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Alberta Project Promoting  
active Living & healthy Eating



Progress Report | JUNE 2012



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## Director's Comments

Time flies. It is hard to believe we are rounding up another school year full of APPLE Schools energy, enriching thousands of students with health education, healthy eating and activities. It is hard to believe how quickly we have grown and that we are currently implementing the APPLE Schools project in 57 schools. In contrast, it is not hard at all to remember that we are passionate about the health of children and that we love our work with APPLE Schools. This is because of the impact that our work makes on children's lives and the many success stories that we hear so often. Pages 7 to 8 of this progress report provide some insights and anecdotes of APPLE Schools in the Edmonton area, in Fort McMurray and in FNMI schools.

Our judgment of program impact comes from what we see happening in the schools and from our research. This spring we were tasked to collect data from grade 5 students, their parents and school principals of 150 randomly selected schools from across Alberta, and from our 42 APPLE Schools and the 15 'Healthy Schools – Healthy Future' cohort schools. As you know, we proceeded with collecting Alberta Student Numbers and Health Card Numbers, allowing us to study the impact of APPLE Schools on learning and health services use. As the data collection was still ongoing at the time of drafting this report, and as data processing and validation is a time intensive process, it is too early to provide a full overview of research findings. However, we did fast track the analyses of the data collected in Fort McMurray. We are excited and proud to report these preliminary analyses continue to show promising results - both in terms of decreasing rates of overweight and obesity and increasing physical activity levels. The details of the analyses are included on pages 2 to 6. Finally, please refer to Appendix 1 where we feature a sample of the news coverage on APPLE Schools over the past school year.

On behalf of the entire APPLE Schools team, I would like to thank you once again for your vision and generosity that drives all of the good things that are happening in schools and that thousands of students will take as experiences into adulthood.

Yours sincerely,

**Paul Veugelers**

*on behalf of the APPLE Schools team*



## Research Update

The spring of 2012 kept our REAL Kids Alberta survey team very busy. Their task was to collect data from grade 5 students, their parents and school principals of 150 randomly selected schools across Alberta, our 42 APPLE Schools and 15 'Healthy Schools – Healthy Future' cohort schools. The team's task was even more challenging than that of previous years because the 2012 REAL Kids Alberta survey was also, for the first time, collecting Alberta Student Numbers and Health Card Numbers. These numbers are essential to our ability to create linkages between our survey data, Provincial Achievement Test results and health care data. Linking these data will allow us to study the impact of the APPLE Schools project on learning and health care costs.

The negotiations with government to allow for the collection of this information, as well as developing the technical phrasing of the informed consent form, delayed the data collection for this year. Indeed, REAL Kids staff are still working hard to finish data collection around the province as we prepare this report. We have, however, completed the data collection in the APPLE Schools in Fort McMurray, and present those results here. Our next report (September 2012) will include findings from all APPLE Schools, along with the provincial average.

### **Preliminary Results from the REAL Kids 2012 Survey: Ft. McMurray**

We currently have ten APPLE Schools in Fort McMurray. Four APPLE Schools started in January 2011 and were surveyed first in April of 2011 and again in April of 2012. We can consider April 2011 as our pre-intervention observation as the school health facilitators were instructed not to target their programming at grade five students before the REAL Kids research was completed. Six additional APPLE Schools started in September 2011. In anticipation of their enrollment, we surveyed them in the spring of 2011; however, we were not able to collect pedometer data as our capacity to collect this data extends only to schools that are APPLE Schools at the time of the research. For these six schools, we should consider the 2011 data as pre-intervention observations and 2012 as early observations.

Table 1, below, shows the distribution of BMI in 2011 (green line) and 2012 (blue line) for grade five students attending the ten Fort McMurray APPLE Schools. In these ten schools the BMI is only marginally smaller in 2012, however, as we have learned from previous analyses, changes in BMI come slowly. We therefore analyzed the 4 schools that joined the APPLE Schools program in January of 2011 separately. These results are included in Table 2.

**TABLE 1. Body Mass Index Measuring among Grade 5 Students Attending Fort McMurray Schools**

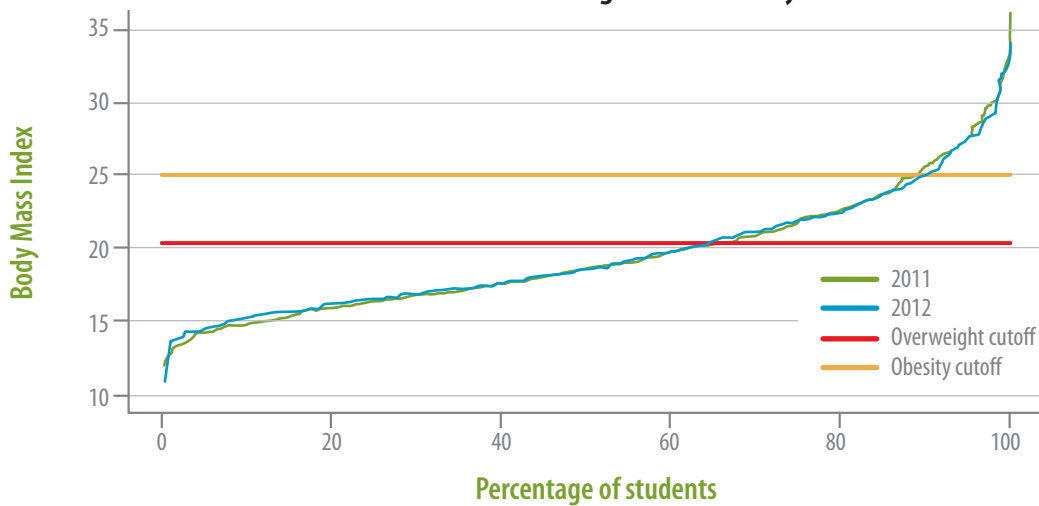
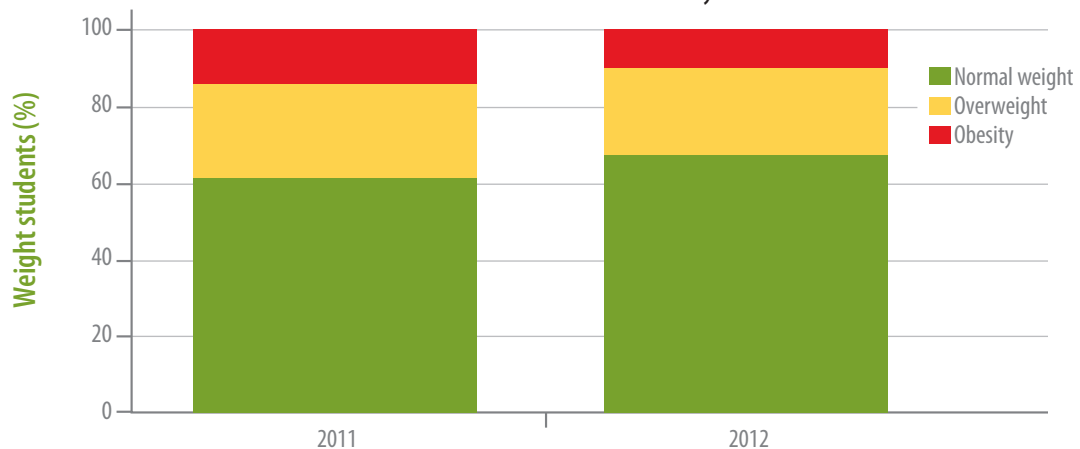


Table 2 shows that among students attending the four Fort McMurray schools that joined the APPLE Schools program in January 2011, overweight reduced from 38% in 2011 to 33% in 2012, and obesity reduced from 14% in 2011 to 9% in 2012.

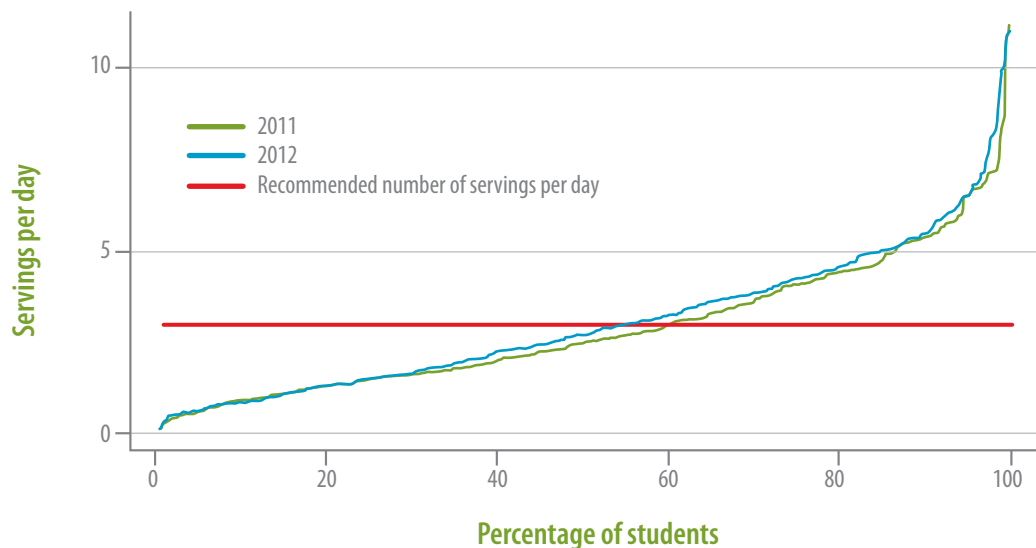
**TABLE 2. APPLE Schools in Fort McMurray in January 2011**  
Four schools started in January 2011



Our analyses then turned to nutritional data, and the consumption of milk products among grade 5 students in Fort McMurray APPLE Schools. Figure 3 shows an increase in milk consumption between 2011 and 2012. In 2011, 50% of students were meeting the recommendation of 3 servings of milk products; in 2012 this was 58%.

### FIGURE 3. Number of Servings of Milk Products among Grade 5 Students Attending Fort McMurray Schools

Four schools started in January 2011 • Six schools started in September 2011



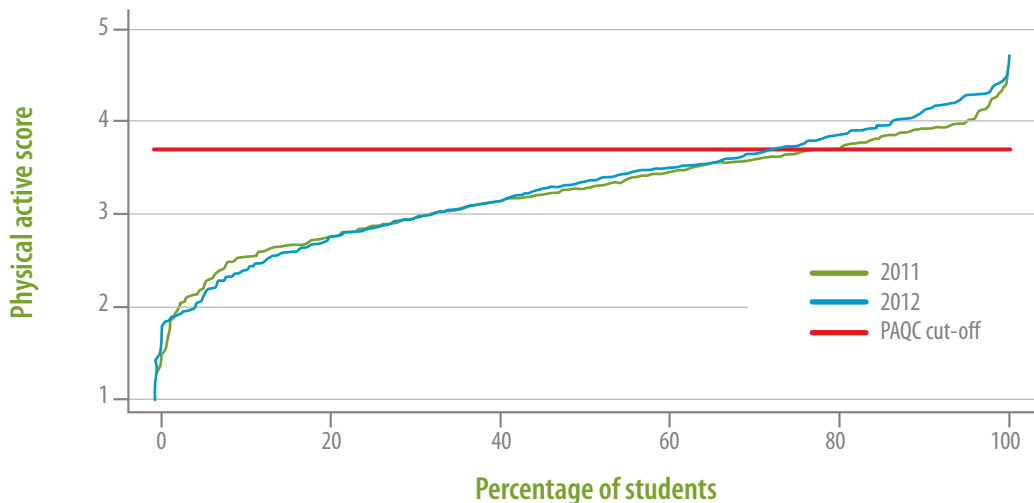
The improvement in milk consumption seems to be in contrast to the change in vegetable and fruit consumption. Between 2011 and 2012 the number of servings of vegetables and fruit consumed declined such that in 2011 27% and in 2012 22% of students were meeting the recommended 6 daily servings of vegetables and fruits. For some part, the decline in consumption may come from an observed decline in the consumption of fruit juices: orange juice consumption declined 16%, apple juice consumption declined 14%, and the consumption of punch declined by 28%. Nevertheless, we are very surprised by this observation as it contrasts our day-to-day observations and the fact that we bring in thousands of apples into the schools that are all eagerly eaten.

Our nutritional data is collected using the Harvard Food Frequency questionnaire, which is fully validated and considered one of the best methods to quantify diet quality. However, we are increasingly concerned that this instrument may actually not work as well to capture *change* in diet quality. In addition, our health promotion activities may cause children to judge their food intake differently. For example, increased knowledge may cause some children to report only fresh produce as vegetables or fruit, whereas previously they may have reported processed foods in this category and may have even considered items such as potato chips as a vegetable.

Figure 4 depicts the increase of physical activity among students attending the ten Fort McMurray schools. While the increase may seem modest at first, we do not believe these observations paint the complete picture of changes in physical activity. Our questionnaire asks children to report participation in a great number of 'standard' activities. This does not capture the various activities during daily physical activity (DPA) and other 'in-classroom' activities led by teachers and school health facilitators.

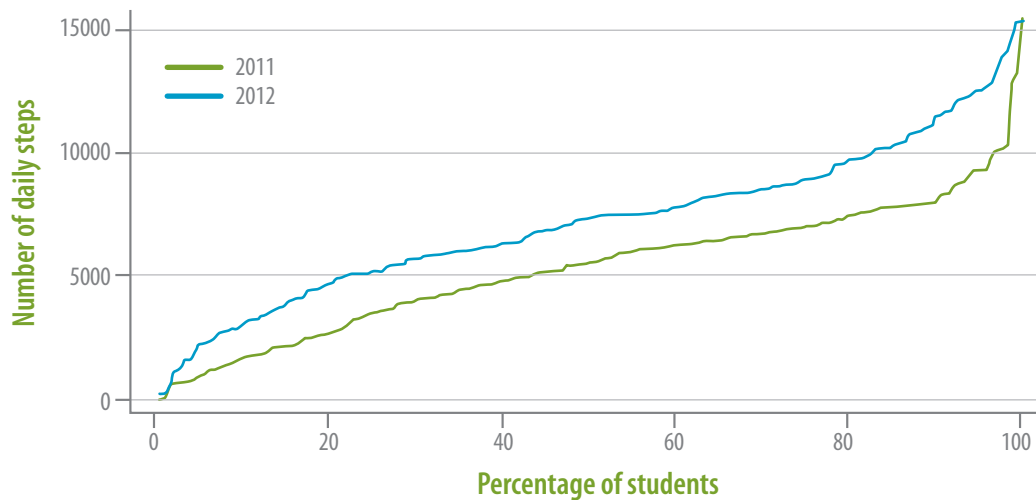
**FIGURE 4. Physical Activity Levels Reported by Grade 5 Students Attending Fort McMurray Schools**

Four schools started in January 2011 • Six schools started in September 2011



Recall, that for the four APPLE Schools that started in January 2011, we have two years of pedometer observations. Pedometers provide an objective measure of physical activity and could potentially capture a broader range of activities than the activities included in the survey. Figure 5 shows that the activity levels between 2011 and 2012 increased substantially. The average number of steps increased from 5333 steps per day in 2011 to 7199 steps per day in 2012: an increase of 35%.

**FIGURE 5. APPLE Schools in Fort McMurray that Started in January 2011 (4 schools)**



In sum, our preliminary analyses for the 2012 REAL Kids Alberta survey in Fort McMurray schools continue to show promising results: overweight and obesity rates are down, nutrition is improving and physical activity levels in particular are up.



## Cohort Updates

### **Fort McMurray Cohort**

The APPLE School Health Facilitators in Fort McMurray have made conscious efforts to connect the work they are doing in schools to the greater community. Efforts to work with the municipality, radio stations and other community initiatives have helped to spread the APPLE Schools message and reach stakeholders outside of the walls of the school. As a result, there are now radio public service announcements prepared by the Facilitators and two schools have received generous donations (over \$5,000 each) from parents, creating sustainability for the breakfast programs.

The vision of a sustainable plan for the schools has led to discussions of supportive policy for physical activity and nutrition at both the district- and school- level. Wellness policies have been finalized in three of the ten schools and all APPLE Schools are working towards policy development for next year. The drive for policy has caught the attention of the districts, and the APPLE facilitators will be working with senior-level school district staff to re-evaluate and create policy at the district-level.

### **Edmonton and Area Cohort**

June 2012 marks the completion of the APPLE Schools implementation in the 10 original schools. Continued support will be provided in 2012 - 2013 for sharing strategies and support of nutrition programs in each school. Nutrition support will be provided via funding from HDF Insurance in Edmonton.

Three of the original APPLE Schools plan to allocate their own budget to support staff time for a school health facilitator in the upcoming school year. The commitment to allocate school funds to health is a significant demonstration of the positive impact of APPLE Schools in these school communities. We will continue to conduct research in the original schools in ongoing years to measure sustainability of the project.

## First Nations, Métis Inuit (FNMI) Cohort

There are currently 8 FNMI Schools across northern Alberta; six are funded through APPLE Schools and two receive funding through Healthy Schools – Healthy Future.

The FNMI cohort has recently expanded their knowledge of traditional games as a strategy to increase physical activity levels of students through cultural experiences. The certification of one of our Facilitators as a Level 3 instructor of aboriginal games will increase our capacity to share traditional knowledge across cohorts through ongoing professional development with the entire APPLE team.

The activities and growth of healthy environments in our FNMI schools has been gradual, but apparent. The pow-wows arranged by the schools now address the nutritional aspects of the event. Parent engagement is enhanced through family activity nights that bring together many cultures in the evenings. Students are receiving a variety of taste tests with an FNMI focus, such as baked, whole-wheat bannock instead of fried, white-flour bannock.

Culturally appropriate messaging in schools provides an opportunity to educate parents, students, staff and community partners on healthy living. Resources to support specific messages related to physical activity and healthy eating in FNMI schools have been distributed to all schools.

The FNMI Advisory Committee and Cultural working group have met and the advice provided is impacting the schools in a meaningful way. The recommendations from the Advisory committee and working group will lead to more inclusive practices and a greater ability to infuse FNMI culture into all aspects of the APPLE project, while impacting research, practice and policy in our schools.

Alexander's Kipohtakaw Education Centre at Alexander Cree First Nation created a Pow-wow Hip-hop Dance-off. In this event, students showcased both modern and traditional dance moves to one another. This highly interactive and engaging dance-off was popular with students from Grade 1 – 12.

In other schools, Facilitators and teachers worked together to bring students out and "walk the trap line". This activity was intended to introduce students to winter outdoor activities. Cree language or cultural instructors joined teachers and students outdoors for the day to learn the flora and fauna

## Healthy Schools – Healthy Future (HSHF) Cohort

The addition of 17 schools across Alberta (15 HSHF cohort and 2 APPLE FNMI cohort) is well underway. All new schools are staffed, with trained facilitators implementing action plans developed by each school community. A Manager for the cohort has been hired to increase our management capacity and ensure that all project cohorts receive the same level of support.

The organizational model of this cohort has allowed us to explore other implementation strategies and processes while increasing efficiencies related to funding, action planning, and professional development. These processes will be infused across all APPLE Schools to ensure further effectiveness for all schools.

As a result of the partnerships gained through this cohort, APPLE Schools now assists with the major professional development opportunities related to healthy schools across Alberta. We provide support and expertise to help coordinate 11 Healthy Alberta School Symposiums (HASS), as well as participating on the Steering Committee of the Shaping the Future Conference, to be held in Kananaskis in January, 2013. These opportunities have improved our relationships with government and other health promoting school projects, and ensure the professional development opportunities for our team meet the needs of our school communities.



## Leader in Me Update

PREPARED BY GAIL GREEN, FRANKLINCOVEY

Since the March report, we have been busy working with all the schools to secure dates for the year one process. All schools are getting a clearly defined picture of how the Leader in Me process and the establishing a culture of leadership, enhances their cultures and helps enhance and compliment the healthy living culture supported by APPLE Schools. We are excited and on-schedule to meet our September 2013 timelines to complete all of the year one process with all schools.

Since March:

- 9 of 10 Edmonton Public Schools have scheduled the 2-4 days of the Year 1 Leader in Me process
- The 7 Schools in multiple other districts are 98% scheduled for full Year 1 Implementation of the Leader in Me Process.
- 6 out of these 7 have already begun Leader in Me training
- This training has resulted in a modified Leader in Me Vision and Implementation session with intentional links to APPLE Schools goals
- All Leader in me schools with timelines have been forwarded to University of Alberta for research purposes.

The  
Leader in Me™

great happens here

## Feedback from Leader in Me Vision Training and 7 Habits Training

*"As an educator in the profession for over 20 years I am honoured to have the opportunity to be part of the 7 habits training. I am not well versed in the habits but consider myself an individual who looks for the win-win and tries to be proactive. This is by far the best professional development I have had in my career both personally and professionally. I can only imagine what a great world we could create with children on board!"*

LORNA KRAVONTKA, PRINCIPAL, WHISPERING HILLS

*"I am quite excited about implementing this process with our students. I believe that it will be a positive and self-rewarding for both the staff and the students. I feel that this will give our students the opportunity to make better choices for themselves and help them see that they have a choice to have the best life possible."*

LARYSA LUCIW, CREE KINDERGARTEN TEACHER, ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

*"This program has already stirred up conversation with the staff and I have noticed staff using common language already with only our first few sessions. The 7 habits will give our students and staff the tools and foundation for making positive changes in their live by setting personal goals and understanding different perspectives. I think this will help our students to feel more equality, empathy and understanding for each other. It is a very exciting process."*

DANIELLE KOWALCHYK, KINDERGARTEN TEACHER, ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCHOOL

*"From my perspective as the School Health Facilitator, I feel that the APPLE program has been greatly successful in the first year of implementation. The students of St. Francis of Assisi have shown great enthusiasm in learning about healthy eating and active living and becoming a part of the APPLE program- everyone wants teach, learn, and help in their own way to create a healthy school environment. This passion was a key indicator to me that we have to embrace the talents and strengths of our children and their ability to become leaders at St. Francis of Assisi School. Whether the children are learning in a classroom, playing on the playground, or participating in extra-curricular activities, I believe that 'The Leader in Me' program will embrace all of the natural talents these children show on a daily basis and create an even happier and healthier school!"*

LORI MOORES, APPLE SCHOOL HEALTH FACILITATOR, ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCHOOL



**TABLE A. Established Dates**

School	Vision	7 Habits	Implementation	7Hs Cert	Lighthouse
Whispering Hills Primary School	Mar 9	August 27-28	Oct. 15	TBD	Oct
Mother Earth Charter School	Mar 5	Feb 1-2	Aug 29	March 6	Fall 2012
Father Beauregard	Feb 27	Feb 28 May 11	Aug 28	Jan 24-25, 2013	Sept 22
Ecole St. Paul	May 11	Sept 28 Dec 7	Feb 15	Jan 24-25, 2013	Feb 14
Good Sheppard School	Aug 28	Sept 21 and Oct 19	Dec 7	Jan 24-25, 2013	Dec 6
St. Francis of Assisi	Apr 26	May, 2012 (Will finish 7 Habits August 2012)	Nov 1, 2012	April 30–May 4 (certifying to deliver to own staff)	Nov 21
Blessed Kateri	Apr 19	May, 2012 (Will finish 7 Habits August 2012)	Sept 27	April 30–May 4 (certifying to deliver to own staff)	Sept 28
<b>Edmonton Public Schools</b>					
Youngstown	May 24	Oct 5, 2012 and Feb 1, 2013	Spring 2013	TBD	TBD
Inglewood	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Sherwood	May 24th	Oct 5, 2012 and Feb 1, 2013	Spring 2013	TBD	TBD
Prince Charles	May 24	Oct 5, 2012 and Feb 1, 2013	Spring 2013	TBD	TBD
Athlone	Spring 2013	Oct 5, 2012 and Feb 1, 2013	Spring 2013	TBD	TBD
Sifton	Jan 17, 24, and Feb 7	Sept 21 and Nov 19	Spring 2013	TBD	TBD
Glendale	Spring 2013	Oct 5, 2012 and Feb 1, 2013	Spring 2013	TBD	TBD
Belmead	Spring 2013	Oct 5, 2012 and Feb 1, 2013	Spring 2013	TBD	TBD
Sawkaw	May 11, 2012	Aug 30 and Nov 12, 2012	Winter 2013	TBD	TBD
Hillview		June 8	Nov 23	TBD	TBD

## Looking Forward

### Government Relations

- The \$2M provided by Alberta Health and Wellness for the HSHF cohort was used to expand our reach into schools across Alberta, that had already developed some existing capacity through the Alberta School Community Wellness Fund. Alberta Health and Wellness will be approached within the next 4 months to confirm continued funding of this cohort after June 2013 when the project is completed.
- Meetings between the Honourable David Rodney (Associate Minister for Wellness) are being scheduled with the Dean of the School of Public Health, Dr. Veugelers and others, to explore future relationships with AHW. The purpose of these meetings is to encourage government to define a provincial comprehensive school health strategy that includes APPLE Schools as a key partner. We will work with U of A government relations to determine which ministers and ministries need to be consulted to determine future direction.

### CNRL Proposal

- Finalization of the future partnership with CNRL is scheduled for June 21, 2012. The proposal will support growth for APPLE Schools in the area of FNMI participatory research methodologies and management capacities, as well as assisting more schools to develop healthy school environments.
- The proposed work consists of two phases:
  - Phase 1 will explore options for implementation in 10 identified communities working in clusters of 3 – 4 schools. Final identification of communities will be defined upon confirmation of proposal acceptance. Strategies to implement and measure progress will be determined in this phase
  - Phase 2 will see implementation of participatory research methodologies and customized expansion into approximately 10 school communities across northern Alberta

## **Change of APPLE Schools model of implementation**

- The original model of implementation of APPLE Schools, approved in March 2011, was based on the assumption that the spending for the project would peak in the early years of the 7 years of funding.
- Spending to date was accelerated at the request of the funder, in order to more quickly reach FNMI communities and Fort McMurray schools.
- Given the experience and knowledge we have gained within our team over the past five years, we have the capacity to expand beyond the AHW and CNRL (pending) funding. We would be interested in discussing this with you in the future.

## APPENDIX 1



Alberta Project Promoting  
active Living & healthy Eating

MAKING THE HEALTHY CHOICE THE EASY CHOICE

## In the News

Below is a sampling of some of the news stories on APPLE Schools over the past year:

- A six-minute feature video on APPLE Schools was presented to delegates at the 2012 Annual conference of the Canadian Public Health Association (June 2012)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=2RY7r1KWw18](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=2RY7r1KWw18)
- Fort McMurray Today (June 2012) – Schools work to form better student eating habits  
<http://today.ab.ca/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=3585664>
- Edmonton Examiner (May 2012) – Homesteader school needs your vote!  
[www.edmontonexaminer.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=3550235](http://www.edmontonexaminer.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=3550235)
- Edmonton Journal (April 2012) – School hopes outdoor classroom will teach kids healthy habits  
[www.edmontonjournal.com/health/School+hopes+outdoor+classroom+will+teach+kids+healthy+habits/6474739/story.html](http://www.edmontonjournal.com/health/School+hopes+outdoor+classroom+will+teach+kids+healthy+habits/6474739/story.html)
- Vermillion Standard (March 2012) – Vermilion Elementary teaming up with Mannville in healthy initiative  
[www.vermilionstandard.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=3516189](http://www.vermilionstandard.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=3516189)
- Fort McMurray Today (March 2012) – A gold star for keeping healthy  
[www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=3507885](http://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=3507885)
- West Edmonton Local (February 2012) – West Edmonton community families get active  
<http://westedmontonlocal.ca/2012/02/west-edmonton-community-families-get-active/>
- Fort McMurray Connect (January 2012) – An APPLE a day helps students learn nutrition  
[www.macmedia.ca/index.php/news/news-and-events/583-apple-jan-27.html](http://www.macmedia.ca/index.php/news/news-and-events/583-apple-jan-27.html)
- School of Public Health, University of Alberta feature story on Paul Veugelers on website (January 2012)  
[www.publichealth.ualberta.ca/School%20of%20Public%20Health%20News/2012/January/CanadaResearchChaircommittedtohealthier youth.aspx](http://www.publichealth.ualberta.ca/School%20of%20Public%20Health%20News/2012/January/CanadaResearchChaircommittedtohealthier youth.aspx)
- Fort McMurray Connect (November 2011) – An APPLE a day for healthier schools  
[www.macmedia.ca/index.php/news/news-and-events/395-apple-schools-nov-2.html](http://www.macmedia.ca/index.php/news/news-and-events/395-apple-schools-nov-2.html)



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