

Comprehensive School Health: An approach for improving health and educational outcomes

This resource gives a brief overview of the Comprehensive School Health (CSH) approach and explains how it can be embedded into Continuous School Improvement (CSI) in CCRSB. Amanda Northcott, Comprehensive School Health Promoter with Public Health, is available to support CSH in CCRSB.

The Comprehensive School Health Approach

Comprehensive School Health (CSH) is an evidence-based *approach* for creating healthy schools. The key premise of CSH is that health and education are interdependent: healthy learning environments support both student wellness and academic achievement. Comprehensive School Health taps into this connection by addressing school health in a planned, integrated and holistic way. It enhances the capacity of both schools and community to work together to support student achievement and wellness.

What does CSH involve?

CSH is a whole-school approach that extends beyond the classroom through action in four interrelated pillars:



The **Social Environment** includes the ‘culture’ of the school, the quality of relationships between students, staff and community, and the emotional well-being of students. The **Physical Environment** includes the buildings, grounds, play spaces and equipment in and around the school that promote healthy behaviours

Teaching and Learning includes the resources, activities and curriculum that enable students to gain knowledge, skills and confidence related to health and wellness

Healthy School Policy includes the management practices, decision-making processes, policies and procedures that promote and support health and wellness

Partnerships and Services includes the connections between schools, families, community organizations, the health sector and other sectors that support student health

The CSH approach is flexible and can be applied to a variety of health priorities, including nutrition, physical activity, mental health, sexual health, and tobacco/substance use. When a CSH approach is applied to an issue, actions in all four pillars are integrated to provide the knowledge, skills, and supports necessary for student academic success and wellbeing.

CSH and the Continuous School Improvement Process

CSH has the same goals as CSI: to improve student learning, achievement, and school climate. CSH also requires the same steps as CSI: data collection, planning, action, and evaluation. Therefore, CSH can be easily integrated into the CSI process.

Support for your school: Comprehensive School Health Promoter, Public Health

Amanda Northcott has been hired as the Comprehensive School Health Promoter in Public Health. Within this role, she is a resource to support schools in the assessment of their health environment and the development of school performance goals and action plans. The CSH approach aims to affirm strengths, identify needs, and inform tailored approaches to promote health. There are various existing data resources and tools available to assist the data collection, analysis and action planning process. Amanda will help your CSI committee navigate these resources and supports. She can also work with your committee to develop data collection methods that are relevant to the needs of your school community and CSI implementation. Amanda will work closely with community partners (e.g. Health Authorities, municipalities, Dept. of Health and Wellness, community organizations, etc) to build capacity for school health initiatives and act as a liaison and consultant in school health promotion for your school.

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