




2020 Report: Rural and Remote APPLE Schools

***A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO EMBEDDING
WELLNESS IN SCHOOL CULTURE***



***"ONCE YOU HAVE
APPLE SCHOOLS IN
PLACE, IT JUST
[BECOMES] THE
CULTURE OF THE
SCHOOL"***

Thank you to the staff, students, and community members of the APPLE schools that shared their time and experience for the report.



The authors of this report respectfully acknowledge the histories, languages, and cultures of First Nations, Metis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada where the research was conducted, and whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant communities.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2007, APPLE Schools has been growing. Twelve schools were added to the organization in 2016 in rural and remote areas of central and northern Alberta; and in 2018, five additional schools were added - one school in Alberta, two schools in Manitoba and two schools in the Northwest Territories. To support this expansion, a process evaluation was conducted to understand what implementing APPLE Schools, which uses a Comprehensive School Health (CSH) approach, looks like in these unique contexts, as many of these schools are located in extremely remote areas. Results from this evaluation are presented in this report and are based on data from five sources (see Appendix 1),

Key findings from the 17 schools are summarized in three sections:

1

APPLE schools look different

In some of the schools, changes were made to the way physical spaces were used and configured (to promote mental wellbeing, physical activity, or nutrition). These changes ensured space was accessible and available to facilitate activities that supported creating a healthy school environment. Some of the schools also made changes to foods served and sold (e.g., more healthy options available), changes to class schedules and breaks (e.g., movement and wellness breaks), and changes to rewards and celebrations.

2

APPLE schools build champions

APPLE school health facilitators (SHFs) are champions and findings from this evaluation indicated they are essential for embedding CSH within the school. It was found SHFs with more experience had more confidence to implement a CSH approach. Further, when a SHF was from the school community, they benefited from previously established relationships and knowledge of community context, which accelerated CSH efforts. Further, as CSH was embedded within the school, other staff and stakeholders, not just the SHF, became health champions. It was also found that students were champions and change agents. Students led activities in their school and shared messages related to APPLE Schools at home.

3

APPLE schools and sustainability

All schools worked to embed CSH within their school. Sustainable change was more likely to occur if schools had effective and long-term partnerships in place and if their administrators continued to be supportive of CSH initiatives. APPLE Schools also honoured the unique cultures within each school community. Key to expansion success in rural and remote areas was that APPLE Schools is not a 'one size fits all approach.' Each school had the autonomy to choose an approach that worked for them given their individual context which often considered: remote and rural locations, high staff turn-over, high cost of food and goods, specific school populations (including diversity in socio-economic status), impacts of the surrounding community (e.g., unemployment, job loss/recession), and the lasting effects of colonization.

INTRODUCTION

Since 2007, APPLE Schools has been growing to include school communities in rural and remote areas of central and northern Alberta, Manitoba, British Columbia, and the Northwest Territories. APPLE Schools now reaches 74 school communities. To understand the impact of APPLE Schools in rural and remote communities, it is necessary to evaluate what implementing a comprehensive school health (CSH) approach looks like in these unique contexts. As such, a process evaluation was conducted.

This report provides a summary of the findings from the 17 schools listed below. Data was generated from five sources (see Appendix 1), including walking interviews at three schools where a variety of staff and administrators were interviewed. APPLE Schools is unique in that each school implements it in their own way, for what works best for that school. Specific changes that some schools experienced are summarized and organized in 3 sections:

- 1. APPLE schools look different**
- 2. APPLE schools build champions**
- 3. APPLE schools and sustainability**

THE KEY TO THE SUCCESS IS THAT APPLE SCHOOLS IS NOT
A 'ONE SIZE FITS ALL APPROACH'



An outdoor classroom with a Truth and Reconciliation garden in the middle that supports an APPLE schools' healing journey

Data generated with the following schools:

Alberta:

- Amisk Community School, Beaver Lake Cree Nation
- Anzac Community School, Anzac
- Athabasca Delta Community School, Fort Chipewyan
- Aurora Middle School, Lac La Biche
- Bill Woodward School, Anzac
- Chief Napeweaw Comprehensive School, Frog Lake First Nation
- Cold Lake Middle School, Cold Lake
- Conklin Community School, Conklin
- Father R. Perin School, Janvier
- Fort McKay School, Fort McKay
- Glendon School, Glendon
- North Star Elementary School, Cold Lake
- Vera M Welsh Elementary School, Lac La Biche

Manitoba:

- École Swan River South School, Swan River
- Minitonas School, Minitonas

Northwest Territories:

- Chief Jimmy Bruneau School, Edzo
- Chief T'selehye School, Fort Good Hope



SECTION 1: APPLE SCHOOLS LOOK DIFFERENT

1. Physical Spaces

Making Room for Wellness

Some schools reported changes to the way physical spaces were both used and configured to facilitate health promotion activities. These changes demonstrated the importance of health and wellness, identified through the APPLE Schools approach, as a priority. Examples of changes to the way spaces in the schools were both used and configured included:

- Extra physical activity space (previously drama storage/practice space)
- A Zen Den space (hammock, bean bag chairs, yoga)
- Reconfiguration of space for a school eating area (eating together/socialization vs. sitting at desks)
- Re-purposed hallways with decals to promote fun, active movement ('Don't Walk in the Hallway')
- Re-envisioned outdoor courtyard
- Increased use of an outdoor classroom, especially for active play
- Flexible seating in classrooms to encourage movement (standing/walking desks)
- Indoor tower gardens in classrooms and libraries



Zen Den where students do yoga, practice mindfulness, and relax



Indoor tower garden

During the walking interviews, SHFs indicated many of the changes to the physical spaces did not cost money. Rather, changes were as simple as shifting things around to create new opportunities (e.g., moving stored furniture to create an empty room for extra physical activity space). SHFs and other staff highlighted the importance of having dedicated physical space in the school to promote well-being. SHFs and staff remarked that having these spaces made staff and students more aware of CSH, and provided a physical reminder to keep CSH at the forefront of their minds.

Schools that became an APPLE school in 2016 reported, on average, a 12% increase in spaces within the physical environment that supported the health and safety of all members of the school community.¹



Extra physical activity space

2. School Environment

Changes to Foods Served and Sold

Great strides have been made to the quality of food and drinks being sold and served in some of the schools. This is remarkable given the high cost of foods in the communities. Several staff indicated they were initially skeptical offering fruit and vegetables to students as they felt they wouldn't consume them. Skepticism was short lived and fruit baskets proved very popular.

One administrator commented *"I see with the students they are making more conscious efforts of actually eating healthier and making better choices. At the end of the day our kids eat fruit, and they don't get that at home."* The administrator was so pleased with the popularity of the fruit that they prioritized finding additional funding to ensure sustainability for this.

To support water consumption, many schools applied for grants for water bottle filling stations, which have been extremely popular. One administrator shared *"This was a school where pop, like Coke and Pepsi, everyone had them, every kid...the best thing we got was an ice maker... kids drink gallons and gallons of water now. It's been a big success, almost nobody brings pop. I think we made a positive change. You do see the difference in behaviour."*

***"Juice box consumption has drastically changed, I've seen an increase in my classroom of children who bring in their own water bottle."* - Teacher**

Regarding food sold and served, some schools reported there are now more healthy options available. For example, in one school canteen a SHF reported changes were made to decrease availability of less nutritious options: *"Things super high in sodium and super high in sugar we did get rid of."* Importantly, these changes were often being implemented in the absence of policy changes. Only a few of the schools reported a healthy eating policy, guideline, or directive at the school authority level for school-run canteens (25%) and for externally-contracted cafeterias (13%).¹

Rewards and Celebrations

Using less nutritious foods as a reward for students was almost non-existent, even in the absence of a school authority-level policy. Only 25% of the schools reported a school-authority level policy, guideline or directive specifically discouraging the use of food based rewards.¹ One staff member made a change from giving candy to paper toys as a reward: *"Every time they do something new in speech, they get one toy. The reason I give them paper toys is I don't want them going back to their teacher high on sugar and they can use their imagination. Now kids want to come to speech."*

***"I honestly can't keep enough fruit in here, as soon as I put it out it's gone. I put it out at recess time and recess isn't even over and my bin is empty."* - School Secretary**



Water fountain/water bottle filling station which promotes drinking water in an environmentally friendly way

Celebrations happen, but there has been a shift in focus that values healthy eating: *"We don't get a lot of cupcakes for birthdays. The kids are acknowledged for their birthdays, just in a different way."* Instead students may receive a book or pencil. This is a directive also supported at the school authority level. Seventy-five percent of schools reported their school authority has a healthy eating policy, guideline, or directive on foods served at celebrations.¹

The shift to healthy eating was found to extend beyond the students to the parents. As one staff member stated, there's *"A culture shift even amongst the parents."* One example related to Halloween: *"In previous times, the tables in the classrooms have been filled with sweets and all of the treats. This year, in most classes, there was very few and it was healthy treats like vegetables and fruits. A real shift in what the parents were bringing."*

Class Schedules and Breaks

Prioritization of physical activity also shifted in some schools. Schools that became an APPLE school in 2016 reported, on average, a 12% increase of the integration of wellness beyond health and physical education classes after three years.²

In one school, a teacher commented that *"The philosophy of indoor recess has changed...[we offer] at least one option for physical activity. We used to have a movie and we got rid of that. The kids love it, recess time, if it's an indoor cold recess, we get at least 50 kids."* At another school, a staff member noted that *"After they [students] are done eating...quite often I'll see the grade 1s have a movement break before they start into their lesson, and that's been a really big shift and it happens more often".* One staff added *"We've done a shift too at our assemblies, it used to be more of a 'sit and get' and now movement is involved."*



Paper toy rewards to give to students in place of choose-least-often treats



Students use the APPLE Schools Daily Physical Activity bins to regularly engage in moderate physical activity

Staff recognized the importance of APPLE Schools and the positive impact it had on student behaviour: *"If the whole class is getting distracted a teacher will now do a DPA with them because they recognize that movement will help their concentration. Whereas before APPLE, they would have tried a punishment method, for example like withholding recess."* Some schools now offer physical education classes five days a week. Also, starting in September 2018, one school added dedicated wellness time during the school day to promote mental health (e.g., breathing, resiliency, growth mindset lessons).

After three years as an APPLE school, an 8% increase was found with schools' abilities to foster a safe and supportive environment that promotes and protects health (e.g., classrooms, cafeterias, and social spaces are inviting and foster positive mental health).²

¹ Data from Essential Conditions Survey

² Data from JCSH Healthy School Planner

SECTION 2: APPLE SCHOOLS BUILD CHAMPIONS



1. School Health Facilitators

Experience Builds Confidence

School health facilitators (SHFs) are invaluable champions for APPLE schools and essential to embedding CSH. Based on data from the walking interviews, SHFs, teachers, and administrators felt that having a consistent SHF from the school community would more likely to lead to a shift in school philosophy in terms of embedding wellness in the school. An administrator shared: *"I think the person you choose is very important. Who we had at our school [as a SHF], is a long standing member of the community, already someone who was a health champion, she was someone who was known in the community as being very healthy and connected."*

"You have to have someone who is known and passionate and who has that drive to go the extra mile... those key people connected to community...they also drive others by how passionate they are."
- Administrator

The same perspective was shared by a SHF: *"I was a teacher in the school already, I had a great rapport with the kids. So I wasn't some outside person coming in trying to put all this stuff in. If you can get someone that's in there [in the community] you are going to have way more success. That's why if I retire, it's now in place and it'll carry on. If it's somebody in the school, there's going to be more buy-in from everyone else."* It was found that SHFs assigned to multiple schools faced greater challenges in building relationships. Even if the SHF was established in one school setting, this confidence did not necessary translate to other schools, where relationship building must start anew. Importantly, if a SHF leaves after only the first year, the relationships and progress often leave with them and another SHF may have to create these relationships again.

SHFs reported an increase in their knowledge and confidence around implementing a CSH approach after both their first year (2018-2019) and after three years of implementation ((SHFs from 2016-2019); see Appendix 2).

From 2016-2019, SHFs that remained in the same school for the three-year period reported, on average, an increased level of confidence in their ability to facilitate the implementation of physical activity, healthy eating, and mental wellbeing under a number of difficult conditions (see Appendix 1 for a detailed list of the conditions). Of the 39 conditions, an increase in confidence was seen in 33 of the conditions, 2 remained the same, and 4 decreased. The scores that decreased were almost all related to student engagement (e.g., if the SHF felt that students disagreed with the importance of physical activity, the SHFs reported lower confidence to change this). This suggests that SHFs may have deepened their appreciation of the importance of student engagement for CSH implementation. In other words, if students were not engaged, it would be harder to implement CSH. This insight is helpful for recognizing the importance of students as drivers of change in their communities.



A bulletin board in the hallway of a school created by a SHF depicting different types of fruits and vegetables to promote the benefits of eating a colourful variety

In regards to SHFs' attitudes towards promoting CSH, there was a contrast between first year SHFs (2018-2019) and SHFs with three years of experience (2016-2019) (See Appendix 3). The SHF attitudes regarding CSH promotion for first year SHFs decreased in all eight areas compared with third year SHFs who saw an increase in four out of the eight areas.¹ The data suggests that SHF attitudes may shift once they encounter the unexpected or unanticipated challenges of implementing a CSH approach in a school, especially in a rural/remote context. It is therefore important to recognize that more than one year is needed for SHFs to support the implementation of a CSH approach. Ongoing training and professional development can help to support SHFs, and is an important component of the APPLE Schools model.

2. Other School Staff and Community

Embracing APPLE Schools

The APPLE Schools philosophy extended to other staff in the school beyond the SHF; other staff became health champions. As one teacher noted: *"The APPLE program has created a lot more opportunities for us [teachers] to investigate this kind of thing...in the past I didn't think about it...it started to become embedded".* CSH even became part of some teachers' professional growth plans as indicated by a SHF: *"My professional growth plan for me this year as a teacher is to learn more about DPA [daily physical activity] and incorporate it into my classroom. That is huge, so people are taking it on that way."*

SHFs mentioned that the help of other staff was extremely important: *"When we started [as an] APPLE school, the whole school's philosophy continued to shift so it's nice for me to be able to step away from that facilitator role and see there's still people driving positive, healthy change and taking that message of 'we're an APPLE school' and still pushing it forward."*

Also encouraging is that 88% of the schools reported that they either 'somewhat' or 'fully' (3 and 4 respectively, on a 4-point scale) perceived that administrators/principals in their school understand, value, and prioritize wellness.² Having supportive administrators is important for long-term sustainability.

In some of the schools, the learnings from the APPLE model extended beyond K-12 students to include others in the school community such as preschoolers. Having a passionate SHF in the school that had previous relationships with the staff *"Really shifted the way things were done in [the preschool] to include a lot of things like that [loose parts and messy play]."* Further, it was indicated that staff at other schools within the division were reaching out to SHFs: *"We get more and more staff from the other schools that want to come and see what we are doing here as an APPLE school, why is it working [and] why is the culture shifting."*



A colourful school display promotes a positive social environment for students and staff

¹ Data from SHF Self Efficacy Survey

² Data from Essential Conditions Survey

Importance of Community

When an administrator was asked what helped with the success of being an APPLE school, they replied with the importance of listening to the whole school community: *"I think we really need to value and check in with our stakeholders [teachers, staff, parents, students, and community members] and making sure that it's not a select group of people's voice that is being heard but it's everyone's voice being heard. I think it's easy to make changes when you have a set of like-minded people but then sometimes those changes are harder to sustain when you haven't had a whole community approach to it. You can light a fire and a passion for a whole community if you listen to your whole community."*

Notably, community involvement was found to be very important for Indigenous school communities. The relationship building process takes time and must consider community context including the lasting effects of colonization. It was suggested that care is needed when hiring and training facilitators and when engaging with the community.

3. Students

Leadership

SHFs and staff from some of the schools noted that APPLE Schools promoted leadership and engagement of students. Students were involved in a variety of activities, including healthy food preparation: *"Student involvement is really good... they will do smoothies and help to deliver to all the classrooms. Students get salad from [the] salad towers and they do their own veggie wraps in the classroom."* Staff reported that most students were either 'somewhat' or 'fully' (3 and 4 respectively, on a 4-point scale) actively engaged as wellness leaders within their school and that students, on average, 'somewhat' (3 on a 4-point scale) had a voice in wellness related decision making.¹

However after three years, student representation on school healthy planning committees decreased by 29%.² While this could be viewed negatively, schools consistently scored higher each year in their provision of leadership opportunities to students in the organization of school activities.² Therefore, students may be more involved with CSH on a day-to-day basis rather than as part of a formal planning committee.



A student leadership team runs the Healthy Breakfast Program which ensures every student receives a healthy breakfast



Students now run the recess bins whereas at the start of 2016, the SHF coordinated them.

"The kids love the recess bins, they go out and we have student helpers that do that. They volunteer, they unlock [the storage bin], they wheel the bins out...the kids run it themselves."
-School Health Facilitator

¹Data from Essential Conditions Survey

²Data from JCSH Healthy School Planner

Change Agents

School staff reported that, on average, students were 'somewhat' (3 on a 4-point scale) drivers of change in their school (meaning they influenced others around them including peers and family members).¹ This was echoed during the walking interviews. Both administrators and staff relayed that students were sharing messaging related to APPLE Schools at home. A SHF reflected that: *"Now the kids are teaching parents...from the taste testing to the walking challenge to the number of steps we should be getting today, all that information kids share. They are just at that age, it's a good time to make changes and they are taking that information home."*

At one school, the students took pride in their school garden. The SHF said *"Kids understand more about gardening and growing their own food...more kids have started to take these ideas home...I hear a lot more conversation 'we have a garden at home' than I did in the past."*

In addition, as kids leave their elementary school and enter junior high, *"The kids are bringing those ideas, like hey we did taste testing and we did this and we did that, can we do that here? The kids would bring that with them."*



School Garden in the Winter



A student sits next to the school's vertical indoor garden, which students are responsible for maintaining and harvesting

***"When we are sharing something and teaching something at school I think it becomes part of the conversation at the dinner table at home."
-School Health Facilitator***

¹ Data from Essential Conditions Survey



SECTION 3: APPLE SCHOOLS AND SUSTAINABILITY

1. APPLE Schools Shifts School Philosophy

Wellness is Embedded

Administrators and staff from some of the schools strongly believed that the philosophy of their school shifted to one that embodied a CSH approach. According to one administrator: *"If you take a look at the school's journey here [since becoming an APPLE school], 90-95% of what has been done over the past few years is very sustainable because it's now part of culture, it's not an add-on. The culture has definitely changed and what is now really engrained in our building won't go away because it's not requiring any additional man-power because it's more of a mind-set."* They felt that because the APPLE approach could be tailored to their specific school and unique circumstances, wellness became embedded in ways that worked best for their specific school.

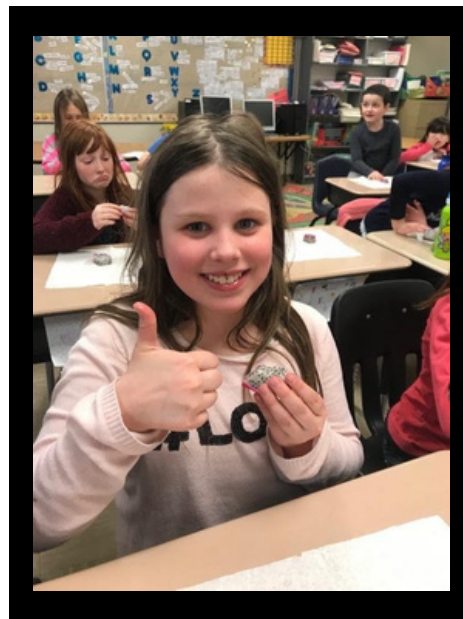
**"If it wasn't for APPLE Schools, I wouldn't have put [wellness] on the agenda and we probably would not have talked about it."
-Administrator**

Another administrator reflected, *"Without APPLE Schools would we have gotten this far? I'm not sure we would have been talking about it all of the time, it's part of our staff meetings... so it's always in the back of our mind as we continue to plan around the school."* Wellness is not viewed as an 'add-on' but rather part of the everyday discussions and planning.

Partnerships

Forging partnerships with community organizations to support the delivery of APPLE Schools was key for the schools, particularly in the area of healthy eating. After three years, schools that became an APPLE school in 2016 reported a 12% increase of effective partnerships that support and contribute to a healthy school community.¹ Data from the walking interviews found that, at the end of the third year when APPLE Schools no longer provided funding for the SHF position (and the role transitioned to a volunteer position), if not enough partnerships were in place, there were challenges to sustain CSH. Examples of partnerships that were mentioned by staff that are important for long term sustainability included an involved parent council and businesses or organizations to partner with (for example grocery stores or food banks).

Encouragingly, school staff indicated it was easier to get grants and partnerships as an APPLE school: *"When you are identified as an APPLE school, it gives you a certain amount of credibility, it's easier to get funding for nutrition, for physical activity, because they know you are not going to take it and go have a pizza party."* One SHF described their partnership with a local organic ranch that provides vegetables for taste testing: *"This partnership happened because we were an APPLE school. She [the owner of the ranch] appreciated the philosophy and what we were trying to do, hence her sitting on our core committee and bringing that partnership to us. So had we not be an APPLE school and been exposed to the concept of taste testing, that partnership probably wouldn't exist truthfully. It's a win/win for them too, they run out of our local farmers market on a weekly basis and a lot of times the kids are coming with their parents to the farmers market and they are like 'oh mom and dad, we tried this, this is really good'."*



A student taste tests dragon fruit - the fruit was donated by Swan River Co-op, which the school has a partnership with to make taste testing a sustainable initiative in the school



An APPLE school that partners with a local food bank received a donation of fresh food from them

All of the schools have some type of free food program (e.g., breakfast, lunch, and or/snack program) funded through grants (most often non-for-profit) and/or partnerships. However, SHFs and administrators noted challenges securing these supports beyond year-to-year funding. In order to offer healthy food options, staff felt a significant amount of time was needed to vet vendors, work with a dietitian, or to find grants that fit within their school authority healthy eating policies (75% of schools reported their school authority had a healthy eating policy, guideline, or directive regarding foods in breakfast or lunch programs).² This was seen as time consuming. As one SHF noted, it takes time to “*Look at grants and opportunities through an APPLE School lens [and] how can it help with CSH.*”

SHFs and administrators also noted that due to the boom/bust nature of the oil industry, during a recession, it was harder to forge partnerships with local businesses. They also emphasized that this was a critical time in which partnerships were needed – students were often showing up to school hungry as the impact of the recession was also felt at home.

“Being an APPLE school...allowed for conversations around what’s going to be on the menu... [we are now] more critical of the quality of the food in the school.”
-School Health Facilitator

Some schools worked creatively with their partners to provide healthy options. Starting in 2016, one school formed a partnership with the local high school to help with their hot lunch program. High school students received credit to prepare food for the elementary students. Staff at the school, as part of their supervision duties, then helped to serve the food. The SHF noted that: “*This partnership piece is very creative because had this been put out to private tender, we probably couldn’t afford as much, and the quality of the food would be lower because we would be paying higher rates...[We] worked with an Alberta Health Services dietitian to plan menus. It’s getting us to have those conversations, we could get better quality for the same amount of money.*”

¹ Data from School Action Plans

² Data from Essential Conditions Survey

2. APPLE Schools Honours Culture

Honouring Indigenous Cultures

The APPLE School model is sustainable as it works in concert with the unique cultures in the school community. For example, one school incorporated the principles of the Circle of Courage (the Circle of Courage is a strengths based model of youth development based on the principles of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity). When the school became an APPLE school in 2016, they found that the components of CSH complemented the Circle of Courage; staff recognized trauma is manifested in behaviour so they strongly prioritized physical activity based on student preference.

Some schools also discussed their path to reconciliation. One school has an outdoor classroom with a Truth and Reconciliation garden in the middle that incorporates elements of the medicine wheel. The SHF noted *"It's used quite a bit, even in the winter time people are coming out and doing outdoor lessons. The amount of active outdoor engagement [with the garden and outdoor classroom] has changed since we've been an APPLE school...more active and creative play."* Some schools also recognized the importance of community and Elder involvement.

An administrator shared their goal to: *"Host an Elders circle, invite Elders in for an Elders lunch...to get it out into the community, invite the community to cook a community meal in the school. Elders and community members could come in and prepare a meal...it brings the community closer to the school, it brings the school closer to itself and everyone appreciates it more."*



An outdoor classroom with a Truth and Reconciliation garden in the middle that supports one APPLE school's healing journey

For one SHF, when asked what she was most proud of since becoming an APPLE school, she said the family game nights (consisting of active games in the gym or board games) that are hosted at the school around six times a year. She indicated she was most proud that it allowed for a positive connection to the school: *"That parent engagement piece that we were kind of missing before [becoming an APPLE school], it takes the having to come to school with that like negative feeling, you know with post-residential school stuff. It gives the school a different vibe where there's no expectation on the parent to be nothing but an engaged parent playing with their kids. [We wanted to] engage our parents and take away that stigma of school of being a bad place. I know we've had a lot of different parents come to those family games nights that wouldn't maybe necessarily go to other places in the community, so I think that's probably a big win."*

APPLE Schools is not a 'one size fits all approach.' Each school has the autonomy to choose how to implement the APPLE Schools approach. This was found to be extremely beneficial. Schools have unique factors that can impact the implementation of APPLE Schools including, among others: school populations (including diversity in socio-economic status), impacts of the surrounding community (e.g., unemployment, job loss/recession), and the lasting effects of colonization.

ADDITIONAL KEY LEARNINGS

After three years of being an APPLE school, some schools strongly believed that their school philosophy shifted to one that embodied a CSH approach. They felt that the changes made were sustainable after the SHF position transitioned to a volunteer school health champion position. Along with all the learnings in the three sections (APPLE schools look different, APPLE schools build champions, and APPLE schools and sustainability), below are the key factors that facilitated sustainable change in some schools:

1

Having a passionate **SHF that was from the community** who had existing relationships and networks. This enabled a faster transition to a healthy school culture in the first and second year as momentum was built on these existing relationships. In addition, having a consistent SHF for the three year period was also crucial. It was found that if a SHF left after the first year, the relationships and progress often left with them.

2

Having **effective and long-term partnerships** in place helped to enable sustainable change. Without these partnerships in place, some of the schools could not financially support their health promoting initiatives. These partnerships also eased the amount of work for the SHF. Partnerships also ensured change was sustained even if the volunteer school health champion left the school.

3

Having **buy-in/participation from the students**. Listening to the perspectives of the whole school community, including students, was extremely important. Students needed to be keen/excited about the initiatives. A key factor which helped facilitate sustained change was leadership from the students. This was seen when students were able to have a voice and lead activities.

4

Having **supportive administrators** was mentioned by staff and SHFs as extremely beneficial for sustained change. For example, as SHFs transitioned to their new role as volunteer school health champions, administrator support allowed them to delegate tasks to other staff/volunteer groups. Changes were not viewed as add-ons but rather part of the school philosophy that administration supported. Supportive administrators also helped in terms of allocation of resources, including financial. For example, they decided whether to continue initiatives in the absence of partnerships (for example daily fruit baskets).

5

Embracing the unique cultures of the school and community. Each of the schools have unique factors that affected implementation of an APPLE Schools approach, including, among others, school population (including diversity in socio-economic status), impacts of the surrounding community (e.g., unemployment, job loss/recession), and the lasting effects of colonization. Schools that had relationships with the community (for example a very involved parent council) helped contribute to the shift in school philosophy. These relationships also helped when the SHF transitioned to a volunteer school health champion because other groups were willing to take on work. Schools that have higher needs and less support may need more than three years to implement and sustain a CSH approach. Further, community involvement was found to be very important for Indigenous school communities. SHFs that understood and worked with the unique needs of the community were able to make meaningful changes faster.

APPENDIX 1: METHODS

Data for the report was generated from 5 different data sources listed below:

1. School Health Facilitator Self-Efficacy Survey - The self-efficacy survey assessed SHF confidence in implementing a CSH approach. It asked questions about their specific knowledge as well as their ability to implement activities in a variety of conditions. SHFs were asked to rate both their knowledge and confidence at two time points using a 5-point Likert scale for knowledge (1=no knowledge, 2=very little knowledge, 3=some knowledge, 4=quite a bit of knowledge, 5=a lot of knowledge) and confidence (1=not at all confident, 2=not very confident, 3=somewhat confident, 4=confident, 5=very confident). SHFs were also asked how confident they were in their ability to facilitate the implementation of physical activity, healthy eating, and mental wellbeing in their school under a number of conditions when:

- colleagues are not involved
- administration disagrees with its importance
- parents/guardians disagree with its importance
- when students are not engaged
- parents/guardians are not involved
- community stakeholders are not involved
- lacking supportive materials
- supportive policies are not in place
- students find the concepts difficult
- I find the concepts difficult
- the overall workload is high

The following was collected and included for data analysis in the report: August 2016 (n=12), June 2017 (n=12), August 2018 (n=9), May/June 2019 (n=10)

2. Walking Interviews (also known as ‘Go-Alongs’): are a unique data generating approach in they make it possible to observe spaces (such as schools) while having access to participants’ experiences and interpretation at the same time (Kusenbach, 2003). The walking interview combines strengths of ethnographic field observation and interviewing. By fusing the two traditional techniques, the walking interview simultaneously takes advantage of each approach’s strengths while employing both to compensate for each other’s limitations. The walking interviews involved in-depth interviewing of participants (SHFs, school staff, and administrators) while receiving a “tour” of their school (led by the SHF). The SHF led the tour rather than following a route determined by the research team. This allowed the SHF to serve as a guide and provided opportunities for subject cues to come up naturally, leading to richer and more place-specific material than if the interview were performed in a static environment (Evans & Jones, 2011).

Walking interviews were conducted in three APPLE schools in northern Alberta in November 2019. The walking interviews were led by SHFs however multiple staff members and administrators were interviewed as well. Photos were also taken and used in the report.

3. School Action Plans: Every APPLE School creates an action plan that is developed by a SHF and core committee (e.g., school principal, staff, students, and community members). The purpose of the action plan was to outline school-specific goals for creating a healthy school culture for the school year (September to June).

The following was collected and included for data analysis in the report: 2016-2017 Actions Plans (n=11), 2017-2018 Action Plans (n=11), 2018-2019 Action Plans (n=16)

4. Essential Conditions Survey: The essential conditions survey is a tool for both the school and school-authority level to help their school community reflect, plan, and celebrate how wellness is integrated in their school culture. The survey asks questions about each of the 8 essential conditions: students as change agents, school-specific autonomy, demonstrated administrative leadership, higher-level support, dedicated champion(s) to engage school staff, community support, quality and use of evidence, and professional development.

The following was collected and included for data analysis in the report: November 2019 (n=8)

5. The Joint Consortium for School Health (JCSH) Healthy School Planner: The JCSH Healthy School Planner is an on-line self-assessment tool used to assess a school's environment (in areas such as teamwork, planning for CSH, implementation across the 4 components of CSH, celebrating success, and sustainability of CSH). It is an evidence-based resource that moves schools from planning to action. Responses are inputted based on a 4-point scale:

Level 1 (Initiating): The school is just beginning on its journey to becoming a healthy school and has lots of room for improvement.

Level 2 (Taking Action): The school has started to set priority areas for creating a healthy school, but still has significant room for improvement.

Level 3 (Achieving Success): The school is well on its way to developing a healthy school, but still has some areas that require improvement.

Level 4 (Maintaining Momentum): The school is succeeding and it is time to concentrate on keeping the momentum to maintain while also considering new and interesting ways to continual improve.

The following was collected and included for data analysis in the report: June 2017 (n=10), June 2018 (n=10), June 2019 (n=7)

References:

Evans, J., & Jones, P. (2011). The walking interview: Methodology, mobility and place. *Applied Geography*, 31, 849-858.

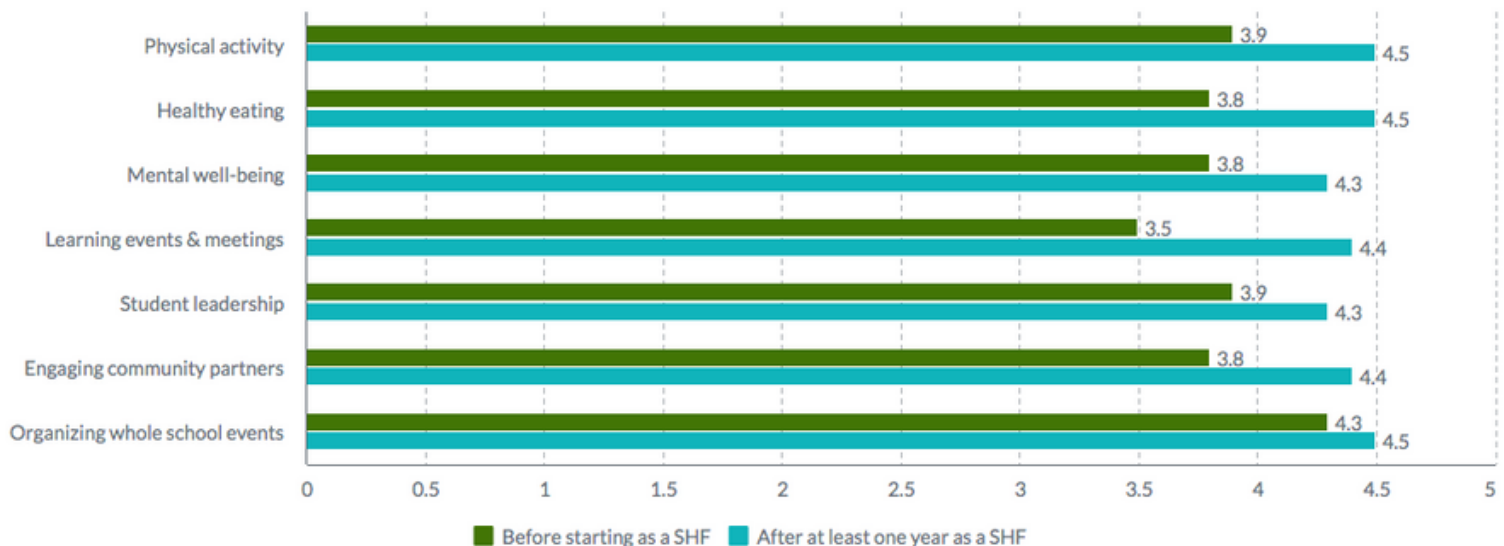
Kusenbach, M. (2003). Street phenomenology: The go-along as ethnographic research tool. *Ethnography*, 4(3), 455-485.

APPENDIX 2: SCHOOL HEALTH FACILITATORS (SHF) SELF-REPORTED KNOWLEDGE AND CONFIDENCE

SHF mean levels of knowledge in the following areas before starting as a SHF and after at least one year as a SHF*



SHF mean levels of confidence in their ability to provide experiences in the following areas before starting as a SHF and after at least one year as a SHF**

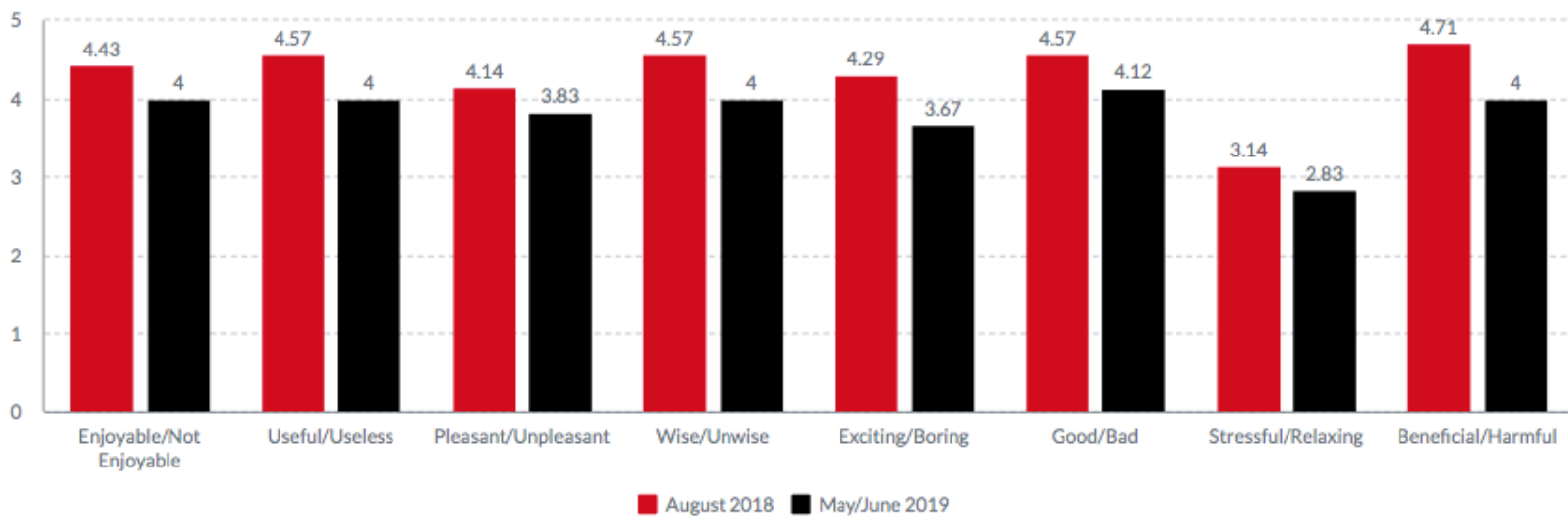


*Each of the nine questions in this section was measured on a five-point likert scale ranging from 'no knowledge' (1) to 'a lot of knowledge' (5).

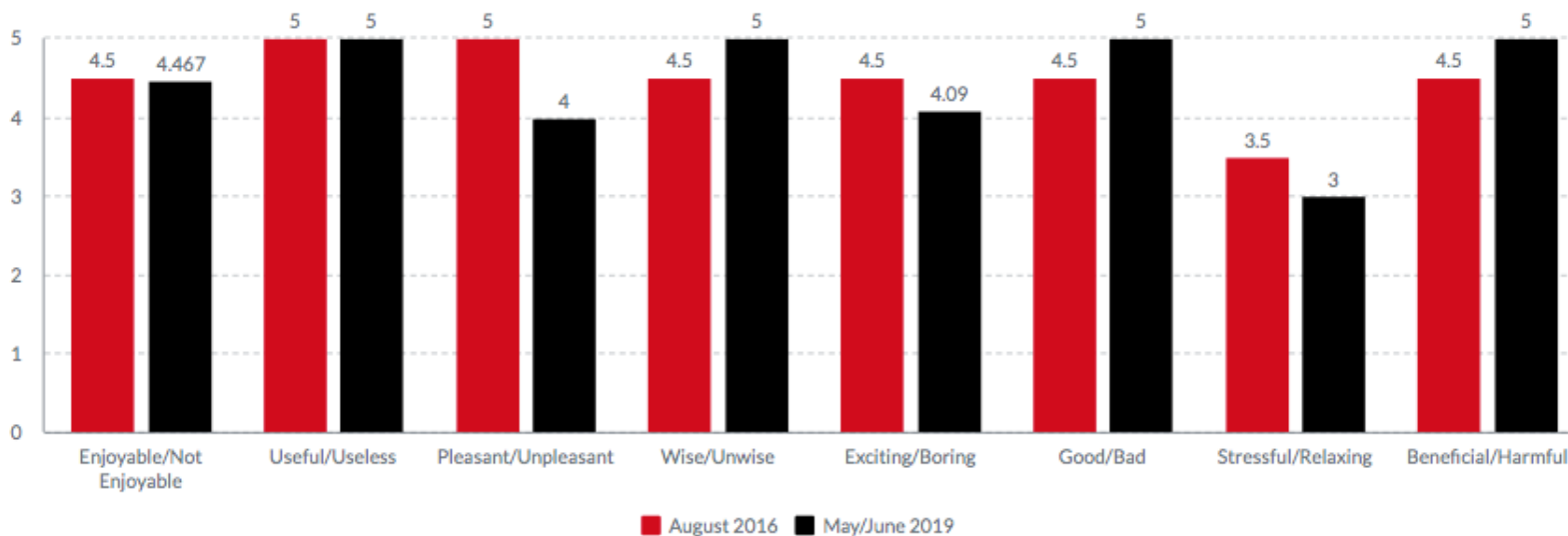
**Each of the seven questions in this section was measured on a five-point likert scale ranging from 'not at all confident' (1) to 'very confident' (5).

APPENDIX 3: SCHOOL HEALTH FACILITATORS (SHF) SELF-REPORTED ATTITUDES OF PROMOTING CSH

First year SHFs - how they feel promoting CSH*



Third year SHFs - how they feel promoting CSH*



*Each of the eight questions in this section were measured on a five-point likert scale and were prefaced by "Promoting CSH is..."



The data generation, analysis, and report was conducted by the SIRCLE Research Lab (Settings-based Intervention Research through Changes in Lifestyles & Environments) within the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta.

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