

UPSTREAM APPROACHES AND COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH: THE CASE FOR CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

The achievement of equitable learning and well-being outcomes for all children and youth in Canada is a complex issue requiring system change.

A commitment to work collaboratively means, by definition, that the contributors are not competing. Each jurisdiction's needs and strengths are unique; combining forces allows each to reach the goals that are shared.

The outcome sought by this cross-sector collaboration of health and education ministries known as JCSH is optimal student well-being, health, and learning in thriving school communities.

The work toward system change is a primary commitment of JCSH. Health and education systems have confronted the need to move from individual responsibilities to more upstream approaches, never more definitively than since the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak at the beginning of 2020.

Moving away from a focus on individual behavior change to population health has been evidenced by consistent and growing cultural perspectives, and by social and structural impacts and determinants of health¹.



ABOUT COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH

Comprehensive school health (CSH) is an internationally recognized framework to improve student achievement and wellbeing.

In all provinces and territories in Canada, the links between healthy students and optimal learning outcomes are recognized and supported. The use of a planned, integrated, and holistic approach is collectively called comprehensive school health but may be known as healthy schools, health promoting schools, or healthy school communities in individual jurisdictions.

Comprehensive school health involves the whole school community and comprises four distinct but inter-related components: the Comprehensive School Health Framework.

SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The social environment is

- The quality of the relationships among and between staff and students in the school
- The emotional well-being of students
- Influenced by relationships with families and the wider community
- Supportive of the school community in making healthy choices by building competence, autonomy, and connectedness.

The physical environment is

- The buildings, grounds, play space, and equipment in and surrounding the school
- Basic amenities such as sanitation, air cleanliness, and healthy foods
- Spaces designed to promote student safety and connectedness and minimize injury
- Safe, accessible, and supportive of

healthy choices for all members of the school community.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Formal and informal provincial / territorial curriculum, resources, and associated activities
- Knowledge, understanding, and skills for students to improve their health and well-being and enhance their learning outcomes
- Professional development opportunities for staff related to health and well-being.

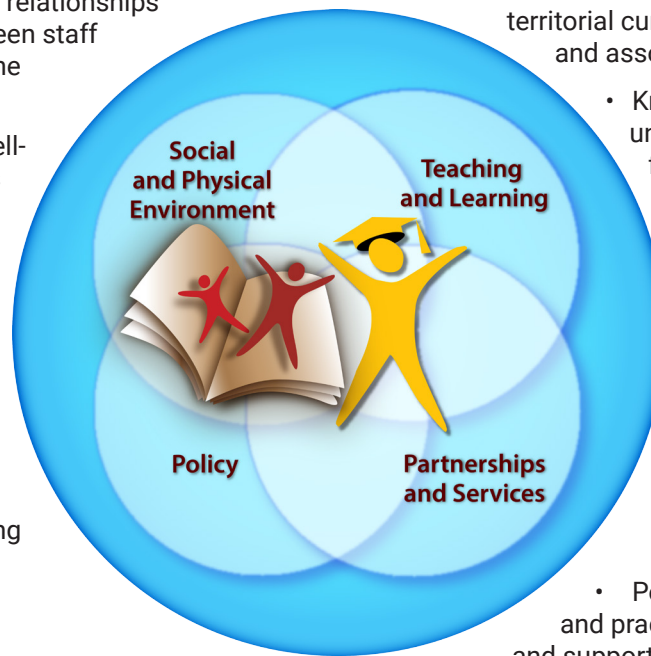
POLICY

- Policies, guidelines, and practices that promote and support student well-being and achievement and shape a respectful, welcoming, and caring school environment for all members of the school community.

PARTNERSHIPS AND SERVICES

Partnerships are

- The connections between the school and students' families
- Supportive working relationships among schools, and among schools and other





community organizations and representative groups

- Health, education, and other sectors working together to advance school health.

Services are

- Community and school-based services that support and promote student and staff health and well-being.

A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTH PROMOTING SCHOOLS



Healthy students are better learners; educated individuals are healthier²³⁴

“School health efforts that are high quality, strategically planned, and effectively coordinated are one of the best investments for influencing the health, as well as the minds, of the nation’s youth”⁵. This is the basis for JCSH to champion the Comprehensive School Health Framework.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH IN CANADA: STUDENT WELL-BEING AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT



Effective, sustainable progress in comprehensive school health depends on a common vision, shared responsibilities, and harmonized actions among health, education, and other sectors.

The challenge is to coordinate these efforts so that partners pool resources and develop action plans together with, and in support of, schools.

In Canada, the JCSH models and encourages the collaborations between health and education sectors essential to implementing comprehensive school health in school communities.

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