# ANNUAL REPORT 2017

EMPOWERING MORE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES TO LEAD CHANGE

# Schools

### WHAT IS APPLE SCHOOLS?

APPLE Schools is an innovative school-focused health promotion initiative that improves the lives of more than 19,000 students annually in 63 schools across northern Alberta. healthy eating, physical activity, and mental health by implementing the **Comprehensive School** Health model. APPLE Schools is governed by a board of directors chaired by Dr. Lory Laing.

### **VISION**

Healthy Kids in Healthy Schools

### **MISSION**

To inspire and empower schools and their communities to lead, choose, and be healthy by recommending and supporting measureable and sustainable changes.

### WHY DO WE NEED APPLE SCHOOLS?

Chronic diseases and obesity have drastically increased in children. According to the 2014 REAL Kids Alberta evaluation, 29 per cent of Grade 5 students in Alberta are overweight, and 8 per cent are obese.1

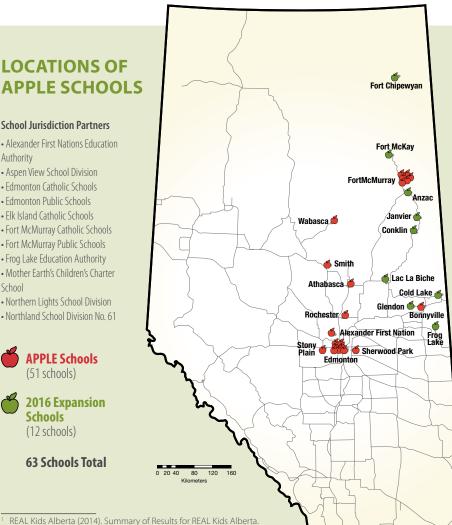
Healthy kids learn better, so staff at APPLE Schools work with underserved school communities to make health an easy choice. Students in APPLE Schools show a **35 per cent increase in physical** activity, eat 10 per cent more fruit and vegetables, and are 40 per cent less likely to be obese than in comparison schools.

APPLE Schools helps students eat healthier, move more, and feel better about themselves so they can achieve more academically.

### **LOCATIONS OF APPLE SCHOOLS**

#### **School Jurisdiction Partners**

- Alexander First Nations Education Authority
- Aspen View School Division
- Edmonton Catholic Schools
- Edmonton Public Schools
- Flk Island Catholic Schools
- Fort McMurray Catholic Schools
- Fort McMurray Public Schools
- Frog Lake Education Authority Mother Earth's Children's Charter
- School
- Northern Lights School Division Northland School Division No. 61
- **APPLE Schools** (51 schools) 2016 Expansion Schools (12 schools) 63 Schools Total



Retrieved from Real Kids Alberta: http://www.realkidsalberta.ca/research



### YEAR IN REVIEW

It has been an exciting year of achievements for APPLE Schools. The growth we saw could not come at a better time as we celebrate 10 years of supporting healthy kids in healthy schools.

Thanks to a first-time-ever grant from the Government of Alberta, we sustained our 51 existing school communities so that they could continue their journey to support wellness. In our last annual report, we were getting ready to support a brand-new cohort of 12 vulnerable schools in rural northern Alberta. We have touched the lives of more than 19,000 students and I am pleased to share updates on a tremendously successful inaugural year.

Our Board of Directors welcomed a talented new director, Nicole Bourque-Bouchier, to the team. She brings an impressive wealth of experience as the CEO of a Fort McKay company. Her wisdom and insights have already been very beneficial.

Research from the University of Alberta's School of Public Health continues to demonstrate the effectiveness of APPLE Schools.

We announced that we are expanding to more schools in 2018 and changed the full form of our name to reflect our broader influence. Our project team has been busy developing new resources for anyone who wants to implement Comprehensive School Health in their communities, and we have been strengthening our partnerships.

It has been a busy year and the future looks bright.

Our school communities have become collective forces of change. Another incredible year of increasing momentum passes thanks to the support of our generous, community-minded funders. Thank you to everyone who has been part of our journey so far: from the student leaders, school staff, and district leaders, to our board and members of the community. The collective wisdom of all the partners involved with APPLE Schools makes the project stronger, with roots that reach deeper and branches that shelter more schools. We thank everyone for their continued support.

Regards, Jenn Flynn,

Executive Director



Agence de la santé a publique du Canada













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### APPLE SCHOOLS EXPANSION

### Supporting More Canadian Children

APPLE schools

APPLE Schools made an official announcement this summer that the project is expanding beyond Alberta to support two schools each in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories in September 2018. Our project team has been working with the local governments to determine the school jurisdictions before selecting vulnerable schools. To reflect the expansion, we changed the full form of *APPLE* to stand for *A Project Promoting healthy Living for Everyone in schools*. This move represents a major shift in our growth as we prepare to expand our influence across Canada.

APPLE Schools currently has resources to expand to four schools in 2018, but we are working hard to find funding to expand the newest cohort to ten schools. Fundraising efforts have been going strong as APPLE Schools' expansion goal is to be in 100 schools by 2025.

### We're Expanding!

We will soon support students in Manitoba and NWT

Visit appleschools.ca for the full announcement

### THE SCHOOLS APPLE School Communities are Thriving

It can be difficult to explain an APPLE school in action, so we decided to let the schools do it for us. Students, parents, staff, and community members often share heart-warming anecdotes about happenings in their schools. We collected the stories and created school district reports to share through our website, social media, email, and hard copy. School highlights include: student-managed gardens, winter activity festivals, cooking clubs, running groups, active school assemblies, mental health activity days, healthy foods in cafeterias, and Daily Physical Activity (DPA) bins. The reports can be found on the Schools section of our website.



A principal helps a student prepare for taste testing

### DPA BINS IN ACTION

St. Martha School staff in Fort McMurray recognize that the physical environment plays a role in promoting health. With no physical education time slots left for the kindergarten and Early Entry Program classes, they opened a spacious room where students can play and exercise using DPA bins. Since opening this designated room, students have been using it daily. The DPA bin games double as literacy activities





#### **Existing Schools**

In December 2016, APPLE Schools was approved for a \$250,000 grant from the Government of Alberta to fund our 51 existing schools until the end of the 2017 school year. This was the first time that APPLE Schools was funded by the provincial government, and we are confident that this opened the door to a meaningful relationship and future support.

Existing APPLE schools continue to have dedicated School Health Champions who maintain a healthy APPLE School culture in each community and implement the school action plan. Administrators and teachers are showing a strong passion for supporting students holistically, recognizing the need to nourish health as a recipe for academic success. They continually convey the need for strategies to support mental health and to feed students at school. APPLE Schools' work in these communities is meaningful and we continue to provide them with much-needed support and resources.

"I feel the (indoor class) garden is happy and makes my tummy smile" KINDERGARTEN STUDENT, ST. KATERI SCHOOL

#### MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IN ACTION

After having honest conversations and exploring mental health throughout the year, a Grade 6 class in Edmonton's Belmead school decided to create a stigma-free school environment where no one would feel alone. They created a monthly campaign about mental health that included a parent newsletter, announcements, and bulletin board display. They created a Peer Counselor leadership position. Peer Counselors are Grade 6 students who make themselves available during recess time to any student who needs to talk. Lastly, the school took part in Hats On! For Mental Health Day and an annual Superhero Run.



A student draws her triggers and personal coping strategies

"With the expansion of APPLE Schools across the province and now into a new province and territory, our healthy school community has grown and received a fresh boost. The available supports are amazing. We feel so lucky to be able to access new resources, supports and ideas related to healthy eating, physical activity and especially mental health."

PAM GRAY, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL AT SIFTON SCHOOL

#### **New Cohort**

The new cohort of 12 remote schools in northern Alberta celebrated their first year as APPLE schools. The endless stories and photos shared by administrators and School Health Facilitators indicate that the schools are committed to their health goals and they are paving the way for achieving promising results.

These schools have experienced measurable growth unique to each community. The classroom and hallway environments reflect the changes that have taken place: hallways are lined with bulletin boards that have healthy messaging, more fruit and vegetables are available to students, students are using healthier language when speaking about food, and there is more focus on winter activities and increased physical activity in the classroom. Indigenous perspectives and mental health are increasingly weaved into lessons, and students are taking more prominent roles as change agents by organizing healthy school activities. "Our students who turned up their noses at vegetables in September are now devouring fresh veggies from our tower garden, affectionately called the Green Monster. They are also making wiser food choices as they become more informed!"

STUDENT LEADERSHIP IN ACTION Chief Napeweaw Comprehensive School, a new expansion school, hosted its first-ever Halloween candy exchange. Students organized the event where children trade their candy for fruit. The overall result was a pleasant surprise to many teachers:

"The candy exchange went awesome. There were many teachers who thought it was a crazy idea, that we wouldn't get any candy. They were totally shocked. We collected over

1,700 pieces of candy. Grade 8 students look charge to help set up, make the poster, and help the little ones."

SIMONE OLMSTEAD, SCHOOL HEALTH FACILITATOR



A young student shows off his snowman fruit kabob

One of APPLE Schools' goals is to earn buy-in from the community and we are pleased to have seen surrounding communities showing support. For example, The APPLE schools in the Conklin and Janvier region lacked access to fresh foods. An Inter Pipeline staff member working in the area recognized this need and knew he had the means to offer a solution. He dropped by almost weekly with a delivery of fresh fruit and vegetables, which disappeared right away as students devoured the treats.

In the fall of 2016, baseline data in the expansion schools was completed, and each school received a tailored report that outlined its areas of need. Read more about these school reports in the Research section on page 12

### NEW RESOURCES AND PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

### Making Healthy Communities More Accessible

The APPLE Schools project team had a busy year of developing resources for anyone who promotes health in their school communities. We fulfilled a demand for more mental health supports, a wider variety of monthly school campaigns with activities, daily announcements, and bulletin board concepts; and daily physical activity bins that promote physical movement in every class. The resources can be found on the new resource page of our website. We also developed promotional materials to expand our reach to a broader audience.

Six monthly campaigns cover topics missing in previous campaigns, like mental health and Indigenous perspectives.

- 1. Unwind Your Mind | stress reduction and mindfulness
- 2. Arctic Winter Games | traditional Indigenous game activities
- 3. Show Your Heart Some Love | maintaining heart heath
- **4. Sweat, Step, Sleep, Sit** | guidelines to live healthily each day (based on the24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth)
- 5. Power of Positivity | shifting perspective to look on the bright side
- 6. Way to Go, H2O | importance of water and how it helps the body

#### "I learned water is the best to drink. I really like water now"

GRADE 4 STUDENT, ANZAC COMMUNITY SCHOOL

**Mental health bins** address students' stress and mental well-being. The bins include eight breathing activities and eight reflection activities, all of which can be incorporated in the classroom any time the need arises, or to maintain good practice. They are being distributed in the fall of 2017, and the activities can be found on the APPLE Schools website for everyone to access.

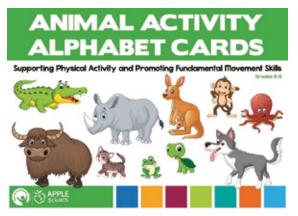


Mental health bin components

**Daily Physical Activity (DPA) bins** offer a greater variety of fun energizers to break out in the classroom and keep students moving throughout the day. Our project team updated and distributed these bins to the 12 expansion schools.

### Animal Activity Alphabet

**Cards** support physical activity and promote fundamental movement skills for K-6 students. Ever Active Schools asked our team to work in partnership with them to create the resource, which is printable and free for everyone.



A promotional video captures the essence of APPLE Schools in two-and-a-half-minutes. We worked with a videographer to bring a storytelling format to the voices of teachers, parents, an administrator, and of course, many students. Only two weeks after releasing the video, it received nearly 3,000 views on Facebook alone and reached almost 10,000 people. Thank you to École St. Paul School in Fort McMurray for opening their doors to the videoshoot. The school is a prime example of an APPLE school community and we are proud to share our story with audiences in the health promotion community and beyond.

### A modernized resource web

**page** offers a user-friendly experience for people seeking resources on our website. Our project team upgraded the web page to be easy to navigate, and updated most of the resources to be concise and easier to understand. The new web page and resources eliminate previous frustrations by reducing the time people spend searching.





A screenshot from the new video

### Tailored prospectuses assist in our

endeavor to secure more financial support. We created three separate prospectuses to target government, industry, and the public, and have been sharing them with people who can help support our expansion goal.



#### Making Life Better for Alberta Children

APPLE Schools is an invovative, school-focused health promotion project that makes students' lives better by

- changing healthy eating, physical activity, and mental health habits. • Relies on peer-reviewed evidence to improve
- Relies on peer-reviewed evidence to improve mutritional outcomes of students, particularly tho in need. Healthy students achieve higher academic
- promoting health eating throughou school, we are we our way to having happy and health school?

here students want to be

monthly and sale

"I really like taste testing. I get to try new foods and decide what I like and don't like. I really like hummus!"

GRADE 5 STUDENT, BILL WOODWARD SCHOOL

### KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE Connected APPLE Communities are Stronger

The 63 APPLE schools are dispersed across northern Alberta, so when APPLE Schools hosted knowledge exchange events, our project team ensured each School Health Facilitator and Champion would walk

exchange events, our project team ensured each School Health Facilitator and Champion would walk away feeling connected and inspired with a toolbox of resources for implementing Comprehensive School Health.

#### **Shaping the Future**

In January 2017, School Health Facilitators from the 12 new schools came together at a pre-conference forum at Shaping the Future. All participants took part in a day of learning The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People<sup>®</sup>. They also connected and shared best practices before heading to the conference sessions to learn how best to create healthy school communities from Canadian experts.

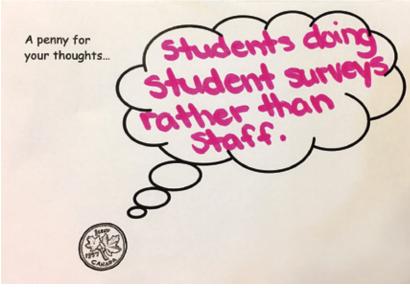
### Sharing Knowledge with the Broader Community

Two School Health Mentors were on the list of speakers at Shaping the Future. They shared valuable knowledge on how students can lead change in schools, one of the core elements of the APPLE Schools project. After presenting, they encouraged the crowd to swap ideas on how they can make this a reality in their school communities.

Jenna Power, a School Health Mentor, presented at a PechaKucha-style event at the conference. Aligning with the event's theme of daring ideas, she encouraged rejection therapy, an approach that helps students get comfortable with failure and rejection. To demonstrate her point, she



A few of the School Health Facilitators with their School Health Mentor (far right)



One audience member's idea on how students can lead change

attempted a handstand, fell over in front of hundreds of people, and took the prize for the best daring talk of the evening.

#### RESPONSES FROM THE JUNE KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE EVENTS

86% of participants prefer two sessions per year

## 100%

either agreed or strongly agreed that the sessions enhanced their knowledge, skills, and attitudes about implementation of comprehensive school health

## 90%

plan to use the newly created monthly campaigns this school year

> 72% plan to implement traditional games in their own school community

#### *"These are actually the most engaging, fun and resourceful PD's I ever attend"*

*"It was great, really enjoyed the Indigenous games aspect!"* 

*"Honestly, I thought it was an excellent day of PD. I came away feeling motivated and energized to continue the work I've been doing as well* 

as implement new ideas!!! Absolutely LOVED IT!!!"

*"Loved it, don't change a thing"* 

*"I think the PD was very well-organized and very informative"* 

#### **APPLE Schools Knowledge Exchange Events**

APPLE Schools facilitated four knowledge exchange events in the 2016-17 school year.

The first event in October 2016 connected 17 brand-new School Health Champions in the Edmonton area. The participants learned about Comprehensive School Health and shared ideas on mental health promotion, school leadership, movement breaks, and their role as a School Health Champion.

In March 2017, we hosted a session called Synergize and Energize during the Greater Edmonton Teacher's Convention, which included Fort McMurray teachers. Edmonton and Fort McMurray-area School Health Champions had an opportunity to connect with each other in a relaxed atmosphere to celebrate their successes and share best practices. A post-event evaluation showed that: 100% of respondents shared best practices, and 100% of respondents believe it is important to come together to celebrate and share stories.

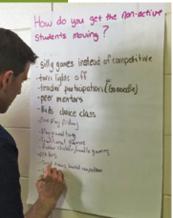
The most successful knowledge exchange events took place in June in both Edmonton and Fort McMurray. 90 School Health Facilitators, Champions, and supporters attended and left with fresh ideas and knowledge to take back to their school communities. An Indigenous perspective was weaved into the event and mental health was a significant focus.

The Edmonton event included a session on traditional games where attendees learned how to make their own sling balls and received Move and Play Through Traditional Games activity cards, a resource created by Be Fit for Life in partnership with APPLE Schools and other provincial partners. Staff introduced new mental health resources and games, including breathing exercises that teach children how to regulate their breathing to reduce stress.



School Health Champions play Sling Ball, after making their own

The post-event evaluations indicated that this was a valuable use of time for the busy teachers, and that they walked away inspired and ready to try new ideas.



#### "I felt appreciated for the extra work I'm doing at my school"

"The event allows teachers to share best practices, and that's the best kind of professional PD" – SCHOOL HEALTH CHAMPIONS

A School Health Champion shares ideas on involving non-active students

### PARTNERSHIPS Joining Forces for Greater Impact

As APPLE Schools' visibility expands, our project team receives more requests to simulate the project in non-APPLE school spaces.

The Fort McMurray school districts have shown immense enthusiasm for the APPLE Schools project and requested to expand it to all the junior high and high schools. To assist with this endeavor, they provided half the funding for the School Health Mentors in Fort McMurray. While the schools are not officially APPLE schools, they still benefit from regular Mentor support. We have already witnessed healthy shifts taking place, like at Father Mercredi High school, which will offer an optional wellness class starting September 2017.

Edmonton Public Schools asked our project team to meet with principals of their 11 new schools that opened in September 2017 to help them build a healthy school culture. They are not APPLE schools, but are keen to replicate the culture and requested our guidance. One of our School Health Mentors met with the new principals to provide access to APPLE Schools resources and offer support to the schools' wellness champions.



APPLE Schools staff with Samuel Galaviz, director of SAM Health By Nutrition, and his sons

APPLE Schools has been attracting interest from international organizations. In the summer, the director of a nutrition promotion organization called *SAM Health By Nutrition* from Hermosillo, Mexico visited the APPLE Schools office to discuss a potential partnership. It is encouraging to see that APPLE Schools is gaining wide-spread influence and organizations are looking our way to help them improve children's healthy eating, physical activity, and mental health habits.

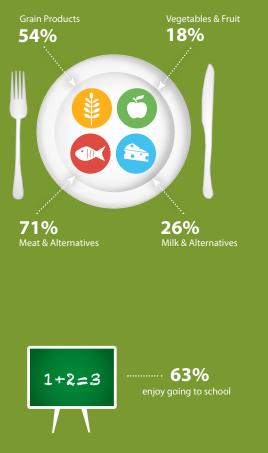
#### **Existing Partnerships**

APPLE Schools continues working closely with existing partners to collaborate on resources, and exchange knowledge and ideas. For instance, our project team invites members from Ever Active Schools, Alberta Health Services, Joint Consortium for School Health, and ParticipACTION to support our training sessions, and contribute resources and professional development opportunities. Also, APPLE Schools is represented on the Indigenous Youth Wellness Collaborative to support youth wellness in indigenous communities.

#### **Baseline data summary**

The following are snapshots taken from the baseline data report. They demonstrate the need for APPLE Schools to be present in the expansion schools.

Percentage of students who meet the recommended number of food guide servings per day:







# RESEARCH

### Changing Health Behaviours

New research published in the 2016-17 school year served as a testament to APPLE Schools' efficacy. The research recognizes APPLE Schools as a model for changing health behaviours in children.

One paper, *Essential conditions for the implementation of comprehensive school health*, determined the elements of implementation as identified by teachers, School Health Facilitators, and school administrators in APPLE schools. The findings were significant. Previous papers outlined what people felt were important components of implementation, but no participants in those papers came from schools with proven effectiveness, like APPLE schools. This research outlined the exact components that makes projects like APPLE Schools so successful, so it has become easier to speak of the project's effectiveness.

The second published research was <u>Cost-effectiveness of a</u> <u>school-based health promotion program in Canada: A life-course</u> <u>modeling approach</u>. This research examined APPLE Schools as a cost-effective intervention for preventing obesity and reducing chronic disease risk over a lifetime. It verified that APPLE Schools is indeed a very cost-effective project, and that allocating resources toward school-based program such as APPLE Schools is likely to reduce the public burden of obesity and chronic disease.

#### **Baseline Data Report**

All 12 expansion schools received a tailored evaluation report summarizing baseline data research completed in the fall of 2016. School Health Facilitators used the data to adjust their school action plans to ensure their efforts are directed where health needs to be addressed. Researchers will return to the expansion schools in spring of 2018 to measure the same areas and determine where schools have improved or fallen short. School Health Facilitators will use it to see if previous problem areas have improved, and to further adjust school action plans if needed. This ensures that health promotion efforts in schools are guided by evidence for maximum success.

### FINANCIALS

APPLE Schools continues to operate in a fiscally responsible manner, and financials are filed according to Canada Revenue Agency guidelines. The fiscal year runs from September 1, 2016 to August 31, 2017. For a list of our funders in this reporting period, see page 2.

### THE APPLE SCHOOLS FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Ms. Jenn Flynn Ex-officio (Staff) BPE Director, APPLE Schools

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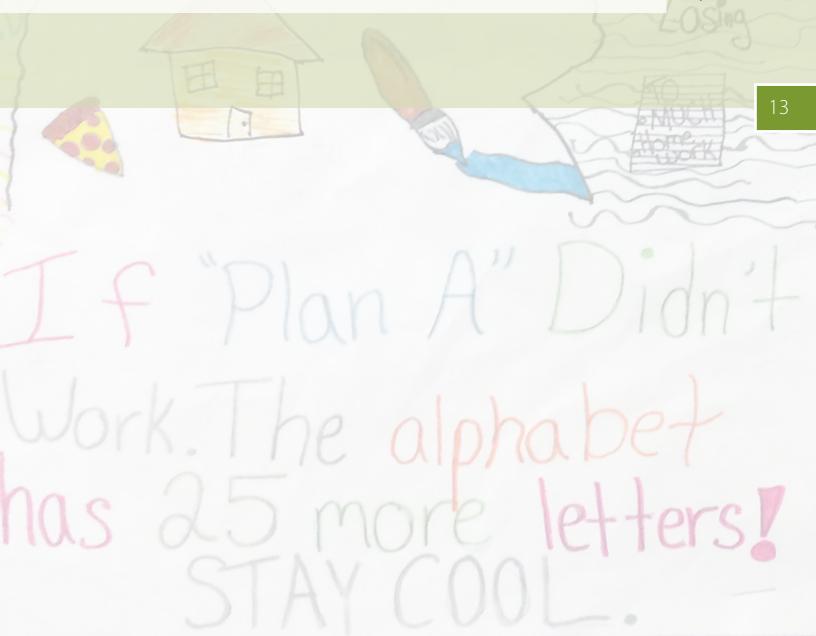




Nicole Bourque-Bouchier

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS ADDITION New Talent Joins the Team

The APPLE Schools Board of Directors welcomed Nicole Bourque-Bouchier to the team in June 2016. A long-time resident of Fort McMurray and a member of the Mikisew Cree First Nation, Nicole is the CEO and co-owner of The Bouchier Group in Fort McKay. She has an extensive resume serving on boards of non-profits and has been honoured with numerous awards and accolades. APPLE Schools has already benefited from her connections to the Wood Buffalo region, her experience, and perspective. We are lucky to have such accomplished board members serving as a strong guiding hand for APPLE Schools as we move forward.





#### HEALTHY KIDS IN HEALTHY SCHOOLS



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