



PAN-CANADIAN JOINT CONSORTIUM FOR SCHOOL HEALTH

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

2020-2025

CONTEXT

In 2005, Canada’s provincial and territorial ministers responsible for health and education pioneered a new approach to improving the 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 long-term health and health care costs.

Today, the JCSH comprises the ministries of education and ministries responsible for health/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 serves as the foundational platform to facilitate and promote collaboration among its inter-governmental provincial and territorial membership. The JCSH facilitates jurisdictions to work together and to support and build capacity within its member governments. In this role, JCSH is an inter-jurisdictional forum that encourages the education and health sectors to work together more efficiently and effectively while promoting and integrating learning, health, and well-being in the school setting.

The JCSH focuses on emerging key priority areas of FPT Ministers of Health and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), including mental well-being, social emotional learning, and substance use prevention – all of which have key implications for the short and long-term learning, health, and well-being of all students. The work of the JCSH results in many efficiencies and enhancements within and across member jurisdictions, including:

- increased knowledge exchange;
- enhanced collaboration across relevant sectors and jurisdictions;
- improved coordination of school health policy and research agendas;
- development of evidence-based, user-friendly tools and resources; and,
- identification of common strategies to address the needs of diverse population groups.

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

The work of the JCSH is grounded in the application of a comprehensive school health (CSH) approach to address the health-related needs of school communities. CSH is an internationally recognized framework for supporting improvements in students’ health and well-being outcomes, which in turn provide a solid foundation to strengthen student achievement in a planned, integrated, holistic and sustainable way. The World Health Organization has concluded that school health programs designed using a comprehensive school health approach have been found to be the most effective, demonstrating significant improvements in student achievement, behaviour, and health outcomes.

VISION

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

MISSION

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

VALUES

Collaboration	Innovation
Diversity and Inclusion	Accountability
Equity	Efficiency
Evidence-informed practice	Knowledge mobilization

Objectives

The Objectives associated with achieving the Consortium’s Mission are:

1. Member jurisdictions experience increased capacity, collaboration and efficiency in their efforts to promote optimal health, well-being, and learning outcomes for all students.
2. There is a continual exchange of information and knowledge related to optimal health, well-being, and learning outcomes for all students among member jurisdictions.

3. The JCSH is recognized by other FPT bodies and key stakeholders for their expertise in the promotion of initiatives to improve the health, well-being, and learning for all students.

MANDATE AREAS OF FOCUS AND PRIORITIES

During this mandate (2020 – 2025), member jurisdictions will anticipate and provide timely evidence-based responses to emerging health and well-being issues that impact students' overall learning and long-term development. By working together through the JCSH and continuing to apply the CSH framework, member jurisdictions can assist each other in building 'upstream' preventive responses to current and emerging priorities. The initial priorities for a fourth JCSH mandate include:

Problematic substance use, with a strong initial focus on vaping;

Mental well-being, including social-emotional learning, resiliency, anxiety, protective factors and disruptive behaviours; and,

School food environment, including the alignment of healthy eating school food policies and priorities through the comprehensive school health approach.

COVID-19 support, given the mental, physical, emotional, and academic impacts of the pandemic on school communities, particularly children and youth

During the course of this mandate, specific topics and areas of focus will evolve and change.

The JCSH is positioned as the foundational platform to support provincial and territorial ministers working together to meet emerging health, well-being, and learning issues. With a focus on these current and emerging priorities, the member jurisdictions of the JCSH are able to identify and support solutions and courses of action to improve student health, well-being, and learning.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1: PROVIDING LEADERSHIP

To advance coordinated and aligned policy, programs and practice that support the optimal health, well-being, and learning of children and youth in Canada.

STRATEGIES:

Strategy 1: Strengthen connections with the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and the FPT Ministers of Health to encourage alignment of priorities and needs.

Strategy 2: Continue to support member jurisdictions with policy and practice-based tools and resources that leverage a comprehensive school health approach.

Strategy 3: Proactively engage with federal initiatives focused on student health and well-being to align with efforts within jurisdictions and encourage principles of CSH to be embedded and visible within these federal initiatives.

Strategy 4: Continue to strategically engage representatives of the non-government sector, and key stakeholders in sectors beyond health/wellness/education, in order to advance CSH-based approaches to common needs and issues.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2: ENHANCING CAPACITY THROUGH KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT AND EXCHANGE

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

STRATEGIES:

Strategy 1: Support member jurisdictions to be responsive, resource efficient, and economically responsible by sharing knowledge of what works best and has the greatest positive impact.

Strategy 2: Identify and/or develop tools to strengthen existing partnerships across the education and health sectors.

Strategy 3: Continue to strengthen knowledge on how CSH-based approaches can meet the needs of diverse population groups and address inequities.

Strategy 4: Increase and enhance opportunities for knowledge exchange among member jurisdictions.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3: PROMOTING INNOVATION

To support innovative approaches to policy, programs, and practice in member jurisdictions that address common challenges to the optimal health, well-being, and learning of children and youth in Canada.

STRATEGIES:

Strategy 1: Proactively identify and provide potential solutions to existing and emerging challenges to student health, well-being, and learning, and disseminate results among member jurisdictions.

Strategy 2: Utilizing a comprehensive school health approach, advance application of evidence to address emerging issues of concern (e.g. vaping).

Strategy 3: Continue engaging research partners in order to create an evidence base of strategies to support student health, well-being, and learning and comprehensive school health approaches.

Strategy 4: Work with research partners to advance evidence-based reviews of responses to emerging challenges.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4: MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

To implement a comprehensive evaluation framework for the goals, strategies, and operational plans of the JCSH 2020-2025 mandate.

STRATEGIES:

Strategy 1: Develop annual JCSH operational plans and budgets that specify planned areas of actions to support the five-year JCSH goals and strategies.

Strategy 2: Undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the JCSH during the mandate.

Strategy 3: Support and ensure the ongoing alignment between the JCSH governance structure, the operational policies, and the implementation of the Strategic Directions.