Active Living Rubric: Background and Instructions

A rubric is one tool that can be used to assess the health of a school community.[a] This user guide provides background information and instructions on how to conduct an assessment using the active living rubric.

Materials

- Active living rubric (included)

Purpose

The active living rubric is an assessment tool designed to help a school community evaluate how well they support active living. The components of Comprehensive School Health (CSH) are embedded within this rubric to help identify active living priorities within all areas of the school environment. Determining priority issues through school health assessments is one of the steps in the process of building healthy school communities (see diagram). This rubric is one of several assessment tools available.[a]
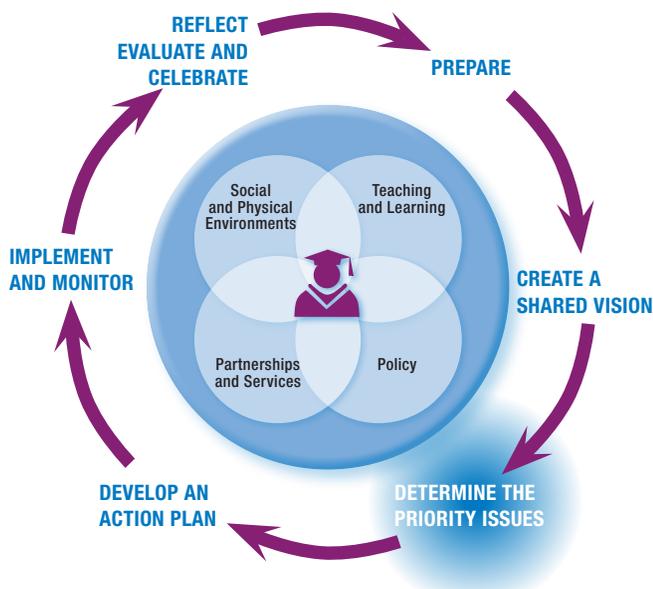
Process for Building Healthy School Communities using the Components of Comprehensive School Health

(Adapted from the Alberta Healthy School Community Wellness Fund)

This assessment tool assists schools by

- offering insight into the overall quality of support and opportunities for active living within the school community
- helping identify priorities and set goals for improving active living
- providing opportunities for collaborative assessment and planning
- identifying meaningful data to track as a measure of progress
- guiding the development, implementation and evaluation of school active living initiatives
- initiating discussions related to active living within the school community

All types of school community members (e.g., staff, students, parents, community representatives) can help complete the rubric. The rubric can be used in a variety of settings (e.g., health champion workshops, staff/parent council/administrator/student leadership meetings).

Method

1. It is recommended that you complete the healthy schools rubric[a] prior to completing this active living rubric. The healthy schools rubric may help identify other important focus areas for your school.

2. Review the active living rubric background and instructions.

3. **Assessment #1:** Complete the active living rubric and record the scores and related comments for each category on the results summary table.

4. **Identify priorities:** Use the results to determine areas that the school would like to improve. For example, if scores in the Partnerships and Services component are lower, then the school may complete a scan of partners in their community who may be able to support active living initiatives for staff, students and families.

5. **Action plan:** Create an action plan to address priorities related to active living.[b] The action plan should include goals, strategies, activities, outcomes and indicators to help track progress and ensure that improvements are being made.

6. **Assessment #2:** Complete the active living rubric and results summary table at the end of the year to evaluate/celebrate successes and guide future planning related to active living.

Notes

The rubric may be modified to suit the context of its use. However, it is strongly advised that any modifications are based on sound knowledge of the CSH approach, active living in school environments and rubric development.

The content of this rubric is based on a number of evidence-based resources.[1,2,3,4,5,6]

Other rubrics that can be used to assess the health of school communities include the healthy schools rubric, healthy eating rubric and positive mental health rubric.[a]

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[a] For more information about school health assessments and available assessment tools, including the healthy schools rubric, visit http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/7123.asp.

[b] To find information about the process for building healthy school communities, information about action planning, an action plan template and the additional rubrics, visit http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/7123.asp.

Active Living Rubric

This rubric has been developed to assess the quality of the school environment in promoting active living for all members of the school community. The components of CSH have been embedded in this rubric to support the physical well-being and learning needs of all students. Refer to the "Active Living Rubric: Background and Instructions" for more information. Circle the indicator in each row that best describes your school's current level of achievement in that area.

Policy

Management practices, decision-making processes, rules, procedures and policies at all levels that promote health and well-being, and shape a respectful, welcoming and caring school environment.

	4: Keep it up!	3: Getting closer	2: On the road	1: Just beginning
POLICY **Does the school provide support for implementing physical activity policies for all students** (e.g., PE, DPA time, curriculum outcomes, inclusivity, facility availability and accessibility, community resources)?	We provide **comprehensive support** for implementing policies related to physical activity opportunities for students and have gone beyond mandated policy to embed additional physical activity policy or guidelines within our school culture.	We provide **some support** for implementing policies related to physical activity opportunities for students.	We offer **informal support** for implementing policies related to physical activity opportunities for students.	We **have just begun** to raise awareness of the need to support implementation of policies and guidelines related to physical activity at school.
LEADERSHIP SUPPORT **Does the school administration drive active living initiatives?**	The administration models an active lifestyle and **provides leadership** in creating a culture of active living within the school community.	The administration **supports** physical activity and related initiatives within the school community.	The administration offers **some support** for physical activity and related initiatives within the school community, but leadership in this area is limited.	Leaders in the school are **just beginning** to offer support for physical activity and related initiatives.

Social and Physical Environment

The social environment is
- the quality of relationships among and between staff and students in the school
- the emotional well-being of students
- influenced by relationships with families and the wider community

The physical environment is
- the buildings, grounds, play spaces and equipment in and surrounding the school
- basic amenities (e.g., sanitation and air cleanliness)

	4: Keep it up!	3: Getting closer	2: On the road	1: Just beginning
INCLUSION Do all physical activities and initiatives accommodate student diversity, including ethnicity, physical ability, gender and age?	**All** physical activities and initiatives accommodate student diversity, including ethnicity, physical ability, gender and age.	**Most** physical activities and initiatives accommodate student diversity, including ethnicity, physical ability, gender and age.	**Some** physical activities and initiatives accommodate student diversity, including ethnicity, physical ability, gender and age.	**A few** physical activities and initiatives accommodate student diversity, including ethnicity, physical ability, gender and age.
ACCESSIBILITY Are there opportunities for all students to participate in organized physical activities during non-instructional time (e.g., activity days, intramurals, open gym time, sports teams, clubs)?	Organized physical activities during non-instructional time are available and accessible to **all** students.	Organized physical activities during non-instructional time are available and accessible to **most** students.	Organized physical activities during non-instructional time are available and accessible to **some** students.	Organized physical activities during non-instructional time are available and accessible to a **limited** number of students.
VARIETY Are there a variety of organized physical activities offered during non-instructional time based on student input (e.g., activity days, intramurals, open gym time, sports teams, clubs)?	There is a **broad range** of organized physical activities for students to choose from and they are directly involved in determining the types of programs/clubs/intramurals that are offered.	There are **several different types** of organized physical activities for students to choose from, but students do not have input into the types of programs/clubs/intramurals that are offered.	**A few different types** of organized physical activities are available, but both student choice and input are limited.	A **limited variety** of physical activities are provided to students during non-instructional time.
FREQUENCY Are there regular structured opportunities for students to be active during non-instructional time?	Intramurals, physical activity clubs or other programs are **offered daily**.	Intramurals, physical activity clubs or other programs are offered **several times per week.**	Intramurals, physical activity clubs or other programs are offered **weekly or on a rotating basis** with large breaks of time in between.	Intramurals, physical activity clubs or other programs are offered **less than once per week** or sporadically through the month or year.
EQUIPMENT/FACILITIES Is there enough equipment and space available to maximize opportunities for physical activity during non-instructional time?	**Ample equipment and space** (both indoors and outdoors) is **available and accessible** to all students.	**Either enough equipment is available or enough space is accessible**, but not both. Strategies are being developed to address gaps in this area.	Students are **able to access equipment and space, but both are limited.** The school is strategizing how to address the gaps.	We have **just begun** to consider how to better accommodate the physical activity needs of students during non-instructional time.
STAFF MODELLING Do staff members model healthy physical activity behaviours during the school day (e.g., during intramurals, active assemblies, events, DPA opportunities)?	**All** staff model healthy physical activity behaviours by participating in active living opportunities.	**Most** staff model healthy physical activity behaviours by participating in active living opportunities.	**Some** staff model healthy physical activity behaviours by participating in active living opportunities.	We have **just begun** to consider strategies that support all staff to participate in active living opportunites.
STUDENT LEADERSHIP Are students engaged as leaders and decision-makers regarding active living at school?	Students are **always** involved as decision makers in the promotion of active living.	Students are **usually** involved as decision makers in the promotion of active living.	Students are **sometimes** involved as decision makers in the promotion of active living.	We have **just begun** to consider strategies to increase student involvement as decision makers in the promotion of active living.

Partnerships and Services

Partnerships are
- connections between the school and students' families
- supportive working relationships within schools (for staff and students), between schools and other community organizations and representative groups
- health, education and other sectors working together to advance school health

Services are
- community- and school-based services that support and promote student and staff health and well-being

	1: Just beginning	2: On the road	3: Getting closer	4: Keep it up!
ENGAGEMENT **Are family and community members encouraged to participate in school-wide activities and events that promote active living** (e.g., dances, fitness nights, fun runs, sports days, coaching, assemblies)**?**	We have **just begun to consider** the importance of extending active living activities and events to all stakeholder groups within the school community.	**Some** stakeholder groups are invited to participate in programs and activities that promote active living. We are exploring possible strategies to encourage involvement from other stakeholders.	**Most** stakeholder groups are invited to participate in programs/activities/events that promote active living. Strategies to increase involvement from other stakeholders are being developed.	**All** stakeholder groups are actively encouraged to participate in programs/activities/events that promote active living.
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS **Are community partnerships established that support active living at school** (e.g., fitness instructors, Alberta Health Services, recreation centres)**?**	We are **just beginning** to identify potential partners within the community that may be interested in supporting active living opportunities at school.	The school has **initiated** communication with potential partners within the community to support active living opportunities at school.	Partnerships are **being developed** within the community to support active living opportunities at school.	Partnerships have been **fostered** within the community to support and sustain active living opportunities at school.
COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SERVICES **Are community resources and services accessed to support wellness-related programs and to enhance participation in physical activity at school** (e.g., PD, credible websites, tools and resources on physical activity, community services)**?**	Awareness of the community resources and services available to support physical activity is **just beginning** to be generated.	Community resources and services to support physical activity are accessed on an **inconsistent** basis.	Community resources and services are accessed **occasionally** to encourage physical activity at school.	Community resources and services are accessed **frequently** to encourage physical activity at school.

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Teaching and Learning

Resources, activities and provincial/territorial curriculum where students gain age-appropriate knowledge and experiences, helping build the skills to improve their health and well-being.

	4: Keep it up!	3: Getting closer	2: On the road	1: Just beginning
EDUCATION **Are there opportunities for the school community to learn about the benefits of physical activity** (e.g., assemblies, displays, newsletters, presentations, health fairs)**?**	**Regularly scheduled** opportunities to learn about the benefits of physical activity are offered to the school community through a variety of resources, events and communications.	**Occasional** opportunities to learn about the benefits of physical activity are offered to the school community through a variety of resources, events and communications.	**Inconsistent** learning opportunities about the benefits of physical activity are offered to the school community. These resources, events and/ or communications are limited in number, type and/or accessibility.	We have **just begun considering** the importance of providing more opportunities for the school community to learn about the benefits of physical activity.
STAFF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES **Are staff members provided with the appropriate training and resources to promote active living and physical activity among students?**	**Regularly scheduled** training/ information/PD opportunities related to the promotion of physical activity and active living are available to all staff members.	**Occasional** training/information/ PD opportunities related to the promotion of physical activity and active living are available to all staff members.	**Inconsistent** training/information/ PD opportunities related to the promotion of physical activity and active living are available to all staff members.	We have **just begun** considering the importance of providing training/information/PD opportunities related to the promotion of physical activity and active living for staff members.
CURRICULUM **Does physical education (PE) programming allow students to acquire developmentally appropriate skills, understand and experience the health benefits of active living, interact positively with others and act as leaders?**	**All** PE programming allows students to acquire developmentally appropriate skills, understand and experience the health benefits of active living, interact positively with others and act as leaders.	**Most** PE programming allows students to acquire developmentally appropriate skills, understand and experience the health benefits of active living, interact positively with others and act as leaders.	**Some** PE programming allows students to acquire developmentally appropriate skills, understand and experience the health benefits of active living, interact positively with others and act as leaders.	We have **just begun** considering how to better support students in acquiring developmentally appropriate skills, understanding and experiencing the health benefits of active living, interacting positively with others and acting as leaders.
CROSS-CURRICULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY **Do students have opportunities to be active in subject areas outside of physical education** (e.g., classroom-based DPA, energizers)**?**	Students have **frequent** opportunities to be active in subject areas other than PE.	Students have **occasional** opportunities to be active in subject areas other than PE.	Students have **inconsistent** opportunities to be active in subject areas other than PE.	We have **just begun** considering how to involve students in physical activity in subjects other than PE.

Active Living Rubric Results Summary Table

Rubric components	Assessment #1 (beginning of school year)			Is this a priority area for your school? (Check if yes)	Assessment #2 (end of the school year)		Additional comments
	Score (1–4)	What are you doing well?	What could you improve?		Score (1–4)	What actions were taken in this area?	
Policy							
Policy				☐			
Leadership support				☐			
Total (out of 8)							
Social and Physical Environments							
Inclusion				☐			
Accessibility				☐			
Variety				☐			
Frequency				☐			
Equipment and facilities				☐			
Staff modeling				☐			
Student leadership				☐			
Total (out of 28)							

Active Living Rubric Results Summary Table

Rubric components	Assessment #1 (beginning of school year)			Is this a priority area for your school? (Check if yes)	Assessment #2 (end of the school year)		Additional comments
	Score (1–4)	What are you doing well?	What could you improve?		Score (1–4)	What actions were taken in this area?	
Partnerships and Services							
Engagement				☐			
Community resources				☐			
Total (out of 8)							
Teaching and Learning							
Education				☐			
Staff learning opportunities				☐			
Curriculum				☐			
Cross-curricular physical activity				☐			
Total (out of 16)							
Total score for all four components (out of 60)	Assessment #1				Assessment #2		

References

This resource was adapted from the "Healthy Students Learn Better Health Champion" tool binder, Alberta Health Services, Central Zone Comprehensive School Health Program, 2009.

[1] The Joint Consortium for School Health. (2009). *Physical Activity within a Comprehensive School Health Model: A School Policy Makers' Toolkit.* Retrieved from http://www.jcshcces.ca/images/Physical%20Activity%20Toolkit%20School%20Policy%20Makers%20FINAL%20Eng.pdf.

[2] The Joint Consortium for School Health. (2009). *Physical Activity within a Comprehensive School Health Model: Best Practices Toolkit.* Retrieved from http://www.jcsh-cces.ca/images/Physical%20Activity%20Toolkit%20Best%20Practices%20FINAL%20Eng.pdf.

[3] The Joint Consortium for School Health. (2009). *Physical Activity within a Comprehensive School Health Model: Researchers Toolkit.* Retrieved from http://www.jcsh-cces.ca/images/Physical%20Activity%20Toolkit%20Researchers%20FINAL%20Eng.pdf.

[4] The Joint Consortium for School Health. (2009). *Physical Activity within a Comprehensive School Health Model: Decision Makers Toolkit.* Retrieved from http://www.jcsh-cces.ca/images/Physical%20Activity%20Toolkit%20Decision%20Makers%20FINAL%20Eng.pdf.

[5] Ever Active Schools. *Health Assessment Tool for Schools.* (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.everactive.org/health-assessment-tool-for-schools.

[6] Canadian Public Health Association. (2010). Supportive Environments for Learning: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity within Comprehensive School Health. *Canadian Journal of Public Health,* 101.