

HEAL School Food & Nutrition Project



Acknowledgements

Participating Schools

108 Mile Elementary, 108 Mile House, BC, Rob Breden,
Principal

Lac La Hache Elementary, Lac La Hache BC, Marjatta
Chapman, Principal

Nesika Elementary, Williams Lake, BC, Ken Berry, Principal

Wildwood Elementary, Williams Lake, BC, Cheryl Dew,
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Project Coordinator

Rose Soneff, Community Nutritionist, Interior Health Authority

Project Proponent

Cariboo Chilcotin School District #27

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Project Support

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Executive Summary

The goal of the HEAL (Healthy Eating and Active Living) was to create supportive environments for healthy food choices to improve the nutritional intake of elementary school children in the primary prevention of Type 2 Diabetes. Four Elementary District 27 schools, located in the Cariboo area of central British Columbia, were involved. Students, staff, teachers, volunteers, and health professionals were involved to create policies that participated in developing school food policies that made healthy eating the easy choice.

Each of the schools followed the Healthy Schools Resource Guide as the format for the development of the school food policies. They undertook a 5-step process to share the vision, select the priority nutrition policies and related activities, develop the plan, put the plan into action, and evaluate the process. The local community nutritionist acted as the facilitator for this process.

The objectives of the project were to establish a school food policy, students develop at least three food selection and preparation skills, students eat more nutritious food at school, students develop preferences for healthy foods at school and at home, and school staff have access to different ongoing nutrition supports.

Each school approached the development of policies differently. All activities, to support attaining the objectives, involved components of awareness, education and hands-on student involvement. Activities included increase access to nutritious food at school, bans of selected nutrient-poor foods, suggestions of which foods to eat most often to least often, guidelines for foods served at school functions, nutritious food used as a vehicle for fun activities and education, lower price incentives for nutritious foods and nutrition workshops for teachers.

Although the project duration was only four months, an impact was seen as a result of activities. Involvement in the HEAL Project, project funding and assistance in facilitation were identified as factors in the project's success. Insufficient time of students and staff, competing priorities, lack of ongoing funding were key challenges.

At a time when only one in five Canadian children meets the minimum daily recommendation for fruit and vegetable intake and child obesity is an "epidemic", creating an environment that makes healthy food choices the easy choices for students was critical.

Introduction

Poor eating patterns contribute to chronic health problems, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and osteoporosis, later in life. Obesity in children is increasing and appears to be related to poor food intake and inadequate physical activity¹. Only one in five Canadian children meets the minimum daily recommendation for fruit and vegetable intake². Inadequate nutrition affects the long-term development of the child³. Child obesity is an “epidemic”⁴ creating an environment that makes healthy choices the easy choices for students is critical.

In 2002, Public Health, Interior Health conducted a School Food and Nutrition Survey⁵ in School Districts #27, 28 and 49. The results indicated that 16% of Grade 3 students stated they “Never” or “Occasionally” (1-2 times/wk) had breakfast. Teachers, noon hour supervisors and principals cited insufficient funds to purchase food and the student’s lack of knowledge, or misconceptions about food as the primary reasons for affecting the student’s ability to eat nutritious food. School Food and Nutrition Policies were inconsistent amongst schools. School Food and Nutrition Policies were suggested as a means of influencing the nutrition education provided to students, the food choices available in school canteens, hot lunch programs, vending machines, special events, and fund raising opportunities. Thus, the message of healthy eating would be consistent throughout the school environment and hopefully, influence the choices made at home too.

Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) in Northern British Columbia to prevent Type 2 Diabetes is an initiative by Health Canada. In October, 2002, HEAL issued a Request for Proposals and SD 27, located in the Cariboo area of central British Columbia, successfully received \$12,500 to institute School Food

Lac la Hache Elementary

More water than juice boxes are now drunk. The bottled water is very popular and we see a decrease in the number of juice boxes that have been going into the recycling container. One teacher felt that the children were more focused, especially in the afternoon.

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and Nutrition Policies. The funding was shared equally amongst 4 schools that volunteered to participate in this program.

Four elementary schools in the Cariboo Chilcotin School District 27, Nesika Elementary, Wildwood Elementary, Lac la Hache Elementary, and 108 Mile Elementary, participated in developing school food policies that made healthy eating the easy choice. Students, staff, teachers, volunteers, and health professionals were involved to create policies that ranged from what is served in canteens to hands-on nutrition education programs for students.

Nesika Elementary, located in Williams Lake, BC, has a population of 250 students. It has large ethnic mix including Indocanadian and First Nations children and a range of socio-economic levels

Wildwood Elementary, located approximately 15 minutes outside of Williams Lake, BC, has a population of 70 students and is located in a rural area.

Lac La Hache Elementary, located in Lac La Hache, BC, a rural area, has a school population of 72 students.

108 Mile Elementary School, located in 108 Mile, BC, has a school population of 250 students drawing from a predominantly middle class neighbourhood.

The Community Nutritionist, Rose Soneff RDN, acted as the Project Manager and facilitator with each school using the Healthy Schools format, a community development process familiar to schools. The Healthy Schools Resource Guide⁶ was used to guide the process.

Cathryn Wellner, upon visiting 108 Mile Elementary

My favourite story of the day came from Rob. He said that one of the lunchroom supervisors carries a bag of cabbage and will cut off a chunk as a treat for children. One young misbehaviorer who was sent to the office was less concerned about the possibility of a discipline than by the prospect of missing out on the cabbage.

The Five Step Process

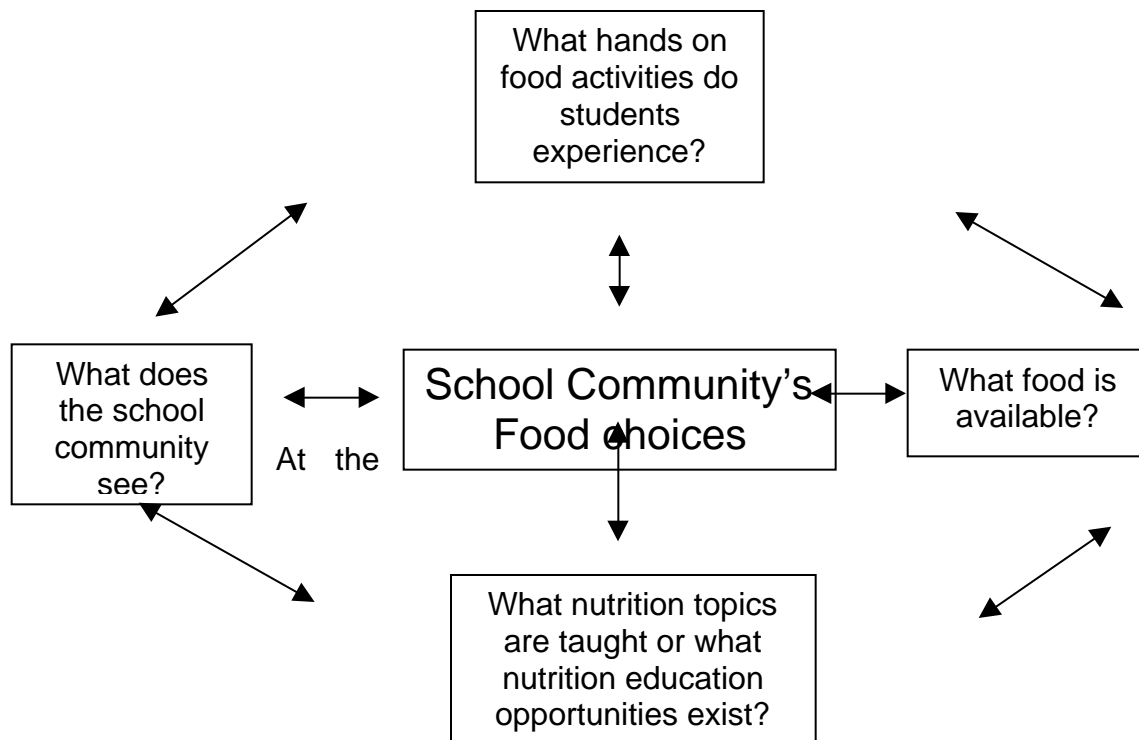
1. Create a Shared Vision
2. Select Priority Nutrition Policy Issues
3. Develop a Plan
4. Put the Plan into Action
5. Evaluate, Plan for the Future and Celebrate

Step 1 Create a Shared Vision

An initial visioning session was held at each school to discuss a variety of questions.

Visioning Session for School Food and Nutrition Policy

~Creating supportive school environments for healthy food choices~



end of the project we would like to be able to say, “*Our school promotes healthy eating as the easy choice by*”

- What is being done now to promote supportive school environments for healthy food choices?
- What are school’s current policies for school environments, food...?

Step 2 Select Priority Nutrition Policy Issues

- What are the food issues for our school?
- What are the barriers (if any) to addressing these?

Step 3 Develop a Plan

- What could we do, what school events could we tie initiatives with?
- What do we need to implement these ideas?
- What have other schools done?

Step 4 Put the Plan into Action

- Who will do this and what is the Role of the Advisory Committee (Appendix 1)

Step 5 Evaluate, Plan for the Future and Celebrate

- How will you know you’ve succeeded?
- How will the school ensure the school food and nutrition policies continue after the project ends?
- How will the school celebrate the successes?

Teacher, Nesika Elementary, after first meeting as an Advisory Committee

This is a fundamentally different way of looking at healthy eating, weaving it between what is taught to what is practiced at school.

Promotion! Promotion! Promotion

Marketing healthy food needs creative strategies and student involvement. Below is a jingle from Nesika School created by Manvir and Chantal, Gr. 7 for fig newtons.

Both: “They have ...chewy fruity insides”

Both: “They have crunchy munchy outsides”

Manvir: “Who are they???”

Chantal: “Just guess”

Both: “NEWTONS ARE THE BEST!!”

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The Community Nutritionist documented the results for each meeting. A sample school food policy, Nutrition Guidelines for Schools, Northern Diabetes Prevention Coalition⁷ and other nutrition information was provided at the initial meeting to stimulate discussion. A work plan and responsibilities were assigned to undertake initiatives.

Subsequently, meetings were held with each Advisory Committee. At each meeting the agenda included:

- What has happened since the last meeting in terms of activities?
- What worked well and less well?
- How was the event promoted?
- How has a link been made between diabetes prevention and healthy eating habits?

The Community Nutritionist sent monthly updates and invitations to the Cathryn Wellner, HEAL Project Coordinator.

Rose Soneff RDN, Community Nutritionist

I visited the senior classes and taught the Zimbabwe Hand Jive, it shows five hand actions illustrating the amount of fat, and protein, fruits and vegetables, grains and milk that should be eaten at a meal. For fruit and vegetables, the hands are cupped together and opened as wide as possible. I meet students around town, they waive to me, and do the hand jive. It's gratifying knowing they remember what they have been taught - like a secret handshake.

Evaluation

Evaluation Plan

Initially there was the intent to conduct objective baseline evaluation and develop participatory evaluation questions. There were several barriers such as a format/tool for conducting the evaluation, sufficient knowledge on the part of the students to identify portion sizes and food group correctly, an appropriate time to conduct an objective evaluation, inability to reach parents to complete an evaluation and a dedicated person to coordinate the evaluation activities.

The schools used a variety of tools to evaluate student meals. For example, after the teachers completed the Dairy Foundation workshops, one teacher created a place mat that Grade 2 students used to determine which food group the contents of student lunches belonged. In another school, “My 3-Day Food Record”, from the Dairy Foundation’s Food Sense workshop was used. The Community Nutritionist provided “School Lunch Spot Check” (Appendix 3) and the “Food Guide Slide” as other assessment tools.

Survey questions were developed for students and parents (See Appendix 2 for results). They asked the following questions.

For students:

1. What has been done at the school that has made you choose healthier food to eat?
2. Tell me 3 things you do to make healthier snacks or lunches because of something you learned at school.
3. Have you asked whoever buys food for home to buy more food from the 4 food groups since November? If yes, what foods?

Principal, Wildwood Elementary

“Mrs McKimm’s class has been researching fruit and vegetable questions for the Fruit and Vegetable Quiz. We have a buzzer board that the contestants push, when they have the answer. It was very popular and the prize was a 100% juice bar – a new item in our canteen.”

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These questions were difficult to administer to younger students without a surveyor to assist in explaining the question.

For parents:

1. What has been done at the school that has made your child choose healthier food to eat?
2. Tell me 3 things your child learned to make healthier snacks or lunches because of something he or she learned at school.
3. What percentage more would you estimate your child has eaten from the 4 Food Groups since November? Please circle. Parents had a choice of no change, 5%, 10%, 15%, 20% or more than 20%.
4. Do you feel you child eats fewer foods high in sugar, fat or salt since November?
Please circle "Yes" or "No".

In addition, comments were collected at Advisory Committee meetings, and in casual interactions with parents.

Why was HEAL Successful?

- The money was the hook and incentive to be part of this project, especially, the possibility to get equipment. One school had many healthy eating ideas and the funding enabled the school to implement the ideas
- Once schools were part of the HEAL project, there was an expectation to do something and raise healthy eating to a higher priority even though nutrition is taught in the curriculum. Knowing that the public and other schools were aware of the involvement of the 4 schools contributed to the momentum.
- The timeline of March 31, 2003 helped to encourage initiatives to take place and be completed.
- The lower cost incentive for kids to try healthier, less expensive foods.

Parent, Lac la Hache Elementary

We purchased a stove with our HEAL money and the parent volunteers in our hot lunch program were gratified that they had the proper equipment that did not burn the food. The kids were enthusiastic about the new menu items, especially the soft tortillas.

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- Opportunities were provided to try new foods and continue to have them in the future
- Food was made fun and a vehicle for interaction, i.e. the Fruit and Veggie Walk, Fruit Spin. The activities were new and presented in a pressure-free way.
- Initiatives provided choices.
- Rose Soneff, Community Nutritionist, facilitated sessions, maintained records, reported and distributed material. School staff had little time to do these administrative duties
- Regular meetings with the specific focus on healthy eating and outlined what needed to be done were held
- This program involved a variety of people from the school community, parents, students, staff, and administration, outside experts, such as the dental hygienist. It was not a top-down program coming from the administration. In most cases, the work was divided amongst people and not on the shoulders of one person.
- The student involvement in planning, promoting and implementing the activities.
- Each school developed policies that reflected the school values and abilities
- Heightened awareness for nutrition, especially with the competing information that is desirable to deliver at the school level, ie. personal safety, anti-bullying, drug-free environment and antismoking campaigns.
- Someone, outside of school staff who organized workshops, provided practical information (source for institutional equipment, quantity recipes).
- Shared information, especially inspiration from other areas, and other HEAL Schools.
- Seeing successes and the eagerness and excitement generated.

Teachers who attended the Nutrition Workshops

“Excellent material provided”, “Really valuable”, “I didn’t know the health unit had anything (resources) like this we could borrow”, “I attended Dairy Foundation Workshops over 20 years ago and the new material is great.”

BC Dairy Foundation Instructor

“Teachers are so busy, the health unit’s help in organizing the nutrition workshops brought out 29 teachers – an unusually high number for our workshops.”

Overall Impact

- Increased awareness by the school population for nutrition and healthy eating
- Consistency and continuity between nutrition information taught and what students experience in the school environment
- Improvement in the quality of food eaten or available

Were there any unexpected surprises as a result of being involved with HEAL?

- The number of other schools in this school district and other agencies that have wanted more information about the HEAL project and how to become a HEAL School (Chilcotin Road, Poplar Glade, Peter Skene Ogden, Columneetza, North Shore Health Unit, Interior Health)
- Initiatives done at other schools were shared and cross-pollination occurred. For example, a Fruit and Veggie Walk held at Wildwood Elementary was also tried at Lac La Hache Elementary, or a parent from Lac La Hache Elementary attended the 108 Mile Elementary Nutrition Fair.
- Six Peter Skene Ogden Grade 11 and 12 students assisted staffing each food group in the Nutrition Fair of 108 Mile House.
- Uptake of other programs Food Safe and food safe practices instituted in schools (food preparation, cleaning, hand washing)
- Involvement of Public Health Dental staff



Fruit and Vegetable Spin, Wildwood School

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- Parent volunteers gratified at positive comments made by students when they had prepared more nutritious food and the satisfaction of working with good equipment.
- Leadership of some students, i.e. Caitlin Chadwick presenting at School District Meeting.
- The key role of organization and facilitation by Public Health rather than just a source of information.

Objectives (also see Appendix 2, for further evaluation data collected)

1. Establish School Food Policies that make healthy choices the easy choice. The following are the school food policies developed by the schools:

School	School Food and Nutrition Policy developed
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Wildwood	To encourage healthy eating and active living in our school community through education of students, staff and parents.
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Nesika	To work toward all children having a breakfast and lunch every school day, no one going without. To work toward all children having nutritious food and drink during school days in our canteen and juice machines. To work toward use of school equipment to facilitate students bringing healthier food to school on a more regular basis. To work toward all children understanding the difference between junk food and nutritious food and drink and to foster a change in eating habits for “junk food consumers”.
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Lee La Heche	Lee La Heche Elementary School promotes healthy eating and
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*Nesika
Kindergarten
student
making wonton for the
Chinese New
Year Lunch*

HEAL School Food and Nutrition Policy Project in selected schools of SD#27

	active living through our food programs, nutrition education and physical education. We support an active lifestyle resulting from exercise and good dietary habits. Our school's food policy will incorporate Canada's Food Guide for healthy eating and focus on "serve most often" foods during classroom and school functions.
108 Mile	Mile 108 Elementary will continue to be a Healthy Eating, Active Living school. We will ensure that all decisions involving food and drink at Mile 108 Elementary will be carried out in the best interests of student's and staff's nutritional needs. We will continue to educate the school community on the importance of healthy eating and active living. Our actions will be directed by the professional advice provided to us through the Interior Health Authority.

2. Develop three skills in selecting and preparing healthy snacks and lunches.

- Food Safe instruction provided to some students, parents, volunteers and teachers
- Increased awareness of the 4 food groups. Nutritionist taught senior classes the Zimbabwe Hand Jive, reading labels, especially for added sugar and fat. Nutritionist spoke to parents at all schools, at least once, to describe the HEAL project and provided nutrition information to parents. "Potato Post" a nutrition newsletter has gone out to parents.
- Increased awareness for dental friendly snacks by Hygienist



*Lac la Hache
Elementary,

Very popular
water coolers*

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- Students in 108 Mile who received nutrition education taught younger grades by forming teaching teams of three students each.
 - Teachers utilizing tools from the Nutrition workshops in the curriculum. For example, a teacher in 108 Mile had students used placemats with the 4 Food Group to identify the composition of their lunches.
3. Eat 20% more nutritious foods and fewer “empty calorie foods”
- **Increased access to nutritious food.** All canteens carried more nutritious food choices and less nutrient poor choices. 108 Mile House served 44 servings of fresh carrot and celery sticks, free, with hot dogs provided by PAC. More water consumed in Lac La Hache and less other “beverages”, “drinks”, “cocktails” due to the water coolers. Greater use of water in all schools. Students taking fruit and vegetables from “free basket” rather than other foods to the surprise of a teacher.
 - **Bans of selected nutrient poor foods.** Lac La Hache and Wildwood already had a no soda pop policy. Other schools removed pop, sports drinks from canteens and encouraged no pop in PAC or school sponsored events.
 - **Adopted foods to eat most often, less often and least often.** 108 Mile Elementary no longer had A&W days, tried a healthy concession for a volleyball tournament, purchased a refrigerator for the chocolate or white milk program where sales had a small increase, making a friendship fruit salad.
 - **Student events used healthy food as a vehicle for fun or education.** 108 Mile Nutrition Fair, the Wildwood Nutrition Trivia and Fruit Spin, Lac La Hache’s Fruit and Veggie Walk

Rose Soneff, Community Nutritionist

The Nutrition Fair held at 108 Mile was fantastic - truly fun with balloons, games and prizes. I credit the hard work of the staff and parents. The gymnasium was divided into stations representing each food group. Groups of students rotated through each station and were able to play a nutrition-related game and try different foods. There were many new foods, such as bok choy, that students had never tried. One student told me he thought the bok choy stem made great dippers.

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- **Price incentives.** Nesika and 108 Mile Elementary had lower prices for healthier beverages. For example, Nesika priced lemonade and iced tea at \$1.50/unit versus \$0.75/unit for water, milk, 100% juice. Eventually sales at Nesika of lemonade and iced tea dropped.
 - **Creating an environment to allow kids to expand the nutritious food brought from home.** Wildwood students utilized microwaves for food brought from home and in general, more nutritious and allowing greater variety in what food can be eaten for meals, or to allow students to store lunches and keep perishable and more nutritious food safe.
 - **Not using nutrient poor foods as a reward.** Some teachers stopped providing candy as a reward and looked at alternatives such as stickers, bottled water.
 - **Role Models for Students.** At Nesika, a teacher commented that younger children purchased healthier choices when they saw older students making healthy choices
4. Develop preferences for healthier foods that will carry over to the home.
- **Improving the quality of food available at all schools.** Lac La Hache offered healthier items in the hot lunch program. Wildwood added healthier foods to the student canteen. 108 Mile offered nutritious foods in the concession of the sporting event. Nesika improved the quality of the hot dog bun by switching to a whole wheat bun and better quality wiener.
 - **Expansion of an existing nutrition program.** 108 Mile expanded milk program, raised the price on less nutritious foods, such as beef sticks., students proffering alternatives to A&W days
 - **Guidelines for school events.** The school asked students to bring more nutritious food for some events held at school i.e. Lac La Hache Halloween party, at the 108 Valentine Party, Bob Bergen, teacher, asked

Parent, Lac la Hache Elementary

She shared two instances that she has seen with her own son, in Grade 3. She said that although her family is already conscientious about nutrition she has seen them “coming home and planning lunches, how much info was absorbed and practiced.” She also discussed balance when her son had a small piece of Rice K square and a piece of fruit. Her son was also aware of the size of meat portion needed and cited peanut butter as a “meat alternative”

his class to bring more nutritious foods for Valentine class event and the students brought and ate nutritious foods. Wildwood sent out guidelines for the use of microwaves only for nutritious foods. One-third of Christmas function had healthy foods and were eaten

- **Introduction of new foods.** For Example 108 Mile's Nutrition Fair introduced kids to new foods that students said they would be interested in having at home, i.e. raw bok choy stems, whole-wheat pita bread. Wildwood had sample taste tests with younger grades of fruit smoothies, or played a game that allowed them to try foods from the 4 Food Groups.
- **Educational impact.** Parents commenting on how kids were asking for more nutritious food at home and knowing which foods belong to which food group.

5. Schools gain access to three nutrition education supports.

- On Jan 17, 2003, teachers were invited to the Dairy Foundation, Heart Smart Kids, Shop Smart Tours and Public Health nutrition workshops. Twenty-nine teachers from the four HEAL schools and others attended.
- Nutrition information provided on an ongoing basis. For example, 108 Mile used Public Health Posters for the Nutrition fair
- 108 Mile Grade 7 students were divided into groups of three to go to other classes and teach the Zimbabwe Hand Jive. The school accessed Save On Foods *Clean Hands Dirty Hands* program.



Nesika Elementary - Over 300 students were served and students with Food Safe training helped to prepare the food such as sweet and sour pork.

Mile 108 Elementary School - Experiment in selling “healthy” foods at a sporting event

In December, the Mile 108 Elementary School PAC, decided to experiment with selling healthier foods at the concession during a Volleyball tournament. The PAC uses these events to raise funds and has traditionally sold mostly non-nutritious foods. The plan to sell healthier foods was in keeping with the schools aim to make healthy eating the easy choice for students. The Hills Health and Guest Ranch donated money to buy the healthy foods, which could then be sold at a reduced rate and funds would still be raised.

Products tried:

*Pre-packaged Carrots and dip;
Yoghurt tubes, which were frozen;
100 % fruit, Juice boxes;
Fruit leathers;
Nature valley Granola bars;
Water;
Pizza Pretzels;*

Hot dogs were sold to ensure the PAC raised some money. None of the usual items such as pop, doughnuts and chips were available for sale.

There were many who believed that very little would be sold. In the beginning, the sceptics seemed to be proven correct. When the children saw the items that were for sale, there were groans and many comments of “Oh Yuck!”

However, once one child had bought a frozen yoghurt tube, the items started to sell quickly. The pizza pretzels were the first to go (7 dozen), then the yoghurt tubes and veggies and dip. Only 6 dozen hotdogs were sold. More water was sold than juice boxes (both costing 50c each). The only items that did not sell well were the granola bars. In total \$202.00 was raised.

What was learned?

- children will buy healthier choice items if they are the only choice;*
- all it takes is one child to set the ball rolling.*
- items might not have sold as well had they not been sold below cost due to the generous donation. We shall find out the next time.*

Lauren Bock RDN, is a parent at the 108 Mile Elementary School

Challenges

- Variable, lack of, or unwritten school food policies
- Lack of time for parent volunteers and in students timetable
- Facilities for storage of perishable foods limited or insufficient cooking tools and equipment
- Ongoing funding, MCFD (Ministry of Children and Family Development) reduced funding by 18% for Community LINK (previously known as Social Equity Funding which funded school meal programs).
- No funding for community development around healthy eating in the present school budget.
- Nutritious food costs more, scarcity of reasonably priced, nutritious food items such as fresh fruit
- Nutritious food more perishable
- Nutrition surveillance data limited to provide baseline
- Fundraising using non-nutritious food is attractive due to the high profit margin, convenient packaging, and long shelf-life
- Rewards in class of non-nutritious food
- Limited resources for teachers, not knowing what resources are available
- Challenge of having policies and carrying them out in the future
- Lack of time for Community Nutritionist to be at all schools.
- Changing Demographics in community (more working parents and reliance on convenience foods, lack of time to prepare food at home, changing economic situations)
- Not stigmatizing children with families who are not able to afford nutritious food.
- Linking diabetes and healthy eating. Project did not involve local Canadian Diabetes Association members.
- Lack of understanding on some parents, staff, students on the impact of

Rose Soneff RDN, Community Nutritionist

This project touched over 650 students, the staff, and parents in the 4 schools. It's important to remember that the schools were already involved in providing nutrition education, hosting school activities, serving food and fundraising. What HEAL did was to put a lens over what was already happening and making some changes to make healthy eating the easy choice. It also didn't take much funding, on average \$3,000. What I heard most often was the assistance in facilitation provided to each school, the help to focus on the issues, and generate ideas was equally as important as the funding. The schools now know the steps to repeat the process and know whom they can turn to for help. In my opinion, HEAL was the most effective use of my time.

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- Not incorporating Active Living more effectively
- Need inexpensive quick to prepare healthy menu ideas
- Lack of resources to determine the influence of physical factors influencing food intake, i.e. time available for meals, refrigeration space to store student lunches, eating areas, access to microwaves, peer pressure, food industry marketing.

Planning for the Future

How to sustain HEAL after the project ends?

- Diminishing Breakfast Club to raise funds for all SD#27 schools proposed
- 108 Mile plans to prepare a school cookbook with healthy eating tips
- Toolkit
- Community Nutritionist to return to school next year
- Expansion to Chilcotin Road School through another Interior Health Project
- Charitable Points program from Save On Foods could be accessed
- Recycling revenue at Lac La Hache to cover ongoing costs
- Gillian DeConto, parent responsible for the Hot Meal program, would like to prepare a How-to-Guide for Meal Planning of Hot Lunches.

Promotion and Celebration

- Articles in local newspaper, HEAL Newsletter
- Update circulated to SD#27 schools
- Posters at schools
- Presentation at SD trustees. Trustees invited to Nutrition Fair
- Toolkit will be distributed to all schools
- Prizes and fruit/veggie stickers provided
- Posters provided for Nutrition Month
- April 16th lunch at Lac La Hache
- March 3 Nutrition Fair at 108 Mile Electuary
- Video taken of 108 Mile Nutrition Fair

Principal, Wildwood

We made Smoothies for younger students to try and they enjoyed them very much and were willing to pay for them. A small glass was 50 cents and a larger glass was \$1.*

**There are many variations of Smoothies. Here is one recipe:*

_ cup (175ml) flavoured yoghurt, 2 tbsp (30 ml) skim milk powder, _ c (250 ml) orange juice, 1 cup (250 ml) frozen fruit (strawberries, banana, blueberry or raspberries). Combine ingredients together in a blender and blend until smooth.

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- Binder maintained at Wildwood of activities
- Wildwood prominently displayed nutrition in library
- Potato Post sent out with newsletters
- Caitlin Chadwick presented so SD#27 Board march 13 with slides of Wildwood Events
- Bannock and Muffin Breakfasts
- HEAL update included in student newsletters for home
- Congratulations and certificates for those who completed Food Safe were posted or awarded at ceremonies
- Nutritionist spoke at PAC meetings at each HEAL school



Students at Lac la Hache Elementary promoted the Fruit and Veggie Walk by creating individually designed posters.

School Food Policy Toolkit (see Appendix 3 for sources)

Checklist

- ❑ Follow *Healthy Schools Resource Guide*
- ❑ Form an Advisory Committee at school comprised of students, staff, administration, parents, volunteers (See Appendix 1 for Role)
- ❑ Seek partners such as local public health staff, retailers, volunteers
- ❑ Review sample School Food Policies
- ❑ Assess food intake of students for evaluation purposes

Helpful tips from the schools:

- *Maintaining all related information to the project in a “HEAL Project” binder, that was available to everyone was helpful. A dedicated bulletin board with nutrition information, upcoming HEAL activities was displayed in the library*
- *Dedicated time at each staff meeting maintained the profile of the project.*
- *Awareness for Healthy Eating in newsletters sent home included guidelines encouraging healthier foods brought to school, nutrition-related events, tips and recipes.*
- *School announcements included student-created ads promoting HEAL events.*
- *Coupons and prizes for healthy foods carried in the canteen were a success*

Recommendations

1. Expand the philosophy of Healthy Eating and Active Living through the development of School Food and Nutrition Policies in all School District 27 schools.
2. In partnership with Public Health seek ways HEAL can be facilitated in other schools.



*Satisfied Fruit
and Veggie Walk
winner. Lac la
Hache
Elementary*



*108 Mile
Elementary
Students sampling
Grain Products at
Nutrition Fair*

Conclusions

The mission of HEAL was to contribute to the health and well being of students by developing healthful eating habits through education and to do so in an effective manner. Making healthy eating the easy choice was achieved through access to nutritious food sold at schools, through changes in hot lunch menus or higher quality ingredients used, healthy eating guidelines for food brought to school, reduction in the number of nutrient-poor foods sold, nutritious food sold at an attractive price, showing that healthy food is delicious and fun, and consistent nutrition messages between the curriculum and school activities.

The school environment has the second greatest influence on a student's food intake after the student's parents' influence. The early school years is an important setting for helping students establish the basis for lifelong healthy eating habits that will contribute to overall good health. School Food and Nutrition Policies created in this project outlined the standards that a school set for foods sold and served in the school. School Food and Nutrition Policies indicated to the community that good nutrition is promoted in theory and practice.

Many challenges were encountered: insufficient time on the part of students, staff and parent volunteers, competing priorities, lack of ongoing funding. Outside assistance from the Community Nutritionist was a key factor for success but resources for the Community Nutritionist to provide the same level of assistance to all schools in School District 27 is limited.

Each school, according to the school's need, used the funding of \$3,125 differently. Schools were able to use the monies very effectively. A challenge in the future will be the 18% reduction in Community Link funding that previously provided for School Meal Programs and Healthy Schools Programs, next year and the projected reductions in following years to sustain or expand existing programs or embark on new programs. Access to funding will be a crucial issue in the future.

This project showed that communities, schools and parents can work together to help students develop attitudes and skills for healthy eating. By creating supportive environments and encouraging children and youth to make informed choices, Cariboo Chilcotin School District #27 can help students establish patterns for healthy eating that will carry into adulthood.

References

¹ Joint Steering Committee Responsible for Development of a National Nutrition Plan for Canada (1996). Nutrition for Health: An Agenda for Action. Ottawa, Ontario

² Food Habits of Canadians, Beef Information Centre. 2001

³ Nourishing Our Children's Future. Canadian Dietetic Association. Ottawa, Ontario, 1994

⁴ Toxic playground: Understanding and Preventing Childhood Weight Disturbance, Prepared for the Public Health Nutrition Program by Jacqui Gingras, MSc RD for the South Fraser Health Region, October 2001

⁵ School Food and Nutrition Survey for Interior Health, Rose Soneff RDN, Interior Health, Williams Lake, BC, July 2002

⁶ Healthy Schools Resource Guide, Ministry of Children and Families, Province of British Columbia, Revised November 1999.

www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/publication/ecd/healthy_schools_website.pdf

⁷ Have Fun being Active and Eating Healthy, Adapted from Nutrition Guidelines for Schools (1993), Northern Diabetes Prevention Coalition, and Saskatchewan.

Appendix 1

Role of the School Food and Nutrition Advisory Committee

Summary

The goal of the project is to create a school food and nutrition policy (policies) that promote healthy eating as the easy choice and school practices that are consistent with the nutrition education provided to students. Each school will form an advisory committee for the School Food and Nutrition Project that will be responsible for the development and execution of the school food and nutrition policy through school initiatives.

Members

The Advisory Committee should be comprised of at least one teacher, parent, student, and principal. Other members such as trustees, volunteers, cafeteria staff, if available, are welcome to participate. The Community Nutritionist will act as a facilitator and liaison with Public Health and the Project Coordinator.

Responsibilities

- brainstorm potential activities
- create the work plan, maintain progress notes
- assign duties
- manage resources
- create the evaluation plan and conduct the evaluation within the school
- participate in the evaluation of the region wide project with the Steering Committee
- record minutes of advisory committee meetings

Meetings will be held monthly to discuss progress, review evaluation criteria, challenges, changes to the work plan, resources needed, objectives for the following month and next meeting date.

Appendix 2

Survey for HEAL Students				
1. What has been done at the school that has made you choose healthier food to eat?	108 Mile N= 25	Lac La Hache N= 65	Nesika N=20	Wildwood N=29
Promotional event	7	19	7	15
More and new healthier food choices available	13	50	10	16
Deleted nutrient poor foods	7		2	
Staying fit	2		1	5
Classroom activities	7	14	8	12
Microwave or Fridge available to use				2
No change to what I eat		3		5
2. What things did you do to make healthier snacks or lunches because of something you did at school?				
Added fruit and/or vegetable to lunches or snacks	16	13	8	11
Try and put something from each food group in lunch	2	18	1	1
Brought a sandwich or lunch	2	2	1	5
Thought about the 4 food groups	4	12	2	2
Be active	4		2	
Replaced or reduced less nutritious food	11	7	12	7
Tried new foods	3	3	2	1
Chose healthy food	5	11	7	9
Used Microwave or fridge		1	1	1
No change, some already ate healthy food		11		4
3. Have you asked whoever buys food for home, to buy more food from the 4 food groups since November? If you said "yes", what food(s)				
More Vegetables or fruit	1	25	6	5
Talks about 4 food groups	1	1	1	
Knows all the food groups	1	6	1	
More Milk and dairy		16	3	2
More Grains		19	3	2
Microwavable				
More meat or protein		12	3	2
Yes, with no comment		11		8
No		2	9	6

Survey for HEAL Parents				
1. What has been done at the school that has made your child choose healthier food to eat?				
	108 Mile N= 13	Lac La Hache N= 25	Nesika N=4	Wildwood N=13
Promotional event	1	15	2	
More and new healthier food choices	9	13	2	9
Deleted nutrient poor foods	4			
Staying fit				2
Classroom activities	4	11	1	3
Awareness in school	1	2		3
Ability to heat foods				2
Child is already eating healthy			1	1
Unknown				1
2. What things did your child learn to make healthier snacks or lunches because of something he or she learned at school?				
Eat vegetables or fruits for lunches and/or snacks daily	3	7	3	6
Get more energy, brain power, health from eating healthier food	3	2	1	8
Taking food from or understanding the 4 food groups are needed	6	19	1	2
Dental health and right snacks	2			
Healthy food tastes good	1			
Drink more milk or water		3		2
Need for bringing a lunch or eating breakfast		1		1
Making healthy choices		3		2
Less nutrient poor foods		6	1	1
Moderation		4	1	
None, already eating well		3		1
3. What percentage more would you estimate your child has eaten from the 4 food groups since November?				
No change (already eating well)	4	7	2	3
5%			1	
10%	3	7		4
15%	3	5		1
20%				1
More than 20%		4	1	3
4. Do you feel that your child eats fewer foods high in sugar, fat or salt since November?				
Yes	9	14	3	10
No	4	10	1	3

Appendix 3

Toolkit

Obtain *Healthy Schools Resource Guide*

Healthy Schools Resource Guide, Ministry of Children and Families, Province of British Columbia, Revised November 1999.

www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/publication/ecd/healthy_schools_website.pdf

View Sample School Food Policies

Nutrition Guidelines for Schools 1993, Have Fun Being active and Eating Healthy

www.ssta.sk.ca/research/students/93-05.htm

Food and Nutrition Policy for New Brunswick Schools. Department of Education, Fredericton, New Brunswick, 1991

www.district14.nbed.nb.ca

Policies to Encourage Healthy Eating. Ontario Heart Health and Nutrition Resources Centres, June 2002 p.92-108

contact heart@opha.on.ca

Communicating for Change: A Recipe for School Food Policy, Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia

www.cancercare.ns.ca/media/documents/CommunicatingForChangeReport.pdf

Contacts for Nutrition Education Workshops

BC Dairy Foundation offers the following:

- Food Explorers K-1
- Food For Us Gr. 2-3
- Food Sense Gr. 4-6
- Passport to Healthy Living Gr. 4-7
- Space Station 5532 Grade 6-8

The workshops are 1 to 1.5 hours in length and are free. A minimum number of 6 people is required for each workshop. There is a \$20-\$45 cost for purchasing workshop material. For more information, call 1-866-582-6455

Heart Smart Kids, BC and Yukon Heart And Stroke Foundation

- Heart Smart Kids Gr. K-3
- Heart Smart Kids Gr. 4-6
- An Aboriginal version is also available and can be integrated

For more information, call 1-888-473-4636

Kids Shop Smart Tour

- For Gr. K-3

Communities with a Save-On-Foods or Overwaitea store have this program. Call the store for the Dietitian/Nutritionist conducting the 1-hour tours. A kit is provided to the school for preliminary information to cover before the tour.

Assess Food Intake of Students

Spot Lunch Checklist (see following page) to assess one lunch. Should do over a period of a few days.

Food Track Check on Balance, for a review of food eaten over a period of one day. Available for \$0.10/copy through the BC Dairy Foundation

Food Guide Slide (BNU-299). On one side a slide for each food group serving eaten, on the other side, a slide for physical activity. Order from Dairy Farmers of Canada, 1-800-361-4632 (local 243)

My 3-day Food Record, available in BC Dairy Foundation's Food Sense workshop

School Lunch Spot Check

Does your school lunch contain servings	YES	NO
1. Fruit or vegetable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Grain group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Meat or meat alternate p	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Milk or milk product	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. No "Other" food (very sweet, salty or high fat)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How many YES's did you
 5 = excellent 4 = good lunch 3 or less = work on healthier

YOU NEED GOOD LUNCHES TO KEEP ALERT AND LEARN



School Lunch Spot Check


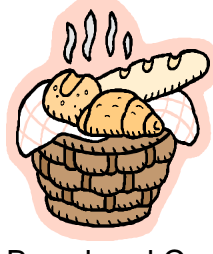

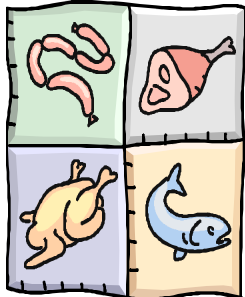
Does your school lunch contain servings	YES	NO
1. Fruit or vegetable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Grain group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Meat or meat alternate p	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Milk or milk product	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. No "Other" food (very sweet, salty or high fat)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How many YES's did you get?
 5 = excellent 4 = good lunch 3 or less = work on healthier

YOU NEED GOOD LUNCHES TO KEEP ALERT AND LEARN



Sample Place Mat to determine the food groups in a student's lunch

 <p>Milk and Milk Products</p>	 <p>Bread and Cereals</p>
 <p>Fruit and Vegetables</p>	 <p>Meat and Meat Alternates</p>

<p>Strategies and Activities for Healthy Eating</p>	
<p>Develop three skills in selecting and preparing healthy snacks and lunches</p>	
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Activities</p>
<p>Food Safe Instruction (A program on safe food handling and preparation practices)</p>	<p>Food Safe practices in preparation and sale of food. Bring in Clean Hands Dirty Hands programs provided by Save On Foods</p>
<p>Increased awareness of the 4 food groups and healthy choices.</p>	<p>Teachers utilizing tools from the Nutrition workshops provided by BC Dairy Foundation Heart Smart Kids Kids Shop Smart Tours</p> <p>Senior students received nutrition education taught younger grades by forming teaching teams of three students each.</p> <p>“Potato Post” a nutrition newsletter provided by the Community Nutritionist sent to parents.</p> <p>Community Nutritionist, teacher or Home Economist shows students how to read labels especially for food high in fat and sugar.</p>

Strategies and Activities for Healthy Eating	
Increased awareness for dental friendly snacks by Hygienist	Regional Dental Hygienist, Local Health Unit
Encourage students to eat more nutritious foods and fewer “empty calorie foods” and develop Preferences for healthier foods that will carry over to the home	
Increased access to nutritious food.	<p>Canteens contain more nutritious choices. Promote new canteen items by using new items as prizes or providing discount coupons for trying new items.</p> <p>Healthy food choices for school meal and snack programs</p> <p>Better quality ingredients or add-ons with existing lunches, such as veggies sticks salsa or cheese.</p> <p>Complimentary vegetables or fruit for anyone.</p> <p>Bannock, muffin or pancake breakfasts using whole grains and fruit toppings.</p> <p>“Friendship fruit salad” made with fruits kids brought.</p> <p>Free access to bottled water.</p>
Adopt foods to eat most often, less often and least often.	<p>See Nutrition Guidelines for Schools, 1993 for copy Insert in bulletins and as a guide for school events, field trips, and healthy food concessions at school events.</p> <p>Reduce the number of meals purchased from outside the school.</p>
Student events used healthy food as a vehicle for fun, education or introduction to new foods	<p>Many examples from the BC Dairy Foundation Workshops. Nutrition Fair, Nutrition Trivia and Fruit Spin/contest, Fruit and Veggie Walk, Science Fair. Students plan format, questions, and implement activity.</p>
Price incentives.	<p>Lower prices for healthier beverages. For example, price lemonade and iced tea at \$1.50/unit versus \$0.75/unit for water, milk, and 100% juice.</p> <p>Games and events are low cost to participate. Fruit and veggie Walk subsidized so students pay 10 to 25 cents.</p>

Strategies and Activities for Healthy Eating	
Bans or time limitations	<p>Eliminate sale of all foods that contain less than 50% real fruit juices, or beverages that contain caffeine (except chocolate milk) or guarana (high caffeine containing bean), more than 30% calories from fat, more than 35% by weight of sugar (except for fresh, dried, or canned fruit and vegetables,</p> <p>Limit bake sale hours near the end of the lunch hour.</p> <p>Vending machine hours at specific time(s) of the day.</p>
Portion Limits (Suggested from California Center for Public Health Advocacy)	<p>Snacks and Sweets (1.25 oz) chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, jerky</p> <p>Cookies/cereal bars (2 oz)</p> <p>Bakery items (e.g. pastries and muffins 3 oz)</p> <p>Frozen desserts, ice cream (3 oz)</p> <p>Yoghurt (8 oz)</p> <p>Beverages (no limit on water, 12 oz)</p>
Creating an environment to allow kids to bring nutritious food brought from home.	<p>A Refrigerator for students to keep perishable lunches safe, and cold.</p> <p>Microwave ovens for food brought from home.</p> <p>Free Water bottles to use for water. Insulated lunch bags, containers as prizes.</p>
Not using nutrient poor foods as a reward.	Use alternatives such as stickers, bottled water, booklets, and more free time on computer, reading time.
Fund raising without using nutrient poor foods.	<p>BC Community Nutrition Council School Fund Raising Toolkit.</p> <p>Apply to Breakfast for Learning to partially fund meal or snack programs.</p>

Strategies and Activities for Healthy Eating	
<p>Be role models for students.</p>	<p>Younger children were purchasing healthier choices when they saw older students making healthy choices.</p> <p>Students seeing teachers having healthy eating lunches, snacks or participating in healthy eating initiatives.</p> <p>“Catch them Being Good”, “Got Fruit (or Milk)” are awarded to kids for having healthy choices, possibly coupon for a healthy canteen item.</p>
<p>Communication to Parents and Caregivers</p>	<p>Newsletter at beginning of the school year explaining school food policy.</p> <p>Regular inserts in newsletter of upcoming healthy eating events, i.e. Fruit and veggie Walk. Insert recipe for popular items, i.e. Smoothies, Soft Tortillas, and Soups.</p> <p>Guidelines given to parents for healthy food on field trips and school events if possible.</p> <p>Recipe book compiled by school of recipes used at school events with healthy living tips.</p>