

What is a Health Promoting School?

- A Health Promoting School is “a school that is constantly strengthening its capacity as a healthy place for living, learning and working”¹
- A health promoting school provides a supportive environment for learning and health.²
- Members of a health promoting school community work to create an environment that will have the best possible impact on the health and learning of students, teachers, staff, parents and visitors to the school.²
- A Health Promoting Schools approach to school health is evidence-based and is a best-practice for improving health within the school community³
- Health Promoting Schools (HPS) is a provincial initiative encouraging all schools to become involved in promoting and supporting health.
- Increasing concern about the health of children and youth prompted the Nova Scotia Department of Education and the Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection to create a partnership to work together to address this issue through a Health Promoting Schools approach.
- Benefits of a health promoting school approach to improving school health includes: improved student learning, positive behaviour benefits, improved health for students, staff and the broader school community, improved school environment, maximized resources and enhanced school-community relationships.⁴
- Partnerships are a key success factor for health promoting schools.⁴
- A Tri-County Health Promoting Schools partnership exists to support Health Promoting Schools. This committee is made up of various partners from across the tri-counties including:
 - Tri-County Regional School Board
 - South West District Health Authority
 - Community Health Boards
 - Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection
 - Community Services, Recreation and Leisure Services
 - Family Resource Centres
 - Connecting to Africa: The Ghana Project
 - NSCC Burrige Campus
 - RCMP
- With the support of these various partners, schools have the opportunity to explore their priorities related to health, create a plan to address priority issues, and engage students, staff, parents and other community members in order to help address these priorities.

- The Tri-County Health Promoting School model is comprehensive and encourages growth within the school community in the following five areas:
 - 1) **School community policies and practices** that promote and support health and wellbeing of students, staff and community
 - 2) Supportive social and physical **school environments** that promote health
 - 3) **Curriculum, teaching and learning** that builds knowledge and skills of students, staff and community for health and health promotion
 - 4) **Community involvement** in the life of the school and school involvement in the community
 - 5) **Partnerships** between the school and community members, community groups and organizations are essential to the success of a health promoting school

- If you are interested in learning more about the process of taking a health promoting schools approach and the supports that are available to schools within the TCRSB, please contact Stephen Cullen, Active Health Living Consultant, TCRSB at 749-2809 or email at scullen@tcrsb.ca.

1. World Health Organization (1996). *Promoting health through schools – The World Health Organization’s global school health initiative*. World Health Organization, Geneva.

2. Centre for Health Promotion, Australia. <http://www.chdf.org.au/>

3. International Union for Health Promotion and Education (2006). *Protocols and guidelines for health promoting schools*. http://www.chdf.org.au/i-cms_file?page=3/GuidelinesProtocolsHPS.pdf

4. Queensland Departments of Health and Education (2001). *A toolbox for creating healthy places to learn, work and play*. <http://www.chdf.org.au/>