

## Program/Service Information Report

# School Health Promotion

June 2017 to June 2018

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**TO:** Board of Health

**MEETING DATE:** October 3, 2018

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## Key Points

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- This report provides a summary of the Healthy Communities and Public Policy (HCPP) team's work in the school health promotion program from June 2017 to June 2018.
- The school health promotion program includes a collection of initiatives and health promotion strategies implemented in collaboration with local school boards and individual schools to promote the optimal health and well-being of children and youth.
- Figure 1, below, is a visual summary of the program's numerous initiatives in the 2017-2018 school year.

**Figure 1. Summary of School Health Promotion Program Initiatives, 2017-2018 school year**

Service Model & School Resources	Communications	Individual School Initiatives	School Board Initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Health Curriculum Resource Line</li> <li>School Resources and Library Collections</li> </ul>	<p>School staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Calendar Resource Guide</li> <li>Teacher e-Bulletin</li> <li>Postcard of WDGPH services</li> <li>Website</li> </ul> <p>Parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kindergarten registration packages</li> <li>School newsletter inserts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healthy Schools initiative and Grants</li> <li>You're the Chef School Pilot</li> <li>Community Collaborative Initiatives:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Happy Healthy Families</li> <li>Minto Mapleton Communities in Motion</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WCDSB Secondary School Needs Assessment</li> <li>Active and Safe Routes to School</li> <li>Physical Literacy Teacher Workshop</li> <li>E-cigarette Resource and Policy Development</li> <li>Cannabis Campaign</li> <li>Substance Misuse and Mental Health Promotion Pilot Program</li> <li>UGDSB Mental Health Week Campaign</li> </ul>

## Strategic Directions & Goals

Building Healthy Communities - We will work with communities to support the health and well-being of everyone.

- We will enhance our understanding of the local needs and priorities of the communities we serve and develop programs and services in response to those needs.
- We will promote healthy environments that support physical and mental health and well-being.

## Operational Plan Objectives

WDGPH provides a program of public health interventions to achieve the optimal health of school-aged children and youth through partnership and collaboration with school boards and schools. School health promotion is an integral program to help achieve that goal. The School Health Promotion Program involves the following three (3) interventions:

- 1) School and Board-level health promotion and capacity support resources;
- 2) School Board Comprehensive Health Promotion Programming;
- 3) Healthy Schools Initiative – based on the Foundations for a Healthy School Framework.

The objective of the school health promotion program is to achieve the optimal health of school-aged children and youth.

## Summary of OPHS Program Requirements

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### OPHS Program: School Health

#### Goals:

- To achieve optimal health of school-aged children and youth through partnership and collaboration with school boards and schools.

#### Strategy:

- Health Promotion and Policy Development

#### Requirements:

- Requirements 3 and 4 of the School Health program standard.

#### Accountability Indicators:

- N/A

#### Performance variance or discrepancy identified:

- N/A

### Highlights

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The 2017-2018 school year marks the second year of the restructured school health promotion portfolio. Led by the HCPP team, the vision of the school health promotion portfolio is to support the Wellington, Dufferin and Guelph (WDG) school sector in creating environments that promote optimal health and well-being for children and youth. This vision emphasizes collaborating with school boards to develop comprehensive board-level health promotion strategies and interventions as part of a population approach, while also providing health promotion supports to teachers and students at the individual school-level.

A Health Promotion Specialist acts as a liaison with local school boards to support the coordination and implementation of the health promotion portfolio, both externally with school boards and schools, and internally within the HCPP team and across other program areas. Two (2) WDGPH nurses work directly with schools to support individual school health promotion needs. As a team, HCPP collaborates with school partners to develop and implement a collection of health promotion interventions based on school-board level needs and priorities.

This report provides a summary of the HCPP team's school health promotion portfolio work from June 2017 to June 2018.

## Summary of School-level Work

School-level work conducted by the HCPP team consists of:

- responding to individual school staff requests about the health curriculum and school activities,
- supporting interested schools to implement comprehensive school health initiatives such as the Healthy Schools approach,
- leveraging existing community partnerships to support schools, and
- piloting new programs.

### School Health Curriculum Resource Line

The School Health Curriculum Resource Line is a telephone intake line for educators seeking credible information and resources to support them with teaching the Health and Physical Education (H&PE) curriculum and planning school health initiatives. The intake line was launched in August 2016. In its second year (August 2017 to June 2018), the intake line received 103 requests, a slight decrease from 123 requests in the previous school year. The majority of requests continue to be from elementary schools (87.4%) and by teachers (57.3%). The most commonly requested topics were about the Healthy Schools initiative (25.2%), hand hygiene (16.5%), and healthy eating (10.7%), compared to healthy eating (24.4%), hand hygiene (19.5%) and sexual health (15.4%) in the previous year. The most common types of requests were for health information for school events (34.0%) and health resources (e.g., sample class activities and interactive kits) (32.0%), which is similar to the previous year.

### School resources and library collections

The HCPP team conducts an annual review of all school resources, including electronic sources, DVDs and kits, to ensure they align with the H&PE curriculum and current evidence. Interactive kits and DVDs are loaned to schools to supplement health curricula instruction and school health initiatives.

In the spring of 2016, WDGPH partnered with five (5) local libraries to transfer ownership of WDGPH's school resource collection to make them more accessible to schools and community groups. A collection of eleven (11) interactive kits and six (6) DVDs were transferred to the following libraries: Guelph Public Library, Wellington County Library, Orangeville Public Library, Shelburne Public Library, and the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) Terry James Resource Centre. Circulation of the school collection continues to vary widely by library. The loaning of resources was lowest among the smaller libraries: Orangeville and Shelburne, which is attributed to smaller populations and fewer schools in those areas. However, all libraries continue to be satisfied with their use and agreed to extend the term of the partnership agreement for an additional three (3) years, until June 2021. Furthermore, as of August 2018, the Grand Valley Public Library also agreed to partner on the collection, making the school resource collection available in all public libraries across WDG.

### Communications Strategy

The school communications strategy incorporates the development and delivery of print and electronic materials to increase schools' access to credible health information and public health

services. Materials developed for schools include: a postcard of key public health services, a school section on WDGPH's website with health curricula-supporting resources, and the School Calendar: a printed resource guide highlighting health resources to support elementary H&PE curriculum instruction. Approximately 1,500 copies of the School Calendar were distributed to teachers at all 105 elementary schools (excluding French-language schools). A new monthly e-bulletin for school staff was also launched in the fall of 2017, with strong support from UGDSB and WCDSB. The e-bulletin, which is distributed to all 105 elementary schools (excluding French language schools) and all fifteen (15) secondary schools, promotes timely health information, resources and public health services for teachers. It will continue to be distributed during the 2018-2019 school year with plans to evaluate it in the spring of 2019.

A teacher evaluation of the School Calendar was also conducted in the spring of 2018 to determine its usefulness and impact, and to understand teachers' preferred format for receiving health information from WDGPH. Among those who use the School Calendar, over 80% stated it increased their awareness of credible sources of health information and their knowledge of health topics, and find it a useful tool to support their work (e.g., teaching the health curriculum, planning health events). Results about a preferred format were mixed among teachers. The School Calendar has been revised based on survey feedback and offered in the 2018-2019 school year with plans to evaluate it again in the spring of 2019.

Parent-targeted public health information is also distributed through the school sector. Monthly health messages are sent to parents via elementary school newsletters and secondary e-announcements, and UGDSB's and WCDSB's winter Junior Kindergarten Registration Packages include WDGPH parent handouts with health information to prepare students for school.

### Healthy Schools

WDGPH supported eighteen (18) schools to implement a Healthy Schools approach during the 2017-2018 school year, an increase from seven (7) schools in the 2016-2017 school year. The Healthy Schools approach is a process that engages school communities to identify and take action on health topics to enhance the health and well-being of students, school staff and the broader community. It aligns with the best practice Comprehensive School Health (CSH) model and the Ministry of Education's Foundations for a Healthy School Framework.<sup>1,2</sup> WDGPH provides consultative services to guide interested schools through the six (6) steps needed to plan and implement activities addressing their selected health topic. Support varies by school and can include assessing assets and needs, sharing data, developing action plans, recommending evidence-based activities and monitoring progress toward goals. As an incentive to encourage more WDG schools to adopt a Healthy Schools approach, WDGPH awarded \$100 grants to fourteen (14) schools in the fall of 2017, surpassing our initial objective of ten (10) schools. Priority health topics among grant recipients were: physical activity, mental health and healthy eating. Due to the success of the grant initiative, WDGPH will continue to offer its Healthy Schools grants in the 2018-2019 school year.

WDGPH also encourages Healthy Schools to register with the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA) to receive additional resources, certification and recognition. During the 2017-2018 school year, twenty-four (24) WDG schools registered with OPHEA, an

increase from twelve (12) schools in the 2016-2017 school year. A total of fifteen (15) schools received an OPHEA certification (Gold, Silver or Bronze level), of which WDGPH supported nine.

### You're the Chef

You're the Chef (YTC) is an evidence-based food literacy program designed to help children and youth develop the skills and confidence necessary to prepare healthy and delicious recipes emphasizing vegetables and fruit. WDGPH adapted the YTC program with permission from Niagara Region Public Health and pilot tested the program in an elementary school in a priority neighbourhood in Guelph. Using a "train-the-trainer" model, WDGPH staff trained five YTC leaders (teachers and a parent volunteer) to deliver YTC to twelve (12) grade six (6) participants over four (4) sessions in May 2018. Results from the pilot program evaluation showed that:

- YTC leaders were very satisfied with the training delivered by WDGPH staff, and felt that the training and resources equipped them well to run YTC.
- All participants learned various cooking skills, increased their confidence to cook, and indicated that they would know how to (and that they plan to) make the recipes at home.
- Participants engaged in collaboration and teamwork, and continually built a sense of social connectedness through cooking and eating with their peers.
- YTC leaders, participants and the school administrator would recommend YTC to other schools or community groups.

Overall, the pilot program evaluation showed that the YTC program objectives were met. Participants demonstrated food skills and practiced safe food handling and basic kitchen safety, and prepared a number of YTC recipes. WDGPH will expand this initiative for the 2018-2019 school year to promote YTC to other interested schools.

### Happy Healthy Families

Happy Healthy Families (HHF) is a community initiative that engages all sectors of the community to "Make Wellington North the Healthiest Place to Raise a Child". As part of its healthy eating theme, WDGPH worked with twenty-four (24) students from Wellington Heights Secondary School (WHSS) to deliver a food skills workshop to students from Victoria Cross Public School (VCPS). This workshop was adapted based on the evaluation from the previous year's pilot. Three workshop sessions were delivered to 117 elementary students in grades three (3) to six (6) over a three (3) day period. The purpose of the workshop was to teach students about Canada's Food Guide and engage them in preparing a healthy snack and lunch. After the workshop, 92% of elementary participants said they would know how to make the recipes at home. All of the teachers said they would participate in the workshops again and that it met their curriculum needs. HHF has begun its second theme, "Move and Play Every Day", and will work with community partners in the coming year to offer physical activity initiatives in schools that focus on inclusion.

### Minto Mapleton Communities in Motion

The Minto Mapleton Communities in Motion Committee (CIM), supported by WDGPH is a community partnership that aims to promote physical activity in Minto-Mapleton. During the

2017-2018 school year the CIM offered \$200 grants to area schools to increase opportunities for physical activity among their staff and students. Four (4) schools in Minto-Mapleton completed the grant application and successfully implemented a variety of initiatives. The Minto Mapleton CIM will offer this grant again in the 2018-2019 school year during in-motion week.

## Summary of School Board-level Work

WDGPH continues to strengthen its partnerships with the UGDSB and WCDSB by working collaboratively to identify and respond to emerging school board needs and practice evidence-informed planning. WDGPH also continues to communicate with other school boards who have a limited number of schools in WDG, including the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board and the French catholic school board: Conseil Scolaire Catholique Mon Avenir. Below is a summary of board-level health promotion interventions that were developed or advanced between June 2017 and June 2018 by the HCPP team.

### WCDSB Secondary School Needs Assessment

In the fall of 2017, a survey was administered to staff at WCDSB secondary schools to better understand their schools' health needs and to help WDGPH identify priority areas to address among secondary schools. The survey was developed using an evidence-based approach to align with the school health promotion topics in the 2018 Public Health Standards, and included topics of importance to WCDSB. In total, 63% of secondary staff completed the survey. Results were validated against the 2017-2018 WDG Youth Survey data, and a set of tiered priority areas were identified. Tier one includes three (3) priority areas that are of high need, timely based on political and community movement and have a high level of WDGPH staff capacity to support in the 2018-2019 school year. Tier two includes three (3) priority areas that are less timely and may not have WDGPH staff capacity to support until future school years. Tier one priority areas include: student mental well-being; student cannabis use; and student e-cigarette use. Tier two priority areas include: student body image, weight bias and disordered eating; student sexual well-being; and student alcohol use. The aggregate and school-specific results from the survey will be shared with school staff in the fall of 2018. WDGPH has already begun planning to address several of the tier one priority areas, which will be its main focus during the next two (2) school years.

### Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Active and Safe Routes to School

A summary of the work completed by Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Active and Safe Routes to School (WDG ASRTS) is available in the September 2018 Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour-Program Service Information Report (BH.01.SEP0518.C16).

### Physical Literacy Workshop

In October 2017, WDGPH and H&PE curriculum consultants from UGDSB and WCDSB collaborated to host a joint half-day physical literacy and mindfulness workshop for elementary school teachers. The need for a capacity building workshop was identified from a 2016 UGDSB elementary teacher survey. The purpose of the workshop was to increase teacher capacity and confidence to foster student physical literacy and mindfulness as part of the H&PE curriculum.

School boards provided funding to send one (1) participant from each elementary school. A total of sixty-six (66) teachers participated in the workshop (48 UGDSB teachers, 18 WCDSB teachers), which was led by instructors from Moving EDGEducation and Experience Groove. Teachers reported several positive outcomes from the workshop: the majority of teachers had a better understanding of physical literacy, how to connect physical literacy to other curriculum subjects, and felt confident in planning physical literacy activities for students in their classroom. In a six (6) week follow-up survey, teachers continued to report a high level of knowledge and confidence in their ability to teach physical literacy, and the majority shared their workshop learnings and resources with other school staff.

### E-cigarette Resource and Policy Development

Through consultations with UGDSB and WCDSB secondary school staff in January 2017, student e-cigarette use was identified as an emerging issue. Secondary school staff reported an increasing number of students using e-cigarettes on school property and challenges teaching students about the health risks due to a lack of available evidence and resources. WDGPH conducted focus groups in the spring of 2017 with over 680 secondary students from a combined four UGDSB schools and four WCDSB schools. The purpose was to better understand student knowledge and perceptions of e-cigarettes to inform the development of tailored curriculum resources.

Reports summarizing findings from staff and student consultations, and recommendations were prepared for each school board and then distributed to school administrators and staff in the fall of 2017. Individual school results were also shared with respective schools. The knowledge translation phase occurred in the winter of 2018 and included presentations to superintendents, administrators, health curriculum consultants, and health and physical education departments. The two (2) key action areas identified from this research were policy, and education and awareness. WDGPH is working closely with both school boards to support the effective communication and enforcement of their school board e-cigarette policies, as well as any changes associated with the Smoke Free Ontario Act 2017, once enacted. WDGPH is also working with two volunteer UGDSB teachers to develop e-cigarette curriculum-supporting resources. These resources, which include a collection of videos, fact sheets and activities, will be available to all UGDSB and WCDSB secondary H&PE teachers in the fall of 2018 to support classroom instruction.

### Youth-Driven Cannabis Campaign

WDGPH received funding from Gambling Research Exchange Ontario to develop a youth-driven campaign to increase knowledge among WDG youth around the risks associated with cannabis use to support informed-decision making. Phase one of this work involved hosting interactive workshops with youth to identify key messages that are important to youth, and appropriate ways to share messaging. A total of seven (7) workshops were conducted with youth in the community and in the school system; two workshops were held in a Grade 9 and 10 class at Guelph Collegiate Vocational Institute (GCVI), and one workshop was held in a Grade 9 class at Bishop Macdonell Catholic High School. WDGPH is currently working with a Youth Advisory Committee and a professional video production company to develop videos and a website for youth which is set to launch within schools and the greater community in the fall of 2018.

### Substance Misuse and Mental Health Promotion Program

In partnership with the Mental Health Substance Misuse and Addiction Prevention (MHSMAP) working group of the Dufferin Coalition for Kids (DuCK), WDGPH secured funding from Gambling Research Exchange Ontario and received approval to pilot test a classroom-based, stress reduction program in the 2018-2019 school year. The need for this pilot was identified based on local trends of alcohol use and teacher consultations. Developed by The Psychology Foundation of Canada, the teacher-led program is called *Stress Lessons: From Stressed Out to Chilled Out* and will be implemented with grade seven (7) students from three UGDSB elementary schools in Dufferin County. Additional content about preventing substance use and problem gambling, as it pertains to mental health, will be included. WDGPH will be conducting a program evaluation at three (3) time points: before and after receiving the program, and at a twelve (12) week follow-up to assess improvements to student self-awareness, self-management and responsible decision-making. Teacher focus groups will also be conducted to better understand program implementation successes and challenges, and any observed changes in student social awareness and/or relationship skills.

### UGDSB Mental Health Week Campaign

In celebration of Canadian Mental Health Awareness Week (the first week of May), UGDSB leads an annual campaign for elementary and secondary schools to raise student and staff awareness about mental health, build protective factors and address stigma. For a second year, WDGPH contributed to the development of a staff campaign toolkit and social media challenge. These components were updated based on staff feedback from the 2017 campaign survey and new school mental health promotion resources. The toolkit is provided to all elementary and secondary schools, and includes a collection of school and classroom activities on: building social connections, emotional self-reflection, promoting physical health, empathy and resilience. A social media challenge was held to promote school participation, share ideas and increase parent awareness of school mental health activities. More than seventy (70) photos were posted to Twitter of students celebrating mental health week, an increase from six (6) campaign entries in the previous year.

## Related Reports

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- Physical Activity BOH report –BH.01.SEP0518.C16, September 2018
- Cannabis Legalization Update report – BH.01.SEP0518.R26, September 2018

## References

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1. Comprehensive School Health Framework [Internet]. Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health. 2018 [cited 2018 Aug 15]. Available from: <http://www.jcsh-cces.ca/index.php/about/comprehensive-school-health>

2. Foundations for a healthy school: promoting well-being is part of Ontario's *achieving excellence* vision [Internet]. Ontario Ministry of Education. 2014 [cited 2018 Aug 15]. Available from: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/resourceF4HS.pdf>