

PEI Home and School Federation
AGM Roundtable Notes
April 13th, 2024

COMPASS Youth Health Survey Results, 2023-2024
Cody Davenport, Project Lead, Chief Public Health Office

Cody Davenport, Chief Public Health Office, shared summaries of the survey conducted for 2 years on P.E.I. He shared the overall average on the island and let the groups know the school results are with the individual schools/principals. Some schools have chosen to share their results on their websites, and we can ask the principals from the school results. If anyone runs into resistance, reach out to Cody for assistance.

- COMPASS is a confidential 30-minute online student survey
- 8,300 students from 35 Grade 7-12 schools (83% participation rate)
- No survey available for Grades K-6 at this time
- Assessment/Survey to be done annually
- ON, QC, BC, AB, P.E.I. participate in COMPASS survey; helps with the national average
- Healthy Eating is below the overall average on P.E.I.
- Smoking - 7% admitted to smoking a cigarette while 26% felt would be acceptable in the future
- Alcohol and Cannabis use - results showed a high percentage of students who drink (36%) and smoke (59%) by themselves; shows this wasn't based on social environment. Many were concerned when hearing these numbers
- Bullying - is the most concerning. On P.E.I., the average (31%) of students shared they have been bullied compared to the 17% COMPASS average. The bullying is not only from school; includes sporting events, home, other family (members), etc.
- Screens - The average time youth are spending on screens is still almost four times what is recommended in national guidelines; spending an average 7.9 hours on screens, with social media being the top activity.

Questions asked:

- How are students accessing alcohol?
- Where are the students drinking?
- Who funds the survey?
- Is their money used to fund next steps?
- Has there been a Gov't piece from the school board? There is buy-in from school board; connecting with school goals, social emotional learning
- What's the honesty rate? Concerned that some students may deliberately answer questions "incorrectly". Measures are taken to weed out questionable answers
- Why are the numbers so high on the island for bullying?
- What measured tools are used or can be used to identify what is Bullying? So many components to Bullying.
- How do people help respond?
- How to share and use the data?

Once another survey is done for the 3rd year, there will be enough data gathered to see the trends. The 2023-2024 survey results are posted on Live Well website at (<https://www.livewellpei.ca/compass-project-0>).

What is the role of an Educational Assistant?

Shannon Bruyneel, Elina John, Erin Veale

General Highlights

- Space constraints.
- Always need more help.
- Small school (small number of EA's, needs based) How do we define needs? Snap meeting – needs diagnosis.
- EA role – support students/support teachers.
- Split responsibilities: behaviours can outweigh academics.

Group 1 = 10 people

(Three parents with EA support.)

- Topic: Not enough space for EA's (quiet room, breakout room, space for students, use voice to text.)
- What is the role of an EA? (Answers a from group of people.)
 - Assigned to student.
 - One of members said she has a full time EA.
- Communication between EA, Administration, parents.

Group 2 = 19 people

(Five – Six EA's in this group and three people with EA supported child.)

- Discussed how EA's used more quiet space, breakout rooms.
- Small school, little support.
- Not enough support.
- Inclusion not working, not enough support for every child.
- What's the formula? How many EA's should each school set? Based on how many students are at school?

Group 3 = 16 people

(Two EA's from Stratford, one EA from Bluefield.)

- Not enough breakout room, quiet space, external, private/semi private spaces.
- Violence in the school.
- Hired/non-qualification items.
- Part of EA's role is to support the teacher.
- Inclusion.

Group 4 = 14 people

- Not enough space – rooms are too loud, not enough breakout rooms etc.
- What is the role of an EA? EA's role changing over the years.
- Same EA's are doing academic work in the class, some are not doing any academic work, just behaviours.
- Diagnosis students may have?

Group 5 = 11 people

(Four EA's in this group)

- Youth worker - discuss their role.
- Not enough space.
- Too loud.
- Not enough help.
- EA's roles are very split.
- Some EA's deal with behaviour only.
- Some EA's are only academics.
- Meet students' basic needs that are not met at home.
- Behaviours pull EA's from their role.

Group 6 = 18 people

(Three parents have EA support for their child.)

- More sensory equipment (schools need).
- Behaviour support only or academic support.

Inclusion Report Summary

Erin McGrath Gaudet, Deputy Minister of Education and Early Years

General Highlights:

- Introduction of self, her background.
- What's happening with inclusion? Teaching and learning conditions.

2019 Memorandum:

- Understanding results of COVID. Hired a consultant and delivered a report in December 2023 with results, then built a committee to build on an action plan. Draft plan is ready, and meeting with education officials regarding action.
- Best practices – survey – parents/students/staff.
- Themes - Kindergarten readiness, smooth entrance, fine and gross motor skills, newcomers.
- Reworking staffing models – possible different positions, working with unions.
- Improving communication and engagement. Home and School language. Individual to child with other services/community.
- Evaluation and metrics – tracking pilots, 180 pages draft, interviews, surveys, environmental reports – is it effective?
- Meeting with principals and unions to discuss draft action plan. Define to be ready for September.
- Heather Mullen talked about population growth and space in schools. All are almost or at capacity. Architectural/functional.
- Study happening. How do we define capacity? How do we plan for the future?
- Across country studies: What are the best practices?
- Architectural/functional/reality: What are the needs? What has changed?

Questions:

Q. Why was there no parental engagement? UPEI – What's happening?

A. It's still in draft form; want parents' perspectives.

Q. Importance of capacity research that includes trades school?

A. On agenda, yes, but not there yet.

Q. Are there plans to put Pre-K in schools since it's a requirement education/funded?

A. Not yet, maybe in a few years.

Q. What type of new roles are needed?

A. Specialized needs, for example, trauma and medical.

Q. What will be ready by September?

A. Working groups, hopefully, STEP program is pilot rolled out. Going well.

Q. Definition of inclusivity used - which learning styles/challenges?

Comments:

- Importance of needs to be transferrable for child from school to school.
- Duty is to accommodate being considered – children and human rights being followed.

Youth Sports Nutrition

Rachael Barich UPEI Sports Nutrition

Group #1 = 14 people

- Youth sport: Food first! We need to focus on this first.
- Food first is most important, especially with social media – thinking that we can just take supplements.
- Different sports can need different foods to get maximum potential out of athlete.
- Carbs are important. Complex carbs- take longer to digest.
- Foods aren't as simple as "Good vs. Bad". (i.e. white bread, chopped fruit, gummy apple sauce, oranges)
- Language is important, Kids need to understand that all foods fit in a balanced diet.
- Can be challenging to get them to eat healthy.
- Age-appropriate conversations. Are they eating enough? Don't eliminate foods unless there are allergies.
- Sports drinks: kids can become dehydrated quicker.
- Gas tank 1-10, don't fall below a 7.
- Coaches, need to stay within scope, don't educate unless properly trained.
- Eat protein to help recover after activity.

Group #2 = 6 people

- Nutrient timing.
- Food first. Helping youth know how to fuel their body.
- Importance of language to go with food first.
- Carbs fill our gas tanks.
- Nutrition is a skill that we have to build.
- Fill before, during and after.
- Simple carbs, fuels sports and performance.
- Healthy food/body relationship.
- Sports nutrition is not about hunger, but fueling the tank.
- How to pack lunches to perform in the gym?

Group #3 = 12 people

- Youth sports nutrition is important.
- Sports nutrition is different than nutrition.
- Food is first.
- Age-appropriate language; language that we use is so important.
- How we feel about food.
- How we fuel our body for big events, especially ones that are over a couple of hours - Nutrient timing - $\frac{3}{4}$ hrs. 2 hrs. before, 30 minutes before and also during the event.
- Food has a different purpose for sport vs. plain nutrition.
- Eating disorders are big in sports due to language used.
- Activities at supertime - $\frac{2}{3}$ hrs. before.

Group #4 = 17 people

- How food can be helpful at an early age?
- Carbs #1. Food First. Athletes Best Friend. Simple vs. Complex.
- Fueling for Performance, simple carbs.
- Eat to fill the gas tank, no greater than 7.
- Fuel to keep gas tank going is greater than 7.
- From young age to university. Fuel before and during.
- Role of food, if fueled healthily leads to less injury.
- Recovery nutrition – 20 minutes. Carb and little protein or chocolate milk – sugar is a carb. Granola bar, 1 hour before a meal.

Group #5 = 8 people

- Early learning has better nutrition success.
- Language matters for rest of their life. Food is more than filling hunger.
- Move away from healthy vs. unhealthy. When we eat and what we eat.
- How do I fuel properly?

Group #6 = 5 people

- Nutrition is not about eating for hunger it is about fueling our bodies for activity.
- Age-appropriate manner is impactful for the rest of their life.
- Food: What, When, and Why?
- Food first.
- If your activity/event is longer than an hour? You need to fuel your body.

Suicide Prevention

Les Wagner, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)

Guest Speaker Presentation:

- Our guest speaker began sessions by pointing out that CMHA's suicide prevention and life promotion programming focuses not just on prevention, but also on intervention and postvention.
- CMHA offers intervention training via a 2-day workshop called ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) which is geared primarily towards those who work in a support capacity, such as counsellors, youth workers, clergy, etc.
- CMHA also has a half-day workshop called Safe-Talk which focuses more on prevention and trains participants in how to recognize, approach, and talk to persons with thoughts of suicide and how to connect them with someone trained in intervention.
- In schools, CMHA provides ACTT for Life workshops (Ask, Care, Talk, Tell) for all Grade 9 classes as part of the health curriculum. This workshop teaches students how to recognize when someone may be struggling with thoughts of suicide, how to ask them about it directly, how to listen with empathy, and how to encourage friends to speak with a trusted adult or how to inform a trusted adult themselves. While the workshop focuses on teaching students how they can help one another, another goal is also for students to be able to recognize when they may need help themselves, and to know where to get that help.
- After the workshop, students' complete surveys which ask if they feel like they need to talk to someone and follow-up is done in all cases where students answer 'yes'. Our guest speaker noted that guidance counsellors are often familiar and working with students who answer 'yes' to this question, but that there are often instances where students weren't yet on the counsellor's radar. Our guest speaker also noted that the number of students who reach out for help through the surveys has been rising.
- These workshops run for 90 minutes which CMHA recognizes is too long and they are working to make them shorter.
- For postvention, CMHA offers support to those who have lost loved ones to suicide through its LASL bereavement group (Life After Suicide Loss).
- It was also noted that another program, "I'm Thumbbody", is offered in Grade 3 and teaches about self-esteem and emotional awareness. Our guest speaker noted that this, and all of their other programs promoting mental health, also help with suicide prevention.
- On the topic of general mental health programs, Les highlighted the CMHA Peer Support program, where peer support workers receive rigorous training and use their personal experience with mental illness and addictions to help others through support groups or one-on-one sessions.

Questions/Comments

- Several participants suggested that it may be better to provide the workshop earlier, such as in Grade 7 or 8. Les said that they are always assessing and trying to improve ACTT for Life and that offering it earlier is something they are considering. It was also suggested that the workshop be offered again in high school and Les indicated that they'd be interested in doing that, but they don't have the capacity now.

Additional Information

- A participant asked what are some of the signs that a person is struggling with thoughts of suicide. There wasn't time for an in-depth answer, but Les did mention watching for general changes in behaviour and that giving away possessions is a common sign.
- A participant asked who the CMHA training was geared towards and how is it accessed. Les noted that guidance counsellors likely all have the intervention training and that some educators would have taken ASIST or SafeTalk. He recommended their website to find out about training and that liking the CMHA Facebook page would provide you with notifications of upcoming sessions. Some workshops have costs and some don't.
- A participant asked if issues like body image were discussed as part of the ACTT for Life workshops. There was no time for this question to be answered.
- A participant asked what happens when a student is absent on the day of the workshop at their school. There was no time for this question to be answered either, but Les did say it was something they should contemplate.

What is Foundations?

Jane Hastelow, Department Education and Early Years

Foundations is a Wilson Language Training Corporation program emphasizing differentiation, progress monitoring and an aligned intervention program. Students receive 30 minutes of instruction every day and an extra 30 minutes to those students who need reinforcement learning. A key feature to Foundations is the built-in and aligned intervention program that is consistent with the content learned in the classroom.

Foundations is an evidence-based structured literacy-based literacy program teaching reading, spelling, and writing skills to students in English language schools across PEI from Kindergarten to Grade three. The program rolled out in 2021 in Kindergarten, and with another grade level each year. In 2025, the program will be evaluated. A somewhat similar program exists within the French Immersion program. After Grade three, students continue with another literacy program developed by the same company.

Some support for parents can be found online though parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher for further support. In split-grade classes, students still receive the targeted instruction for their grade level by a trained teacher.

Additional Information

No other questions were discussed other than those answered by the information above. The presentation was well received with some parents expressing how much their children enjoyed the program, especially the use of Owl puppets, "Mama Echo" and "Baby Echo". The program is flexible in that it allows for Canadian spelling and grammar conventions to be included in the lessons.