



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Established in 2005, the Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health (JCSH) is a formal partnership of federal, provincial, and territorial governments working together to promote the health, well-being, and achievement of children and youth in the school setting. Recognizing that every province and territory has initiatives in place to foster healthy school environments, JCSH brings together key representatives of government departments responsible for health and education for the following purposes:

- Strengthen cooperation among ministries, agencies, departments and others in support of healthy schools
- Build the capacity of the health and education sectors to work together more effectively and efficiently
- Promote understanding of, and support for, the concept and benefits of comprehensive school health initiatives

In 2020, the Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Education and Provincial and Territorial Ministers responsible for Health and/or Wellness committed to the current five-year JCSH mandate (2020-2025).

JCSH PRIORITIES 2020-2025

JCSH commenced the current mandate (all JCSH mandates are five-year terms) with three overarching priorities:

- Mental Well-Being, including social-emotional learning, resiliency, anxiety, protective factors and disruptive behaviours
- Problematic Substance Use, with a strong initial focus on vaping
- School Food Environment, including the alignment of healthy eating school food policies and priorities through the comprehensive school health approach

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in massive lockdowns and school closures beginning in March 2020, with repercussions continuing through 2021 in all communities.

In Canada, JCSH added a fourth priority: COVID-19 Support.

In the months since, JCSH has constantly monitored its responses and activities to best support its member provinces and territories and the Health/Wellness and Education ministries. Mental well-being, problematic substance use, and school food environment have grown in significance; at the same time, attention has been given to ways of addressing physical activity needs/sedentary behaviours, digital media, and student relationships with peers, educators, and families.

JCSH ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2020-2021

- In addition to representatives from Education and Health Ministries in 12 of 13 provinces and territories and from the federal government through Public Health Agency of Canada, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) began observer status with JCSH.
- JCSH began new initiatives in response to the problematic substance use priority. The first phase is underway: the Substance Use Prevention/Harm Reduction Task Group has laid the framework for development of a set of multi-media assets on Substance Use Prevention And Harm Reduction In Canadian Youth Grades 6-12: A Positive Youth Development Approach.
- Recognizing the significant contribution to JCSH priorities through the longstanding, evidence-based core resource, the Healthy School Planner Task Group has developed the criteria for Phase One of its redesign and issued the first Requests for Proposals. This will be a substantial communication for all of JCSH work: Standards and Indicators / Wise Practices for Comprehensive School Health / Health Promoting Schools in Canada.
- To support the 2021-2022 survey round of the Canadian Health Behaviour in School-aged Children study, JCSH brought together a Research Advisory Committee comprising members of both the Management Committee and the School Health Coordinators' Committee in every one of the 12 member provinces and territories with leadership from the Public Health Agency of Canada.
- JCSH participated on an expert panel developed by the Sedentary Behaviour Research Network (SBRN) led by Dr. Mark Tremblay of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) and an international team of health researchers. The results of this work has led to the development of a School-Related Sedentary Behaviour Systematic Review and, from this, School-Related Sedentary Behaviour Recommendations in students (K-12) during school and school-related activities (such as homework).
- Environmental scans in 2020-2021 developed by JCSH included initial and/or updates on the following issues:
 - Bullying Prevention and Cyber-Safety
 - Cannabis
 - Student Injury Prevention
 - School-based Mental Health Plans
 - Return-to-School for Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions
 - Sexual Violence / Misconduct in Schools
 - School-based Responses to Vaping



- A webinar series has been added to the School Health Coordinators' Committee regular meetings; every second of the monthly meetings is devoted to having two one-hour presentations on a variety of topics. Those held in 2020-2021 are as follows:
 - Pan-Canadian Supports for K-12 Workplace Wellbeing
 - Planet Youth and the Icelandic Model
 - Nurturing SEL for policy makers, principals and teachers (preparing for system change)
 - An Update on the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children survey
 - Canada's Food Guide: Update on Initiatives from Health Canada
 - Human Trafficking: Risks to Canadian Youth (from Public Safety Canada)
- Began a series of Comprehensive School Health summaries and infographics:
 - Return to School: for Students, Teachers, Staff, Families, Communities

NEXT STEPS

The JCSH 2021-2022 annual work plan will continue to focus on priorities: Mental Well-Being, Preventing Substance Abuse, School Food, COVID-19 Support.

JCSH will approach this work with an Equity Perspectives lens: ethno-racial, Indigenous, linguistic and cultural diversity of student populations (including newcomers), youth identifying cognitive and physical exceptionalities, LGBTQ+ youth, respecting diversity.

Assets and protective factors of students and school communities are essential elements of JCSH initiatives: Culture, family, community, social connections.

Comprehensive School Health is the foundational framework through which initiatives are developed.

