

Healthy Schools Network Reports

Featured Stories 2006-07

Selected Reports of Action Research and Design

School	District
Morley Elementary	School District 41 Burnaby
Trafalgar Middle	School District 08 Kootenay Lake
Howe Sound Secondary	School District 48 Howe Sound

**Morley Elementary
#41 Burnaby**

Leadership Team: Stephanie Miller, Liz Cramb, Sue Fulton, Elizabeth King, Tina Waterhouse Cambell, Lana Horton, Lorrie Cramb, Troy Closs , Tammy Wirick. Marge Thorne

Contact: lcramb@morley.sd41.bc.ca, Stephanie.Miller@sd41.bc.ca, Steve.Cairns@sd41.bc.ca

School Context/Community:

Morley Elementary School in Burnaby enrolls a population of 350 students from grades Kindergarten – 7. The school has many characteristics typical of an inner city school. Not every student’s basic needs are met including food and appropriate shelter.

The following are significant features of our community:

- In the 2003 Early Development Instrument (EDI), which assesses preschool children’s readiness to learn, Morley ranked 39th out of the 39 Burnaby elementary schools. The 2005 EDI indicated little or no improvement in children’s readiness level when entering Morley. These children are critically in need of early intervention programs.
- A significant number of our students are impacted by low social economics and single family structures
- 29% of the grade seven students were excused from the 2005/06 FSA (Foundation Skills Assessment) due to challenges in language or academic development. Of the 71% participating in the FSA, 56% met or exceeded grade level expectations for reading comprehension. This means that approximately 40% the total grade seven population met or exceeded grade level expectations for reading comprehension. Similar numbers reflect the grade 4 reading comprehension rate.
- There are over 24 different languages spoken in the homes.
- Approximately 45% of the total school population is enrolled in the ESL program. Approximately 75% of these are assessed at Level 0-2. This population by the nature of the limited language proficiency puts excess demands on the classroom teacher and resource supports in the school.
- 34% of our ESL students are on refugee status and have significant gaps in their education. This also represents 14% of the entire school population.
- Approximately 12% of the school population has a behavioral designation (H or R)
- Approximately 230 students come in or go out of Morley in a one-year period.
- There is an average of 30% student enrollment change in a typical classroom in a one-year period.

The students are eager to participate in resource programs that address their needs and build on their strengths. This has extended to strengthening other programs such as Peer Tutoring and Buddy Reading. The rate of student growth in the resource programs often narrows the gap between delayed skill development and grade level expectations. This is due in part to student’s willingness to participate and to parent’s willingness to be involved at home with follow-up activities, which are specifically selected to accelerate individual student growth.

Given that we have over 24 different languages representing multi-ethnic, multicultural populations, we are proud that our students play and interact in a socially polite and positive manner. There is a root of empathy that binds these students together.

The staff of Morley Elementary was actively involved in developing the school growth plan. A series of collaboration hours were focused on the implementation of our current plan. At staff

meetings and during collaboration time periods, teachers analyzed the data collected on our reading goals and identified areas of growth for our focus next year. The School Planning Council also examined the student performance data at meetings throughout the school year. The SPC reviewed the draft goals and was encouraged to provide input and feedback. Our parent community had opportunities to have input to our plan as school bulletins regularly include information about the school goals and objectives and their feedback was invited. Practical strategies were included in the newsletters for parents so they could support their children at home. PAC meetings always included updates about our work on the plan and the school held workshops to help parents support student learning. Our school website also provides links for strategies.

School Inquiry and Action: HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Questions:

1. Will providing teachers with the learning outcomes for their grade levels, and information about what activities their students participate in during our “Action School” time, alter their perception of what their students are learning in terms of the health outcomes?
2. Will providing Heart Smart resources and training increase the number of learning outcomes that teachers can cover in class when integrated into other subject areas?
3. Can we directly address the learning outcomes (that teachers identify as being difficult to cover in class) during the “Action Schools/ Collaboration” time?

Strategies & Structures:

- The team met and we wondered about the difference between the *perception* of what learning outcomes the teachers think are being addressed in their classrooms, and what is *actually* being covered.
For example, were they aware of the following?
 1. The health learning outcomes for their grade level
 2. What was being done in our school through other programs such as:
 - Actions Schools time
 - lunch-time clubs
 - and other school wide activities.
- Using the Creating Healthy Futures BC Healthy Schools Network Assessment Tool our team assessed our overall school health.
- The results were as follows:
Morley achieved high scores in *Area 2* - School Environment and *Area 3*- Partnerships
- we noted the lowest scores in the active living components
 - 100% for school connectedness
 - 95% for school policy
 - 88% for healthy eating and community partnerships
 - 70-77% for the physical environment and active living components
- Areas identified as needing attention:
 - Area 1*- Teaching and Learning of:
 - Element 1- Health and Career/Planning (score: 40%)
 - Element 2- Physical Education (score: 50%)
- Heart Smart Workshop was booked and teachers attended during a lunch hour in March to address the concerns of not having enough time to teach the health curriculum. The resource provided contained complete lesson plans with L.O. listed as appropriate for each grade, as well as integrating the core subjects with the health and career/ planning outcomes. Resources and workshop were free.

- Photo's were taken and "walk-about's" planned for teachers to view what their students actually do during the "action schools" time. They were then able to check off which learning outcomes were being addressed during this time.
- A subcommittee of staff volunteered to look specifically at the learning outcomes for their grade level (all grades covered). They were asked to highlight the areas they felt were covered in class in yellow, and those covered during action schools time in orange.
- The team assessed where the gaps were and consider ways to address these during the "action schools" time.
- Materials and cost included:
 1. "Heart Smart" Workshop: Free (minimum 10 participants to run)
 2. High-lighters and copies of the learning outcomes: office supplies
 3. Digital camera: owned by school and operated by teachers or student volunteers
 4. Printing/viewing photos: small change (\$)
 5. Biggest expense:
TIME for teachers to group, discuss and implement the plan. This was achieved primarily during our weekly collaboration hour(s), during staff meeting time, and during a couple of lunch hour meetings.

School Findings:

- Teachers reassessed the learning outcomes after attending the Heart Smart workshop, and learning more about what is done school wide towards achieving more physical activity in the day. A sample group of teachers formed a subcommittee to reassess the learning outcomes. They highlighted the outcomes they felt were covered and the following results were obtained.
- On average, teachers felt they were able to cover most of the learning outcomes contrary to our initial assessment. This has improved our overall scores in AREA 1 of the assessment tool. The score changed from %40 to %60 (teaching and learning of the Health and Career Ed Curriculum). We would also like to note that we believe this scoring system undervalues our improvement, as many teachers moved from rating their ability from moderate to thoroughly, but the tool doesn't reflect this.
- Interestingly more teachers responded to our second survey than the first (18 responses vs 11 from the first request) and there was a definite increase in the number of teachers who felt they could moderately or thoroughly teach all the health related learning outcomes in the curriculum. As well many of them moved their thinking from a *minimal* rating to *moderate* or *thorough* rating with respect to the amount of instructional time they had for students to meet the learning outcomes.
- The original question was posed to the staff a second time.

School Plans 2007-2008:

- Walking Wednesdays, Thirsty Thursdays.... Theme days
- healthy schools snacks fruit and vegetable program
- changing the action schools cycle every 6 weeks to offer a variety of activities
- outside groups such as the local RCMP will be invited in to address street smarts and drug awareness and refusal skills (D.A.R.E. program).
- *Healthy Hearts* will be invited next year to help address specific needs as discussed by teachers
- Creating an assessment tool to help determine if the students are changing some of their choices (during or after school) into healthier ones, based on what they are learning at school.

Reflections, Advice:

- When we began this process we thought teachers may have underestimated their abilities to cover the learning outcomes over the course of the year.
- Providing the opportunities to think of healthy living as a goal and then providing the resources and training for those interested seemed to improve their perception of how much more they actually covered during the course of the year.
- We have now identified some key areas to address (as a school) in our action schools time to ensure all topics of the health outcomes are delivered.
- Bringing the health curriculum to a more visible forum has made our whole school more aware of ways to incorporate these important aspects of learning into our everyday practices.
- For example we had:
 - a. a Hip Hop to Health week
 - b. Healthy snack days which occurred at the same time as the Act Now publication was distributed.
- Our Action Schools/Collaboration hour has become much more focused on delivering specific aspects of the health and physical education curriculums such as:
 - a. offering leadership opportunities to train students to lead physical activities during action schools time
 - b. students are learning games and activities and skills that they can incorporate into their lives outside of school time (ie skipping has been a focus this month, playing cooperatively).

**Trafalgar Middle School
#08 Kootenay Lake**

Leadership Team: Jim Booth, Geoff Burns, Helena Burrows, Hannah Davison Early Evans, Alison Graeme, Margaret Listar, Hillary Muth, Louise Poole

Contact: gurns@sd8.bc.ca

School Context/Community:

Trafalgar Middle School is a school of 510 students located in the city of Nelson. Our school enrolls grades seven, eight and nine and is the catchment school for the majority of those students living on the west side of Kootenay Lake. Half of our students live within the city of Nelson and half are bussed in from the surrounding area. Our PAC is very supportive of activities and programs developed at Trafalgar. Trafalgar's original building was built in 1924, but while the building may be a heritage structure, we have many creative and innovative programs, such as academies for hockey and dance, school wide club days, and Trafalgar Reads – a library initiative to increase reading in the school.

School Inquiry Action Story: HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Trafalgar Middle School has had an active Healthy Schools Committee for some time now. We joined the Healthy Schools Network this year and immediately chose to focus on food and drink options in the school. Our goal was to begin the transition to the standards set by the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools that must be in place by 2009. These guidelines recognize that:

- healthy children learn better, and
- schools can directly influence students' health.

Our school has an active hot lunch program available to all students. In addition, there are several vending machines in the school and a canteen that sells a variety of drinks and snacks at lunch. We wanted to see if changing to healthier snacks and drinks would impact food and beverage choices and sales at Trafalgar School.

Question: Will providing more healthy food and drink options and education about healthy eating at Trafalgar Middle School affect the eating and drinking habits of our students?

Strategies & Structures:

Trafalgar's Healthy Schools Committee went through a long process to understand the guidelines that need to be in place by 2009, and to implement them effectively in our school. The vending company, as well, has been very supportive and helpful through all the changes. The process we have gone through included:

- studying the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools to understand them better;
- examining a list of products from which we could choose, as well as many samples of these products so that we could see their ingredients and nutrients list;
- classifying these products using the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools document. This proved a challenge as the nutrient lists met some categories in the guidelines and not others, or there was no nutrient list at all;
- creating a list of products we would be willing to include in our school. This was much easier for beverages than food snack products. For beverages, we simply changed to water and 100% fruit juices. For snacks and food choices, there were simply not enough

- food options in the “Choose Most” or “Choose Sometimes” categories to fill a machine.
- communicating with parents and students through the Parent Advisory Committee, information in newsletters and a parent e-mail list, grade assemblies to introduce the changes, and posters placed around the school, especially near the vending machines, explaining healthy eating choices and the “Choose Most,” “Choose Sometimes,” “Choose Least,” and “Not Recommended” categories.
- Attaching stickers to the vending machines themselves classifying each of the products in the categories listed above. The stickers combined the check mark system of the guidelines with a simple colour scheme where “Choose Most” products were marked with a green sticker, “Choose Sometimes” with yellow, “Choose Sometimes” with red, and “Not recommended” left blank.

Focus on Formative Assessment:

While we have not formally used any formative assessment methods in classroom teaching, we tried to reinforce two of the important elements of formative assessment. Students understood that the objective was to make healthier food and drink choices for better learning and life-long health. They were also given clear criteria in the form of the categories listed above. Students were then allowed to make their own choices from the products available.

School Findings:

All along there was a concern that as options were changed and healthier choices were provided, students would simply buy fewer healthy options and find unhealthy choices elsewhere. Our school is only a short walk from a candy carrying corner store. The change over of products in the vending machines took place around Spring Break 2007. Analysis of any changes in student buying habits could be tracked by comparing purchasing patterns before March with the data for sales after March.

Our results have, in fact, been mixed. The predicted loss in sales seems to have come true for the food snacks. Sales have indeed gone down in the month of April compared to earlier months. However, the beverage changes seem to be hugely successful. In fact, students are choosing healthy drink choices more than they have ever chosen any products before. Clearly, it is too early to tell how things will settle out, but it is certainly safe to say that students have embraced the choices for drinks that they have been given. The following charts provided a little insight into just how buying patterns have changed since March.

Beverage Sales:

Month	Items Sold	Commission ¹
September 2006	385	\$72.38
October 2006	392	\$73.70
November 2006	351	\$65.99
December 2006	314	\$59.03
January 2007	397	\$74.67
February 2007	395	\$74.29
March 2007	214	\$40.66
April 2007	702	\$133.38

The significant increase in sales in April 2007 shows that students approve of the beverage choices they have been given. The leap in sales seemed almost too significant to be believed. The

vendors confirmed that the numbers were accurate, that the increase in April, almost double most previous months, was far above sales from previous years as well, and that the largest part of that increase was from sales of *water*. This is a great choice for students, and may partly be to the fact that we consciously chose to keep the cost of water down to only a dollar, while most other products range from \$1.25 to \$1.75. Whatever the reason, having students choosing water above most other choices is a success.

In contrast to the beverage experience, snack sales seem to have followed our prediction. The only data we have is for the month before and the month after the change over, but it does show a slight decline in sales. The chart below shows the difference.

Snack Sales:

Month	Commission
February 2007	\$291.71
April 2007	\$226.08

While this is limited data, it does suggest an unwillingness on the part of students to buy the healthier choices as much as the previous unhealthy options. We will continue to track sales to see if students will simply get used to the new choices and ultimately choose them more often. These findings are preliminary, but they do offer hope that the change over to healthy food and drink options in the school will ultimately be accepted by the students, for their own benefit.

School Plans for 2007-2008:

The Healthy Schools Committee has several plans for the coming year. These include:

- searching for a larger number and wider variety of snack products that fit the “Choose Most” and “Choose Sometimes” categories that we can provide for students.
- meeting the standards in the guidelines for 2009 a year early by having at least 50% of the products sold in our school as “Choose Most,” and no more than 10% as “Choose Least.”
- continuing with the school milk program and becoming involved with the fruit and vegetable snack program available to elementary schools.
- developing an information program for parents to implement next year to assist and encourage parents to provide their children with only the healthiest choices for meals at school and at home.
- incorporating more healthy eating activities into Health and Career Education and other classes.

In addition to these school-based activities, our district is implementing a Food and Nutrition Policy which essentially commits schools to following the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools as soon as possible. This will probably be in place by next school year.

Reflections, Advice:

The choice to offer healthier options has been a good one, and students are accepting the changes with little complaint. Our Healthy Schools Committee feels strongly that this is important, and it is good to have both the ministry and our district supporting the changes. We would like to focus more on communication and education for both parents and students next year, promoting healthy choices – not just in the area of food, but in physical activity and decision-making.

Howe Sound Secondary #48 Howe Sound

Leadership Team: Nancy Campbell, Eric Jones, John Nelson

Contact: ejones@sd48.bc.ca

School Context/Community:

Located in downtown Squamish, between the mountains, Howe Sound Secondary serves a very mixed population of 15,100; 67% our parents have high school graduation, and 9% have a Bachelor's degree or higher, one quarter of our families is single parent.

HSS has a population of approximately 800 students and 50 educators with grades 8-12. We are the only high school in Squamish, but have students entering our school from Don Ross Secondary in their grade 11 year. We have an alternate school on site and we partially support a First Nations Alternate Program off-site. Approximately 10% of our students are First Nations, 10% of our students are International students, 11% of our students are Punjabi, 14% of our students are Special Needs and 60% of our students take a bus to school.

School Inquiry and Action: HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Our original inquiry question asked whether existing tobacco cessation programs have any affect on the incidence of tobacco use by young adults. Our research into these programs led us to examine the influences on students when it comes to making healthy choices. We realize that the choices students make about healthy living and substance use are complex and varied. The research suggests that education is not enough and that girls have very different reasons than boys for starting and continuing smoking.

Health Canada recommends implementing initiatives and programs that promote self-esteem, self-empowerment, independence, exercise, healthy eating, and stress management skills.

Question: Can programs that promote self-esteem, self-empowerment, independence, exercise, healthy eating, and stress management skills influence the healthy living choices made by Howe Sound students?

Strategies & Structures:

Strategy 1: Tobacco Intervention

- This strategy included participation by the Tobacco Cessation Coordinator from Coast Garibaldi Health region and the alternate school teacher.
- At-risk students participated in the 'Kick the Nic' program. Kick the Nic is a program to help young people quit smoking and is delivered by health and education professionals in schools and community settings.
- It is based on the following assumptions:
 - Young people who come to the sessions have made the decision to quit tobacco.
 - It is possible for young people to quit smoking with support from peers.
 - Social situations appeal to young people.
 - It is important for young people to believe they are able to, make positive choices.
 - Family, educators, role models, peers and media influence young people's behaviour.

Strategy 2: Healthy Peer Environment

- This strategy included involvement of the BC Cancer Agency Community Prevention Coordinator, Kwantlen College, the youth coach, and Junior Achievement
- Develop a teenage entrepreneur network in Squamish to accomplish the following:
 - Provide a healthy peer environment for Squamish youth to encourage and support each other as they start a summer business. It is our hope that fostering self-esteem and confidence will diminish a youth's need to engage in high-risk behaviour, such as drug or tobacco use.
 - Match adult mentors with young entrepreneurs. Participants will sign a drug free contract.
 - Provide workshops to network members on the following topics:
 - Designing a business plan
 - Advertising, marketing and customer satisfaction
 - Securing a small business loan and money management
 - Involve young people in the implementation of the network. The project is in its initial phase, but as we work to engage youth, they will be increasingly involved in recruiting youth to join the network, designing workshop content, and organizing networking social events.

Strategy 3: Healthy Choice and Opportunities

- This strategy included participation with the District of Squamish Recreation Parks and Tourism
- Students create a community activity card that enables youth to participate in a variety of programs and activities in Squamish. The card contains free activity options utilizing businesses and resources in Squamish. We believe this will help reduce financial obstacles and encourage young adults to participate and explore the large variety of activity options in Squamish.
- Students will be surveyed regarding their activity habits at the end of their grade 10 year (June 2007) and again at the end of their grade 11 year (June 2008). This data will be used to examine the effectiveness of the program.

School Findings:

Most of this year was spent building our team and working with students to develop programs which we believe are sustainable and that have a positive impact on the connection students make to school and community.

School Plans for 2007-2008:

1. Collect baseline data to evaluate the effectiveness of the various programs.
2. Continue to develop our programs to include more students.

Reflections, Advice:

- The coordination of such a large, and very diverse team was a major challenge. However, now that small teams have been developed within the larger context, we believe that each individual contribution will add to the overall inquiry question.
- We recognize that the issues surrounding our inquiry are complex and that there are no simple solutions. We also recognize that results may be difficult to quantify, but we are encouraged by the partnerships we have developed. We believe that good inquiry leads to new questions and a more refined understanding of the factors that contribute to the healthy living choices made by students.