



MEMORANDUM

December 17, 2024
 Regular Board Meeting

TO Board of Trustees

FROM Shauna Boyce, Superintendent

ORIGINATOR Dr. Meg Miskolzie, Associate Superintendent, Student Supports and Services

RESOURCE Christine Ross, Division Principal, Wellness and Community Partnerships
 Margaret Culley, Health and Wellness Facilitator

GOVERNANCE POLICY Board Policy 1: Division Foundational Statements
 Board Policy 2: Role of the Board
 Board Policy 12: Role of the Superintendent

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE Administrative Procedure 390: Community, Equity and Belonging
 Administrative Procedure 702: Comprehensive School Health
 Administrative Procedure 730: School Counselling and Guidance

SUBJECT **STUDENT WELLNESS REPORT**

PURPOSE

For information. No recommendation required.

BACKGROUND

The Board of Trustees reviews and approves annual education goals for the Division and adheres to the Board Annual Work Plan. The Student Wellness Report is in response to these responsibilities.

REPORT SUMMARY

Along with student success, the well-being of students in Parkland School Division is part of the foundational statement that directs the values and the learning opportunities provided. This report offers a comprehensive look at the wellness initiatives implemented across the Division to assist students and families.

Administration would be pleased to respond to any questions.

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Student Wellness Report December 2024

Presented to the Board of Trustees, December 17, 2024

Dr. Meg Miskolzie, Associate Superintendent, Student Supports and Services

Resources: Christine Ross, Division Principal, Wellness and Community Partnerships

Margaret Culley, Health and Wellness Facilitator

Our Students Possess the confidence, resilience, insight and skills required to thrive in, and positively impact, the world.

BACKGROUND

Parkland School Division is dedicated to advancing student wellness, aligning with the ultimate goal of student success and well-being. Our approach emphasizes collaboration with staff, caregivers, and community partners to deliver comprehensive programming, support, and services that foster health and wellness for children, youth, and families.

Student wellness is recognized as a key determinant of their ability to engage fully in learning and succeed in life. Within our schools, wellness is defined as creating healthy, responsive, and innovative learning environments informed by evidence-based practices for healthy communities. We acknowledge that every student brings a unique set of circumstances, including socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, talents, skills, and challenges. In response, the Division is dedicated to nurturing a culture of belonging and wellness that values diverse learning experiences and offers a continuum of support and services tailored to student needs.

Educational research consistently highlights the strong connection between student health and learning outcomes, underscoring the essential role of schools in establishing and maintaining healthy communities as a foundation for optimal learning. A healthy school community prioritizes the wellness of both students and staff, guided by a Comprehensive School Health approach. As defined in the *Canadian Healthy School Standards (2022, p. 6)*, “A healthy school centers holistic health and well-being in its policies, its curriculum, its people, its relationships and its environment.”

A continuum of supports and service are in place throughout the Division to uphold these principles, including:

- **Preventative and universal supports** accessible to all students,
- **Targeted supports** designed for specific groups of students, and
- **Individualized services** for students requiring intensive interventions.

Universal

Targeted

Individualized

The achievement of student success and well-being relies on a collaborative effort involving school-based and Division-based staff. PSD’s Wellness and Community Partnership Team is composed of a Division Principal of Wellness and Community Partnerships, a Division Psychologist, a Health and Wellness Facilitator, a Divisional School Business Coordinator, two Divisional Family Support Workers, and a Mental Health Nurse. Working together with schools, they aim to enhance the overall well-being of our school communities.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH

The Comprehensive School Health (CSH) approach in Parkland School Division focuses on three tenets:

- Active living,
- Healthy eating, and
- Mental well-being.

The Division, as well as individual school sites, have multiple initiatives, events, and procedures already in place that support these three tenets. [Administrative Procedure 702: Comprehensive School Health](#) supports a continued focus to grow CSH practices within our schools.

School Health Leads

Each school has identified a School Health Lead who serves as a primary contact for all PSD wellness initiatives. The School Health Leads work with school administration to develop and implement school CSH action plans. School Health Lead meetings are held four times throughout the year to share ideas and resources, and to build knowledge in the area of health and wellness. In addition, five professional learning sessions aligned with the tenets of CSH are being offered this year and are available for all staff to attend during self-directed professional development times.



Comprehensive School Health Action Plans

Each school within PSD has created a CSH Action plan for the 2024-2025 school year with a minimum of one growth initiative for each of the three tenets. PSD's Health and Wellness Facilitator met with each school to support the development of their plan and will continue to meet with them throughout the year to support implementation. Schools have identified a wide range of priorities within their CSH action plans to support student success and well-being, including:

- Mindfulness techniques and Mental hygiene practices and routines
- In-class lessons with school counsellors to support social-emotional learning (SEL) & Mental health literacy
- Embedding SEL into the curriculum; Utilizing the PSD Mental Health In Schools (MHIS) Website and Lesson Library
- Maintaining Daily Physical Activity (DPA) equipment and utilizing Ever Active School resources and games
- Walk & Talks/ 1 KM Walk or Run routine for DPA
- In-class movement breaks & brain breaks to support regulation
- Creation of positive food environments through school-wide approaches to accessibility and food-neutral language
- Teaching culture & food literacy through community gardens, school gardens/tower gardens
- Supporting community, diversity, and belonging through professional learning and staff development
- Small Group sessions: Pro-social skills, Community Classroom, etc.
- Expanding intramurals & athletic teams
- Guest Nutritionists/Dieticians to provide in-class sessions and professional development
- Sharing health and wellness information through school, parent, and home communication.

Examples of Student Wellness supports and services include, but are not limited to, the following:

In support of the *Active Living* tenet:

- A variety of **physical literacy strategies** are implemented in schools; such as yoga, movement breaks, participation in sports, and encouraging active travel. The Wellness & Community Partnership team is intentionally focusing on the tenet of Active Living for the current school year.
- A professional learning opportunity was created in collaboration with the Steadward Centre at University of Alberta to support *Physical Education for all* through **Adapted Physical Education**. This was a 2 part series; one session was offered at the gymnasium at Brookwood School and the other session was held at the Steadward Centre. In support of active living for all, a range of Adapted Physical Education materials were purchased for schools to borrow and utilize directly with students. Some of the equipment purchased is to enhance the experience of neurodivergent and sensory-sensitive students. This includes a variety of sensory balls (shape, weight, size, texture), autism fitness curriculum packs, autism visual exercise system packs, etc.
- **Try-Me-Try-Athalon** has become part of the culture of Wellness in PSD over the years. We had just over 300 participants at the June 2024 Try-Me-Try-Athalon, with students ranging from Kindergarten to Grade 7. We are in the early stages of planning the upcoming Try-Me-Try-Athalon, scheduled for June 6th, 2025 in Stony Plain.
- A number of schools submitted group grant applications to Canadian Tire JumpStart for equipment and specific activities (e.g. Horsemanship). Unfortunately, submissions were universally denied due to the overwhelming amount of applications for Fall programming across Canada. We will continue to encourage schools to re-apply when the next round opens in January.

In support of the *Healthy Eating* tenet:

- Healthy Eating programming across PSD is a division-wide initiative delivered through the collaborative efforts of school staff, school leadership, the Wellness & Community Partnership team, Facilities staff, and various numerous partners, funders, and volunteers.
- **Breakfast Clubs of Canada (BCC)**: Through BCC, all PSD schools have access to nutritious foods at the beginning of the school day. BCC provides allocations, food (including yogurt and pre-packaged eggs beginning in January 2025), and egg coupons for schools and families. The yogurt and pre-packaged egg deliveries to schools will be supported through the PSD courier.
- **Community Pantry**: Through our partnership with the Spruce Grove Rotary Community Partners Society, schools access nutritious brown bag lunches from the 'Community Pantry' twice per week. Lunches are jointly funded through the Rotarians and Parkland School Division (through the Alberta Education Nutrition Grant), and supported by St. Andrew's Church and volunteers. For the 2024-2025 school year, we are accessing approximately 850 lunches per week. Bagged lunches are delivered to school sites without a fee to students for schools in Spruce Grove, Stony Plain, Wabamun and Duffield.
- **President Choice Children's Charity (PCCC)**: PCCC funds are used by schools to purchase food items for breakfast and lunch programs. This grant opens yearly in the spring for application for the following school year. This year, 23 of 24 schools accessed this grant, with Entwistle School's nutrition needs being met through other means.
- **Cargill Foods** donated and delivered 78 boxes of cereal to be distributed to schools. The PSD courier delivered the cereal boxes to schools to support their breakfast programs.
- **Nutrition Nooks** are available at all Parkland South schools, stocked with pre-packaged healthy snacks that students can access throughout the day. This is funded through the Alberta Nutrition Grant and BCC.
- **Athabasca Delta Community School (ADCS) nutrition programs**: Students at ADCS access morning snacks and a hot lunch program. Breakfast is also available by student request. These nutrition supports are funded through Alberta Education and BCC.

In support of the *Healthy Eating* tenet (continued):

- **Food equipment:** From March 2024 to date, to support food security programs in schools, we have been able to purchase fridges, freezers, stoves, dishwasher, serving warmers, toasters, soup pots, slush machine, plates, bowls & cutlery. This is funded through the Alberta Nutrition Grant, BCCC and PCCC.
- **Food for families:** Identified families within the Parkland region are provided with links to community programs to support food security.
- **Professional Development for School Health Leads:** Food Impact (Food Discovery Foundation) provided professional learning to School Health Leads on the topic of *Nourishing Mind and Body: The Connection Between Food and Mental Well-being*.

In support of the *Mental Well-being* tenet:

- Schools use a variety of **social-emotional programs and exercises** to meet the social-emotional and mental health needs of their students. Some examples include: Captains & Poets, CASEL resources, Zones of Regulation, Mind UP, A 5 is Against the Law, Rainbows (for students experiencing grief), as well as the PSD Mental Health in Schools Lesson Library.
- **Counselling Services:** Counselling Services are available to students in all PSD Schools through staffed School Counsellors. PSD currently employs 22 School Counsellors, with 16 serving students enrolled in Kindergarten to Grade 9 and at Connection For Learning sites, and 6 serving students in High School. A contracted Counsellor provides services to students in Athabasca Delta Community School in Fort Chipewyan. School Counsellors in Kindergarten to Grade 9 receive clinical supervision through PSD's Division Psychologist.
- **Complex Needs Facilitators:** These facilitators support school staff in the areas of Positive Behaviour Supports, Trauma-Informed Practices, and Social-Emotional Learning Competencies. This helps to build staff capacity to support students with social-emotional needs in the area of mental well-being.
- **School-based Suicidal Ideation (SI) Response Protocol:** Each school has trained selected staff and have designated a SI Point person. All schools use this Protocol when an individual presents with suicidal ideation and are supported by the Divisional Psychologist.
- **School-located Youth Mental Health Clinics:** The WestView Primary Care Network (PCN) operates the Youth Mental Health Clinic (YMHC) from the Queen Street Medical Facility in Spruce Grove, providing services to youth aged 11 to 24 in the Tri-Region. In February 2023, school-based PCN YMHCs were launched in partnership between PSD and the WestView PCN at Memorial Composite High School and Spruce Grove Composite High School. This school year, the clinics were expanded to include support for students at the Spruce Grove Connections for Learning campus. The clinics are staffed by a physician and supported by a social worker, who provide services to identified youth with parental consent.
- **Professional Development for School Health Leads:** AHS Health Promotion Facilitators provided professional learning to School Health Leads on the topic of: *Nurturing Relationships and Building a Belonging Classroom*.
- **Mental Health in Schools (MHIS) Pilot:** Alberta Education's MHIS pilot, originally scheduled to run from January 2023 to December 2024, has now been extended to June 2025. Within PSD, this pilot has supported the establishment of school-based youth mental health clinics, the development of numerous preventative and universal mental well-being lessons and resources for teachers and staff (available on the MHIS website), and the piloting of the SOS-Q survey within the Division. This year, the SOS-Q survey is being administered in all PSD South schools for students within select grades (between Grades 4 and 12). The survey gathers student voice and perceptions across various areas, including safe and caring schools, peer relationships, self-confidence, external and internal resilience, utility of school, and participation in extracurricular activities. School administrators and staff use the SOS-Q data to proactively design school-based opportunities to enhance students' positive experiences and perceptions of school.

Nutrition Matters

Parkland School Division maintains a universal nutrition program through diverse partnerships with the community.

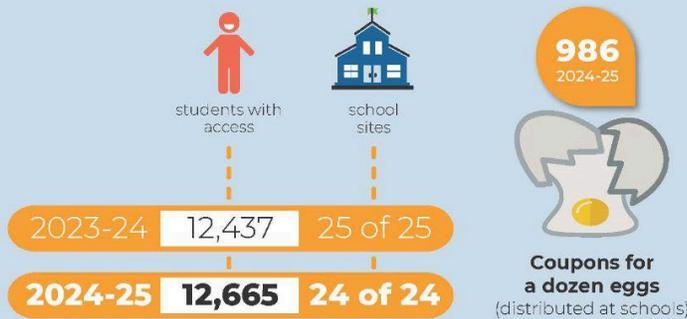
Nutrition Nooks

providing students access to healthy snacks throughout the school day



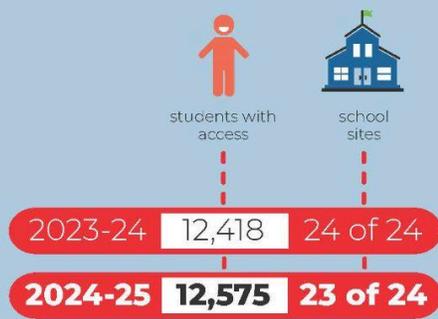
Breakfast Club of Canada

providing reliable access to nutritious foods at the start of the school day



PC Children's Charity

providing funds that contribute to the cost of healthy snacks



Community Pantry

providing healthy brown bag lunches to students



New Equipment Purchased

with financial support from The Breakfast Club of Canada



FAMILY SUPPORTS

PSD's Family Support Model is a caring and supportive approach where families are welcomed without judgment, and therefore are more likely to be engaged in working to improve their lives and the lives of their children. Navigating systems and accessing supports can be difficult especially during times of high stress. PSD offers supports to families, as outlined below:

Individualized Family Supports

The PSD Family Supports team provides individualized supports to families through:

- **Parkland School Division Family Supports:** Two Family Support Workers work with families who would benefit from individualized support. These families are generally identified and referred by schools. The Family Support Workers connect families to supports and services within the community and support them in accessing these services. As of December 1, Family Supports has an active caseload of 84 families.
- **Sunrise Supports:** The Sunrise Support Team is made up of several local partners: AB Justice (Probation Officer), AHS Mental Health Services, Children and Family Services, RCMP School Resource Officer, Family Supports for Children with Disabilities, AHS Mobile Substance Abuse Therapist, Alberta Parenting for the Future, and the Stony Plain Youth Network (for families within Stony Plain). Partners meet with referred families to offer their expertise regarding community support and strategies. Together an action plan is developed. The Family Support Workers work alongside the family to assist them in accessing the support and strategies within the plan. Sunrise Supports meets the first Tuesday of each month, with the capacity to support 4 families per month. As of December 1, the Family Supports team is supporting 18 families working through Sunrise Action Plans.

Preventative and Universal Family Supports

The PSD Family Supports team also provides preventative and universal supports to families through:

- **Stronger Together Newsletter:** A monthly newsletter for parents highlighting local resources for families. Past and current editions of the newsletter can be found on PSD's website.
- **Strong Families Education Series (early years focus):** 3 sessions for parents are scheduled for the 2024-2025 school year, focused on the topics of: *Supporting Regulation Needs in Early Childhood*, *New to ASD*, and *Literacy Development in Early Childhood*.
- **Strong Families Education Series (school age focus):** 6 sessions for parents scheduled for the 2024-2025 school year, focused on the topics of: *Attendance and School Refusal*, *Transitional Support with Gateway* (2 part series), *the Dangers of Social Media*, *Teen Substance Use and Addiction*, and *Sleep Hygiene*.

MOVING FORWARD

Ongoing work to Support Student Wellness:

- School-based Comprehensive School Health (CSH) will continue to be supported through development, approach, and implementation. This is evolving to integrate greater student voice in the CSH process.
- PSD's school nutrition program continues to evolve with the support of multiple partners. Implementing an evolving universal school food program requires an ongoing commitment to researching best practices and creating/maintaining school infrastructure.

Ongoing work to Support Student Wellness (continued):

- Plans are being developed to support ongoing mental health needs across the Division for the 2025-2026 school year. As the MHIS pilot concludes in June 2025, we will await Alberta Education's decision in the spring regarding the availability of mental health funding for school divisions in 2025-2026. It is important to note that PSD's approach to the MHIS pilot was developed with the understanding that it was a two-year project, with no guarantee of sustainable funding. With this in mind, the Division designed the pilot to leave a lasting impact through strengthened resources and partnerships. Key outcomes include the development of an evidence-based mental health resource (the MHIS website) for ongoing staff use, as well as a strengthened partnership with the Westview PCN. Through the establishment of school-based youth mental health clinics, this partnership has not only reduced wait times at the PCN's community clinics but has also led to a commitment from the PCN to continue funding the social worker position initially supported by the pilot. This ensures the school-located clinics will remain a resource for students beyond the pilot's end. We remain hopeful that Alberta Education will continue to invest in mental health supports in schools, recognizing the increased needs reported by school divisions across the province during this pilot.