



High School Wellness: Embedding Wellness Education Cross-Curricular

In January 2012, the Wellness Fund introduced high school wellness grants to support Alberta’s high schools to embed health and wellness cross-curricular using a comprehensive school health approach.

Making it Happen!

Teacher collaboration was established early by the projects to be a key element for success. Projects established cross-curricular committees’ that met throughout the year to discuss teaching strategies, methods to embed wellness outcomes into their instructional design and plan for and implement actions that would embed wellness throughout the whole school.

Teachers were provided with some targeted time to collaborate. Projects stated that this was an important first step to change practice because, “high school departments often work independently from one another”. This also gave rise to the opportunity for teachers to dialogue about students, where they hadn’t previously.

Teachers enjoy and are motivated by the dynamics of collaborative work environments.

If you have a limited definition of wellness then it becomes the responsibility of Phys. Ed or CALM teachers. Wellness education is not just a discipline or subject area standing by itself – it is something that needs to be embedded through all discipline areas.

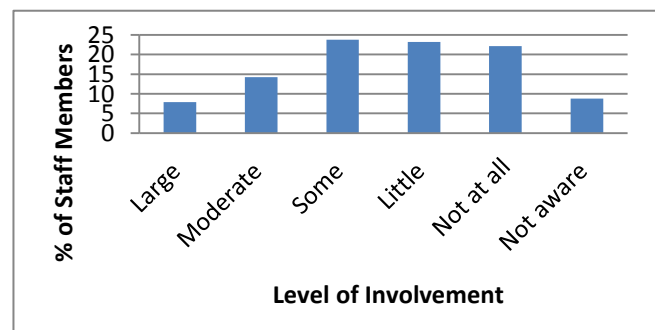
A range of evaluative strategies ranging from self-developed surveys to the *Tell Them From Me* survey, *JCSH Healthy School Planner*, a *staff social network analysis* and focus groups. Capturing student voice and staff collaborative networks was specifically undertaken by participating high schools and “responses provided feedback to teachers to help drive their practice.”

Opportunities for consultation with students were created to ensure that the concepts and strategies reflect the most effective ways to engage students and pave the way for change to occur.

“[The] support of senior administration throughout the project was key Through our connections with senior administration we were able to gain buy-in from principals. To create more interest, we targeted health champions with the support of principals. Then we were able to present at staff/department meetings to expand *participation from teachers*.” - A project lead

Involvement with the Wellness Fund Projects:

About 70% of respondents had some level of involvement in the Wellness Fund Project in their school (Figure 1).





Measuring Success through Social Networks

In 2014 eight schools encompassing four jurisdictions took part in a social network analysis. The survey measured staff collaborative practice, involvement with the project and job satisfaction.

The wellness projects help high schools to increase and strengthen social networks that include personal network (**Who you know**) and professional networks (**Who you work with**). Comparing teachers and staff who had involvement with the Wellness Fund to those who had no level of involvement or knew nothing of it, there are some significant differences in their pattern of working in the school (i.e., in their social networks). Teachers and staff who were involved with the Wellness Fund Project this year are more likely to know others more personally and to be consulting with others about curriculum.

FIGURE 4.8: Example of change in ‘collaborate about student learning’ network diagrams (School 3)

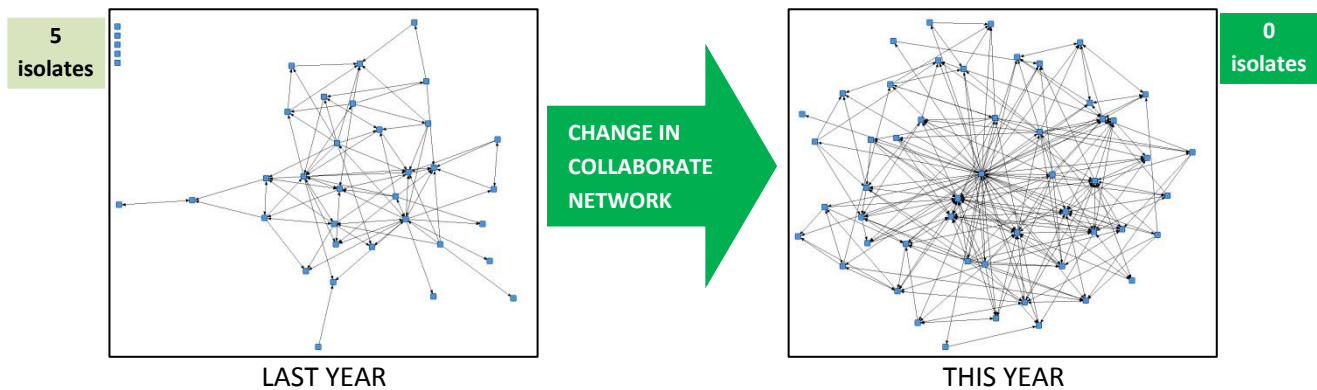


Figure 1 Level of Involvement of Staff with projects

Job Satisfaction

Projects may lead to high job satisfaction among teachers and staff. Increases in collaborative practices, opportunities for professional development, and an interdisciplinary approach in planning and classroom curriculum can motivate teachers and facilitate their work. Increase in job satisfaction in turn can positively impact students’ academic achievements.

Figure 2. Distribution of Job Satisfaction

Over half (53.2%) of the surveyed staff members scored the highest possible score on job satisfaction (Figure 2).

