://www.euro.who.int/document/e88185.pdf>, accessed April 16, 2014).

⁴ Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2008). Student Health and Academic Achievement. Accessed April 16, 2014 from http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/health_and_academics/.

VISION

Children and youth in Canada thriving in school communities committed to optimal learning, health, and well-being.

MISSION

To work collaboratively across the education and health systems to support the learning, health and well-being of children and youth in school communities.

VALUES

Collaboration

Diversity and Inclusion

Equity

Evidence-informed practice

Innovation

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

Three long term outcomes associated with achieving the Consortium's Vision are:

- Increased System Capacity, Collaboration, and Efficiency
- Increased Research Coordination
- Increased Inter-Sectoral Action between Education and Health

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

GOAL 1: LEADERSHIP

To advance the principles of comprehensive school health through policy, practice, and research.

STRATEGIES:

Strategy 1: Support Ministries of Education and Ministries responsible for Health and/or Wellness in collaborating across the sectors.

Strategy 2: Strengthen existing partnerships and align with federal, provincial, and territorial (FPT) work.

Strategy 3: Engage new partner organizations within the health / wellness / education fields.

Strategy 4: Explore engagement of additional sectors beyond health / wellness / education.

Strategy 5: Strengthen inclusiveness in the work of the JCSH to support the needs of diverse populations.

GOAL 2: KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT AND EXCHANGE

To build, share, and leverage knowledge to support the learning, health, and well-being of children and youth in Canada.

STRATEGY:

Develop a comprehensive research and knowledge exchange strategy.

GOAL 3: CAPACITY BUILDING

To enable member jurisdictions to advance a comprehensive school health approach to support optimal learning, health, and well-being.

STRATEGIES:

Strategy 1: Promote provincial and territorial efficiencies and effectiveness by developing and adapting tools and resources that support the use of a comprehensive school health approach

Strategy 2: Promote provincial and territorial efficiencies and effectiveness by coordinating the exchange and dissemination of knowledge between sectors and among jurisdictions.

Strategy 3: Influence external partners to adopt a comprehensive school health approach in their work and resource development.

GOAL 4: MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

To develop and implement a comprehensive evaluation framework for the goals, strategies, and action plans of the JCSH 2015-2020 Strategic Plan.

STRATEGY:

Develop an evaluation framework and monitoring plan that encompass the scope of activities of the JCSH as well as the tools and resources created to support comprehensive school health.