

## ***Add it Up! Healthy Eating + Physical Activity = A+***

The **Alliance** is a network of agencies, organizations and individuals with an interest in promoting healthy eating and physical activity for overall health.



### **Membership includes:**

- Cancer Care Nova Scotia
- Canadian Cancer Society, NS Division
- Capital District Health Authority
- Dalhousie University
- Dietitians of Canada, Atlantic
- Doctors Nova Scotia
- Ecology Action Centre
- Halifax Northwest Trails Association
- Heart and Stroke Foundation, NS Division
- Physiotherapy Association of Nova Scotia
- Recreation Nova Scotia
- St. Francis Xavier University

### **Priorities of the Alliance:**

- Support the implementation of Quality Daily Physical Education (QDPE)
- Support the implementation of school food policy
- Create school capacity (dedicated time and leader skills) to support physical activity, including opportunities for active play throughout the school day
- Encourage active transportation to and from school

### **Setting the Stage:**

- Thrive! A plan for a healthier Nova Scotia*- Alliance priorities align with *Thrive!* strategic directions
- Release of *Class II* data from Dalhousie University regarding student's dietary intake and weight status before and after implementation of the *Food and Nutrition Policy in NS Public Schools*.
- Literature Review funded by the Heart and Stoke Foundation- *The link between healthy eating and physical activity and school performance*
- Schools as an ideal setting to move healthy eating and physical activity issues forward

### **School Board Engagement Project:**

Why School Board Members? They,

- Play a central role in establishing high-level policies, programs and services
- Create policies that outline expectations of board administration, teachers and students
- Make decisions that determine the direction and quality of public education

### **Phase One of Project: 2012 Municipal Government Election:**

- Surveyed school board candidates from across the province on issues related to healthy eating and physical activity policies in school communities
- Asked about support for:
  - Implementation of increased physical activity in schools
  - Healthy eating school-based policy
  - Active transportation to school
  - Time and resources allocated to these issues
  - And, to identify top 5 priorities if elected

### **Survey Findings:**

- 33 candidates completed the survey (39% response rate)
- Over half of respondents referenced physical activity and healthy eating in their top 5 priorities
- 91% respondents stated that they were committed to working in partnerships to advance policies that encourage healthy eating and physical activity in schools
- But it was not always clear what specifically could be done to move these issues forward and many candidates mentioned barriers and challenges to addressing these issues
  - Phase Two of this project was planned to help school board members address these barriers and challenges

### **Phase Two of Project:**

- Goals of project included:
  - To develop a relationship and an ongoing partnership between the Alliance and school board members to address healthy eating and physical activity issues in schools.
  - To identify the needs of school board members to take action on healthy eating and physical activity issues in schools across the province.
  - To increase school board members understanding of the link between healthy eating and physical activity and school performance.
  - To improve school board members understanding of their roles in addressing healthy eating and physical activity in schools across the province.
  - To provide support for school board members as they strive to create and implement healthy eating and physical activity policies in schools across the province.

### **Project Activities:**

- Relationship building
  - Engaged with staff at NSSBA to gain support for project and determine how to best work with school board members
- NSSBA Board of Director's presentation in December 2013, which covered:
  - Overview of Alliance, its priorities and Phase One of the Project
  - Link between healthy eating, physical activity and school performance
  - How to best engage with school board members to take action on these issues
  - The Alliance was invited to attend NSSBA-AGM
- Alliance presentation at NSSBA-AGM in Cape Breton, May 31, 2014

### **Alliance Presentation at NSSBA-AGM:**

- Drs. Sara Kirk and Jessie-Lee MacIsaac from Dalhousie University & Mike Arthur from the Heart and Stoke Foundation presented
- Presentation topics included:
  - Research data about the link between physical activity, healthy eating and school performance
  - Class II and Keeping Pace data
  - School board member's role in addressing these issues
  - Discussion questions about how the Alliance and school board members can partner to take action on healthy eating and physical activity issues
- 75-80 school board members in attendance

*"I certainly appreciated your presentation and I look forward to hearing more about it as the research data develops. I think you are on to something here and I hope that the school boards can help you with your important work. Thank you for the opportunity to participate"* (School board member at AGM).

### **Moving Forward- Some Potential Alliance Actions:**

- Follow-up with contacts made at NSSBA-AGM during the Fall of 2014
  - Attend NSSBA's Board of Director's meeting
  - Attend NS Federation of Home & School's conference
- Connect with individual boards to:
  - Identify challenges with taking action on healthy eating and physical activity issues
  - Find Champions from each board to advocate for these issues
  - Distribute relevant materials to board members (e.g. fact sheets, AGM presentation slides, etc.)
- Establish a network of organizations with a vested interest in the work of this project
- Update Alliance webpage with emerging relevant research data and best practices, success stories from across the province, fact sheets, etc.

### **For more information visit:**

Alliance for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Nova Scotia-

<http://hpclearinghouse.ca/alliance/index-new.html>

Or contact Sherry Jarvis at [sjarvis@dal.ca](mailto:sjarvis@dal.ca)