



Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members Board of Health
COMMITTEE DATE:	November 13, 2017
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Public Health Services School Program Review (BOH17031) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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COUNCIL DIRECTION:

On January 16, 2017 the Board of Health made a motion directing:

- (a) That Public Health Staff complete a School Program Review, with the goal of providing recommendations for programming in alignment with both school board needs at the elementary and secondary school levels, Ontario Public Health Standards and City of Hamilton context and local needs;
- (b) That Public Health Staff consult with all publicly funded elementary and secondary school boards, on a more integrated approach that includes mental health wellness;
- (c) That the Review of the Public Health Services (PHS) School Program be added to the Board of Health Outstanding Business List; and,
- (d) Staff report back with a Review of the City of Hamilton Public Health Services School Programs, to the Board of Health by the third quarter 2017.

This report fulfils that request and the items can be removed from the outstanding business list.

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REPORT:

Purpose

This purpose of this report is to inform the Board of Health (BOH) about the key findings that have been used to develop a revised school program service delivery model, as well as to seek input from the BOH on the revised model.

Executive Summary

In response to the motion, and as part of continuous quality improvement, the school program has completed a multi-phase review of services. At the same time, the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care (MOHLTC) has released the revised Standards for Public Health Programs and Services (SPHPS). The revised SPHPS includes a new standard for School Health with goals and requirements related to promoting and protecting the health of children and youth in schools. The new School Health Standard has informed the review and development of the recommendations for the proposed service delivery model. Additionally, each of the four area school boards' leaders, and parents, students, teachers and principals were engaged in the review process and development of the proposed service delivery model.

Schools are a critical setting to build important relationships, promote a positive sense of self, and therefore promote and protect the health and well-being of children and youth. The proposed service delivery model aims to strengthen partnerships between PHS and local schools while enhancing programming. Every school is responsible for producing an annual school improvement plan. In the new model, Public Health school program staff will collaborate with schools to identify and produce products on population health data that critically influences student health and wellbeing. This data along with critical conversations with school leads will be used to collaboratively identify key needs and priorities within schools. The new model will include universal services for all publicly funded schools as well as targeted and more intensive services for identified priority schools with the highest level of need. Public health staff will work with the school staff, students and parents to implement programs and services to address identified needs. The intent is to have broader and longer-lasting impact within school communities through collaboration with the school and across the board on joint priorities. PHS staff will also engage other partners and services who can assist the school in these areas. PHS will collaborate with the schools in monitoring the work and outcomes to ensure the services are making a difference for the students and school community.

The final school program resourcing will come back to Council as part of PHS' annual service plan and budget approval process along with other programming for PHS Department.

Background

Schools are an important setting to promote and protect the health of children and youth. Schools that focus on relationships between staff and students, the links between school and students' families, and effective connections to community-based services are better at promoting the skills to be physically and emotionally healthy for life (People for Education, 2013).

The Ministry of Education's (MOE) strategic plan, [Achieving Excellence](#) (2014) (see Appendix A), outlines its commitment to student success and student well-being. The MOE recognizes that "children and students who have strong relationships and a positive sense of self are in a better position to reach their full potential" (2017).

In addition to the MOE commitment, the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) released new Standards for Public Health Programs and Services (SPHPS), effective January 2018 (BOH17010b). New to the SPHPS is the addition of a School Health Standard (Appendix B). This standard acknowledges the importance of Public Health's partnership with School Boards and schools, and identifies schools as an important setting to impact the health of populations. The goal of PHS' School Program is to support the achievement optimal health of children and youth in schools. This aligns with the City of Hamilton priority for Healthy and Safe Communities.

Child Visual Health and Vision Screening have been added as new service requirements in the SPHPS. The MOHLTC is currently developing detailed expectations for Boards of Health. PHS will report back to BOH related to this new initiative once further details are available.

School Program – Current Services

PHS School Program provides services to publicly funded schools across the City of Hamilton (Appendix C), serving all 24 secondary schools, and approximately 48 elementary schools. The program also supports a secondment to the Arrell Youth Detention Centre (BOH17008).

Public Health Nurses (PHNs) work in partnership with school communities and also help to link the school to Hamilton's community resources. The school program has historically offered a diverse range of services that responded to the needs of individual schools, principals, teachers and students. In more recent years the school program and school boards have identified the following key health topics: mental health promotion, healthy eating, sexual health and physical activity. Mental health promotion continues to be the School Program's top health priority within school communities. During the 2016/17 school year, PHNs engaged over 860 youth to plan and implement

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strategies to address these topics within their schools, reaching over 44,000 students across Hamilton.

School Program Review

In September 2016, the School Program began a full program review in collaboration with its school board partners to ensure the most effective and efficient delivery of school health programming. Since the launch of the review, School Program has also taken into consideration the mandates and requirements outlined within the new SPHPS. The School Program review has been comprised of three distinct phases:

- Literature review, summary of environmental scans, and current practice review
- Stakeholder engagement
- Recommendations and Implementation planning.

Phase 1: Literature Review, Summary of Environmental Scans & Current Practice Review

In December 2016, the school program completed the first phase of the review. This consisted of a literature review, synthesis of environmental scans of comparator health units, and a review of the current school program service delivery model. Phase 1 of the review confirmed the most effective way to improve learning and health outcomes in students is through a school based comprehensive health promotion approach. School PHNs can work with individuals, families or groups, and whole school communities through a holistic approach with consideration of the social determinants of health which include emotional, physical, social, economic, political, spiritual, cultural, historical and environmental factors. Within this approach, schools and public health staff work together to align:

- Curriculum, teaching & learning
- School & classroom leadership
- Student & parent engagement
- Social & physical environments
- Home, school & community partnerships

Phase 2: Stakeholder Engagement

In January 2017 the School Program secured support from the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB), the Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board (HWCDSB), the Conseil scolaire Viamonde, and Conseil Scolaire MonAvenir to embark on the stakeholder engagement phase of this review. The School Program received input from:

- 423 students
- 206 school board staff
- school board leads
- 21 parents

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Overall, stakeholder input reveals a positive experience in working with the School Program. 79% of respondents, who collaborate with the School Program, reported that working with their school PHN enabled the school to better identify and address their school's health needs. The reported benefits of collaboration with the School Program include increased:

- awareness of the school community's health needs
- student skills to make healthy choices
- support with health curriculum
- access to resources and information
- engagement with youth and parents
- relationships between students, parents and schools

Respondents reported the following barriers to collaboration with the School Program:

- a lack of access to School Program PHN's
- lack of awareness of the PHN role
- limited time with PHN

Proposed Actions and Model Changes

Synthesis of the information from the literature review and stakeholders led to a series of recommendations that have been shared with, and are supported by, all School Board partners. Overall, the recommendations aim to strengthen partnerships between PHS and local schools while enhancing programming to have broader and longer-lasting impact within school communities.

1. Collaborate with school boards and schools to:
 - Meet the new requirements within the Standards for Public Health Programs and Services (2017)
 - Align to the requirements within the MOE's strategy, Achieving Excellence (2014)
 - Strengthen partnerships between PHS and local schools
2. Establish a formal structure between PHS and School Board leadership to:
 - Share health data and strategic plans to identify shared priorities between PHS and School Boards
 - Establish shared goals, success indicators, and processes for evaluation
 - Plan for PHS resource allocation and service coordination of school based PHS services (e.g. School PHNs, Immunization Services, Dental Services, Vision Screening Services)
 - Connect and liaise with other relevant community stakeholders (e.g. Neighbourhood Action Strategy, Youth Strategy, Early Years Plan and other community services)
 - Share successes and challenges

3. Provide services within a Family of Schools (FOS) Model in alignment with current school board structure:
 - universal services will be provided to all schools, including:
 - i. sharing school health data,
 - ii. supporting linkages with community resources,
 - iii. consultation on emerging health priorities
 - iv. school based immunizations in grade 8
 - v. dental screening
 - vi. vision screening, and
 - vii. web based resources.
 - Targeted services will be provided to priority schools within the FOS. A full comprehensive school health approach will be used in these schools, engaging with the full school community (principal, teachers, students and parents) to address priority health needs,

4. Allocate staff time to act as a school board liaison to:
 - Ensure PHS service implementation is consistent across schools and with board priorities
 - Link appropriate PHS and City staff as well as community resources to support board level initiatives
 - Ensure board level awareness and input on progress and activities related to agreed upon goals and implementation strategies.

5. Maintain a focus on mental health and well-being of children and youth in schools.
 - Clarify roles and responsibilities
 - Ensure integrated and complementary services by staff within the School Boards, PHS, and community agencies, e.g. CCAC
 - Build on the strengths, and capacity of students, fostering resilience among students, creating a supportive environment and where appropriate, assist in referral to needed services

Phase 3: Implementation

A staged implementation process has been designed in collaboration with school board partners (Appendix D). It will be guided by best practices in change management, and will identify and mitigate risks and challenges.

Major milestones of implementation include:

Time Frame	Milestone
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Fall 2017	Establishment of School Board/PHS Leadership Group Establishment of Data Sharing PHS/School Board Sub-Group Collaborative data sharing to inform 2018 priority health issues at the Board level Establishment of shared goals and priorities at Board level Initiate comprehensive internal and external change management plans Implement and evaluate staff development model
Winter 2018	Collaborative data sharing to inform 2018 priority health issues at Family of School (FOS) level Establishment of shared goals and priorities within each FOS Identification of high priority schools for targeted service
Winter 2018	Select and begin pilot of new model within selected Hamilton FOS Finalize resourcing the annual service plan and budget approval process
September 2018	Launch new Family of Schools model of service delivery

Conclusion

The PHS School Program is in alignment with the City of Hamilton’s Strategic Plan and the priority area of Healthy and Safe Communities. PHS services offered to and implemented within schools promote and protect the health of children and youth. School Program’s revised model of service delivery will provide universal services to all schools within the 4 publicly funded school boards in Hamilton, as well as targeted services to identified priority schools across the City.

The School Program will continue to collaborate with school and school board partners to implement, evaluate and continually improve the services offered, and ensure alignment with the SPHPS. PHS has a plan in place to move into compliance with the new Standards and will support the BOH to make decisions with service delivery recommendation through the annual service plan and budget approval process along with other programming for PHS Department.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Achieving Excellence, 2014
- Appendix B – School Health Standard
- Appendix C – Role of the School Public Health Nurse
- Appendix D – Implementation Timeline

References

City of Hamilton (2017). 2016-2025 Strategic Plan. Retrieved from <https://www.hamilton.ca/city-initiatives/priority-projects/2016-2025-strategic-plan>.

Ministry of Education (2014). Achieving Excellence: A renewed Vision for Education in Ontario. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/excellent.html>.

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People for Education. (2013). Mind the Gap: Inequality in Ontario's Schools. Retrieved from <http://www.peopleforeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/annual-report-2013-WEB.pdf>