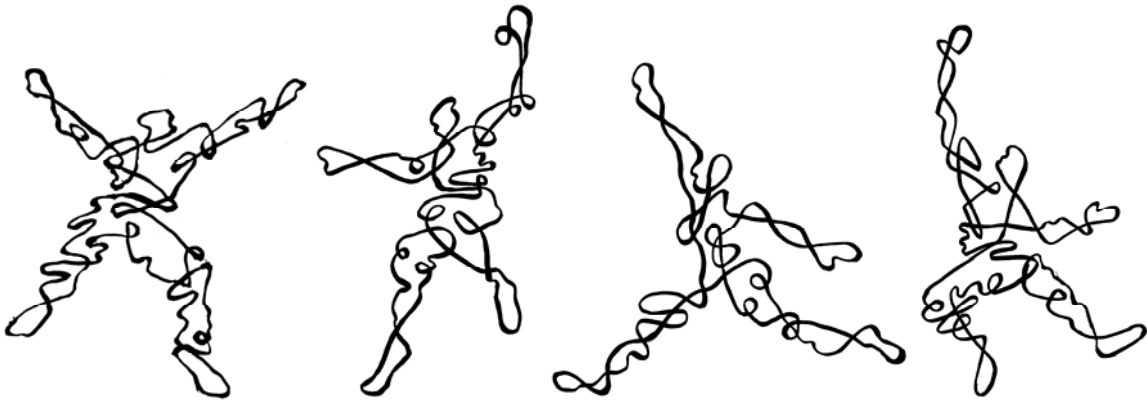


Daily Physical Activity Survey Report

Executive
Summary

we educate



Executive Summary

Background

The Daily Physical Activity Initiative

The Government of Alberta is committed to enhancing the health and wellness of the children and youth of Alberta. In September 2005, Alberta Education implemented a requirement of 30 minutes of Daily Physical Activity (DPA) for all students in grades 1 to 9 based on the belief that healthy students are better able to learn and that school communities should provide supportive environments for students to develop positive habits needed for a healthy, active lifestyle. Alberta Education's DPA Initiative supports the Healthy Alberta School Communities (HASC) strategy, a joint initiative between Alberta Education and Alberta Health and Wellness.

To support implementation of the DPA Initiative, Alberta Education has produced resources in English and French, including:

2007 *Objective Measures of Physical Activity Levels of Alberta Children and Youth*

2006 *Creating a Desire to Participate* (video)

Daily Physical Activity for Children and Youth: A Review and Synthesis of the Literature

Daily Physical Activity: A Handbook for Grades 1–9 Schools.

In addition, as a result of a grant provided by Alberta Education in 2004–2005, Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia (ARPDC), in collaboration with Schools Come Alive, provided professional development support to school jurisdictions for the implementation of DPA in Alberta. A total of 257 professional development opportunities offered to 5706 participants were provided to teachers across the province.

As well, Alberta Education provides approximately \$1.2 million per year to school authorities to support the implementation of DPA at the school level. Eligible schools offering grades 1 to 9 programs have received funding at a rate of \$1020/year (2006) and \$1051/year (2007) per school.

The Daily Physical Activity Survey

The intent of the DPA Survey was to gather school-level information from teachers and principals regarding their perceptions of DPA, thus providing a greater understanding of DPA implementation in grades 1 to 9. This study aimed to help identify the many variables that influence the attainment of the DPA outcomes and provide an opportunity for feedback on promising practices and challenges associated with the implementation of the DPA Initiative.

In March 2007, letters were sent via e-mail by Alberta Education to all Francophone, public, separate, private and charter school superintendents in the province of Alberta. Identical letters were sent via post to senior high school principals. A total of 1901 principals in these

jurisdictions received the letters, which included a Web site address for the online DPA Survey. Principals were asked to complete the online survey, available in English and in French, and forward the Web site address to teachers in their schools in order for them to complete the survey. The online DPA Survey was available from March 30, 2007 until April 24, 2007.

Summary of the Survey Results

The following is a summary of the key results from each section of the DPA Survey.

Demographics	1025 DPA surveys were completed. Approximately 60% were teachers and 40% principals, representing at least 83 different school authorities.
Facility Accessibility and Usage	The top four types of facilities accessible to, and used by, schools for DPA were single and/or double station gymnasiums, playing fields, playgrounds and ball diamonds.
Funding	Approximately half the respondents indicated their schools were accessing the DPA funding provided by Alberta Education. These respondents identified using this funding to purchase equipment and resources and to offer professional development opportunities to staff.
DPA Resources and Supports	Over half the respondents indicated that their schools had increased resources (other than the DPA funding) allocated to physical activity opportunities since the implementation of DPA. Approximately 70% of respondents felt somewhat or very supported by Alberta Education in their efforts to implement DPA. Approximately 80% of respondents indicated that they used the <i>Daily Physical Activity: A Handbook for Grades 1 to 9 Schools (DPA Handbook)</i> and 70% of respondents found the <i>DPA Handbook</i> effective. Respondents indicated that authorized physical education resources were the most frequently used resources and were most effective in supporting the implementation of DPA.
DPA Implementation	A majority of respondents (58.3%) indicated that DPA is offered through daily physical education classes that are a minimum of 30 minutes in length.
Scheduling of Daily Physical Education	Daily physical education classes (minimum 30 minutes) were offered in 30% of the respondents' schools prior to September 2005. This percentage increased to nearly 70% at the time of the survey and for a majority of respondents, this daily physical education takes place throughout the entire school year.
DPA Policy and Principles	Survey respondents indicated that their schools are meeting the guiding principles as stated in the DPA Policy in the <i>Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12</i> . This is primarily achieved by maximizing facility usage within the school or maximizing outdoor opportunities on the school grounds.

DPA Activities	Respondents' perceptions indicated that most students work at a moderate to vigorous level when participating in physical education classes and a light to moderate level when participating in DPA. The activities that are most effective in encouraging student participation are those in which students participate cooperatively.
Challenges to DPA Implementation	Principals and teachers indicated the biggest challenges to DPA implementation are associated with scheduling and lack of facilities and/or space.
Monitoring of DPA	Over 64% of respondents indicated that their schools are monitoring DPA by scheduling 30 minutes of daily physical education. School authorities also appear to be passively monitoring DPA implementation, as 32.3% of principals indicated that they were required to submit DPA information to school authorities as part of the Annual Education Results Report.
Attitudes Toward DPA	The majority of respondents agreed that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students are satisfied with the DPA opportunities provided to them • DPA has a positive impact on student learning • DPA has contributed to student wellness • DPA is considered a positive initiative and a priority in their school • DPA has made a positive impact on the school environment.
Additional Comments	Respondents were asked to provide additional comments. Of these, 31% indicated that DPA is a positive initiative, 27% indicated concern about lack of time, 26% pointed out the lack of facilities, and also 15% indicated that for DPA to be successful parents must be supportive and take responsibility for their children's health.

The results of the DPA Survey indicate that most respondents view the DPA Initiative positively. Respondents expressed concern with a lack of facilities for DPA, and it appears that most schools are providing additional funding to purchase equipment for gymnasiums and school yards and scheduling DPA as daily physical education classes. For a number of measures, significantly more principals than teachers are likely to express positive perceptions of DPA.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the DPA Survey, the following actions are recommended:

DPA Handbook	Distribute the <i>DPA Handbook</i> to all eligible grades 1 to 9 schools in Alberta.
DPA Booklets or Tip Sheets	Create a series of topic-specific booklets or tip sheets in French and English to complement the <i>DPA Handbook</i> that feature promising practices, equipment and facility usage information, scheduling, funding and mentoring tips.

Additions to the DPA Web Page

Collect and post success stories and promising practices on Alberta Education's DPA Web page to highlight the positive impact of DPA (including promising practices regarding the effective use of DPA funding).

Mentorship Opportunities

Explore mentorship opportunities for teachers related to active living, healthy eating, and school connectedness/positive school behaviours.

Alberta Healthy Schools Analysis Tool

Collaborate with partnering ministries, the Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health, and Ever Active Schools to develop an Alberta Healthy Schools Analysis Tool. This can be adapted from models that have been tested and used in other provinces and countries. This would include a section related to DPA and the other Healthy Alberta School Communities strategic issues.