

Healthy Eating Rubric: Background and Instructions

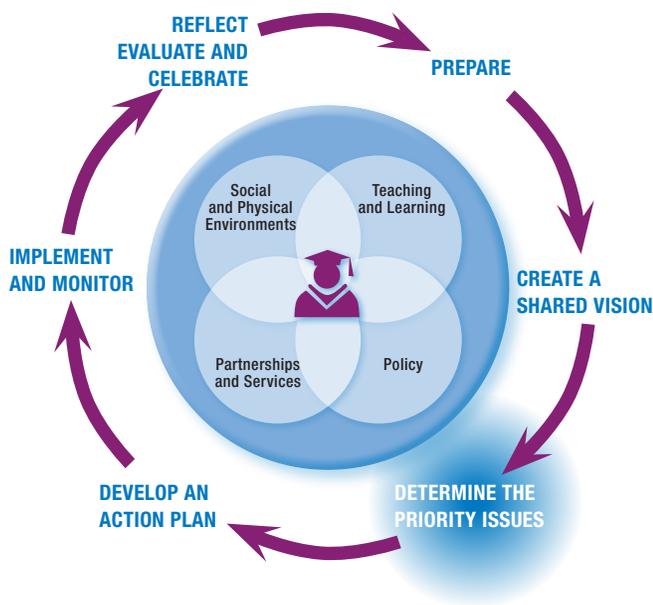
A rubric is one tool that can be used to assess the health of a school community.^a This user guide provides background information and instructions on how to conduct an assessment using the healthy eating rubric.

Materials

- healthy eating rubric (included)

Purpose

The healthy eating rubric is an assessment tool designed to help a school community evaluate the quality of their nutrition environment. The components of Comprehensive School Health (CSH) are embedded within this rubric to help identify healthy eating priorities within all areas of the school environment. Determining priority issues through school health assessments is a step in the process for 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 supports schools by

- offering insight into the overall quality of the nutrition environment within the school community
- helping identify priorities and set goals for improving healthy eating
- 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 nutrition initiatives
- initiating discussions related to healthy eating within the school community

All types of school community members (e.g., staff, students, parents, community representatives) can help complete the rubric. The rubric could 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^b prior to completing this rubric. The healthy schools rubric may help identify other important focus areas for your school.
2. Review the “Healthy Eating Rubric: Background and Instructions” form.
3. **Assessment #1:** Complete the healthy eating 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 Teaching and Learning component are lower, then the school may focus on incorporating healthy eating messages within the curriculum and providing skill-building activities for students and staff.
5. **Create action plan:** Create an action plan to address priorities related to healthy eating. The action plan should include goals, strategies, activities, outcomes and indicators to help track progress and ensure that improvements are being made.^b
6. **Assessment #2:** Complete the healthy eating rubric and results summary table at the end of the year to evaluate/celebrate successes and guide future planning related to healthy eating.

Notes

The rubric may be modified to suit different contexts. However, it is strongly advised that any modifications are based on sound knowledge of the CSH approach, healthy eating in school environments and rubric development.

The content of this rubric is based on a number of evidence-based resources.^{1,2,3} Other rubrics that can be used to assess the health of school communities include the healthy schools rubric, active living rubric and positive mental health rubric.^a

This rubric makes reference to “healthy foods and beverages.” Healthy foods and beverages are those that meet the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth.^c

^a For more information about school health assessments and available assessment tools, visit <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/7123.asp>.

^b For more information about the process for building healthy school communities, information about planning, an action plan template and the additional rubrics, visit <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/7123.asp>.

^c For information about the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth, visit <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/nutrition/Page2925.aspx>.

Healthy Eating Rubric

This rubric has been developed to assess the quality of the nutrition environment within a school community. The components of Comprehensive School Health (CSH) have been embedded to support the learning needs of all students through the promotion of healthy eating within the school community. Refer to the “Healthy Eating Rubric: Backgrounder and User Guide” for more information and instructions.

Circle the indicator in each row that best describes your school’s current level of achievement in that area.

	4: Keep it up!	3: Getting closer	2: On the road	1: Just beginning
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.	School- and/or district-level policies and/or procedures have been fully implemented to ensure that healthy eating is supported within the school community.	Policies and/or procedures are being developed and/or partially implemented to support healthy eating within the school community.	The school offers informal support for healthy eating, but has not yet addressed this issue in a formal way.	We have just begun to raise awareness of the importance of developing some guidelines to support healthy eating at school.
HEALTHY EATING POLICY Are there nutrition policies and procedures aligned with the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth ⁴ to support healthy eating at school?	All safety procedures and standards related to food handling, preparation, equipment and facilities are followed.	Most safety procedures and standards related to food handling, preparation, equipment and facilities are followed. Strategies to address gap areas are being developed.	Some safety procedures and standards related to food handling, sanitation and equipment are followed. We are raising awareness of these gap areas.	We have just begun to consider the importance of safety procedures and standards related to food handling, preparation, facilities and equipment.
FOOD SAFETY POLICY Are food safety guidelines in place to protect students from illness and injury?	The administration models healthy eating habits and provides leadership in creating a culture of healthy eating in the school community.	The administration supports healthy eating habits and choices.	The administration offers some support for healthy eating habits and choices, but leadership in this area is limited.	Administrators are just beginning to offer support for healthy eating habits and choices.
LEADERSHIP SUPPORT Does the school administration drive healthy eating 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
UNIVERSAL ACCESS Do all students have equal access to healthy food choices? (i.e., breakfast, snack, lunch programs, vending machines, canteen, cafeteria, classroom snacks are all inclusive)	All students have equal access to healthy food choices at school.	Most students have access to healthy food choices at school, but not all programs are inclusive.	Some students have access to healthy food choices, but access is limited by one or more factors (e.g., cost of healthy foods, availability, culturally inclusive).	We have just begun to consider how all students can access healthy food choices.
SPECIAL FOOD DAYS Are healthy options provided for special food days?	Almost all hot lunches and special food days in our school involve healthy food and beverages exclusively.	Healthy food and beverages are available for most hot lunches and special food days.	A few special food days offer healthy food and beverages.	We are just beginning to consider offering healthy food and beverages during hot lunches and special food days.
REWARDS and RECOGNITION Does the school use healthy rewards as incentives? (e.g., healthy foods or non-food items such as swim parties, extra DPA time, stickers, skipping ropes)	All rewards are healthy.	Most rewards are healthy.	Some rewards are healthy.	We have just begun to raise awareness of healthy alternatives for rewards.
FUNDRAISING Do fundraising efforts support healthy eating?	All fundraising efforts support healthy eating through the sale of non-food items or healthy foods.	Most fundraising efforts in our school support healthy eating through the sale of non-food items or healthy foods.	Some fundraising efforts in our school support healthy eating through the sale of non-food items or healthy foods.	We are just beginning to consider fundraising efforts in our school that will support healthy eating.
EATING ENVIRONMENT Is there an adequate amount of time and space for lunch?	At least 20 minutes is provided to eat lunch and adequate space and tables are available daily.	Either 20 minutes is provided or adequate space and tables are available daily, but not both. Strategies are being developed to address these issues.	Either 20 minutes is provided or adequate space and tables are available daily, but not both. We are raising awareness of these issues.	Currently there is less than 20 minutes offered for lunch and we do not have a designated space to eat lunch (e.g., students eat in the hallway).
CELEBRATIONS Are healthy choices available during team, club and classroom celebration activities?	All celebrations in our school involve healthy food and beverages.	Most celebrations in our school involve healthy food and beverages.	A few celebrations offer healthy food and beverages.	We are just beginning to consider offering healthy food and beverages at celebrations.
STAFF MODELLING Do staff members model healthy eating habits and choices?	Staff members model healthy food choices almost all of the time.	Staff members model healthy food choices most of the time.	Staff members model healthy food choices some of the time.	We have just begun considering strategies that encourage healthier food choices amongst staff.
STUDENT LEADERSHIP Are students engaged as leaders and decision-makers regarding healthy eating at school?	Students are always involved as decision-makers in the promotion of healthy eating.	Students are usually involved as decision-makers in the promotion of healthy eating.	Students are sometimes involved as decision-makers in the promotion of healthy eating.	We have just begun to consider strategies to increase student involvement as decision-makers in the promotion of healthy eating.

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

	4: Keep it up!	3: Getting closer	2: On the road	1: Just beginning
ENGAGEMENT Are there opportunities for all types of school community members (e.g., students, parents, school staff, administration, community members) to participate in school-wide initiatives that promote healthy eating (e.g., meal programs, healthy living fairs, hot lunches, family picnics/potlucks, community gardens)?	<p>All types of school community members are actively engaged in programs and activities that support healthy eating.</p>	<p>Several different types of school community members are involved in programs and activities that support healthy eating. Strategies to engage a broader range of stakeholder groups are being developed.</p>	<p>Staff and students are involved in programs and events that promote healthy eating and we are developing strategies that will encourage involvement from additional stakeholders.</p>	<p>We have just begun to consider the importance of engaging more school community members in programs and activities that promote healthy eating.</p>
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS Are partnerships established within the community to support healthy eating at school (e.g., Alberta Health Services, community organizations, local businesses)?	<p>Partnerships have been fostered within the community to support and sustain healthy eating choices at school.</p>	<p>Partnerships are being developed within the community to support healthy eating choices at school.</p>	<p>The school has initiated communication with potential partners within the community to support healthy eating at school.</p>	<p>We are just beginning to identify potential partners within the community that may be interested in supporting healthy eating at school.</p>
SUSTAINABILITY Do you have the necessary resources and support (e.g., volunteers, grants, donations) to sustain healthy choices within all food programs/outlets on an ongoing basis (e.g., snack programs, canteen, vending machine, cafeteria)?	<p>The necessary resources and supports are available to sustain healthy choices in all food outlets and programs.</p>	<p>The necessary resources and supports are available to sustain healthy choices in most food outlets and programs.</p>	<p>The necessary resources and supports are available to sustain healthy choices in some food outlets and programs.</p>	<p>We are just beginning to investigate ways of making healthy choices sustainable for our students.</p>
COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SERVICES Are community resources and services used to support healthy eating and wellness-related programs at school (e.g., PD, credible nutrition websites, educational tools and resources, community services)?	<p>Community resources and services are accessed frequently to encourage healthy eating and support wellness-related programs.</p>	<p>Community resources and services are accessed occasionally to encourage healthy eating and support wellness-related programs.</p>	<p>Community resources and services to support healthy eating are accessed on an inconsistent basis.</p>	<p>Awareness of the community resources and services available to support healthy eating is just beginning to be generated.</p>

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 educational opportunities for members of the school community to learn about healthy eating?	Regularly scheduled opportunities to learn about healthy eating are provided to the school community through a variety of educational materials, communications and events/initiatives.	Occasional opportunities to learn about healthy eating are provided to the school community through various educational materials, communications and events/initiatives.	Opportunities to learn about healthy eating are provided on an inconsistent basis , and educational materials, communications and events/initiatives are limited in number and/or accessibility.	We have begun considering the importance of providing educational opportunities for the school community to learn about the benefits of healthy eating.
CURRICULUM Is healthy eating reinforced in applicable subject areas (e.g., science, language arts, math, arts, social studies) using a coordinated approach?	Healthy eating is integrated into all applicable subject areas in a coordinated way.	Healthy eating is integrated into most applicable subject areas in a coordinated way.	Healthy eating is integrated into some applicable subject areas, and we are working on a more coordinated approach.	We have just begun considering ways of integrating healthy eating into applicable subject areas.
STAFF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES Are staff members provided with the appropriate training and resources to promote healthy eating among students?	Regularly scheduled training/information/PD opportunities related to the promotion of healthy eating are available to all staff members.	Occasional training/information/PD opportunities related to the promotion of healthy eating are available to all staff members.	Inconsistent training/information/PD opportunities related to the promotion of healthy eating are available to all staff members.	We have just begun considering the importance of providing training/information/PD opportunities related to the promotion of healthy eating for staff members.

Healthy Eating 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)	
Policy						
Healthy eating policy			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Food safety policy			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Leadership support			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Total (out of 12)						
Social and Physical Environments						
Universal access			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Special food days			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Rewards and recognition			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Fundraising			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Eating environment			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Celebrations			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Staff modeling			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Student leadership			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Total (out of 32)						

Healthy Eating 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			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Community partnerships			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Sustainability			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Community resources			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Total (out of 16)						
Teaching and Learning						
Education			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Curriculum			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Staff learning opportunities			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Total (out of 12)						
Assessment #1			Assessment #2			Additional comments
Total score for all four components (out of 72)						

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 Alberta Health Services. (n.d.). *Steps to a Healthy School Environment: School Nutrition Handbook*. Alberta: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-school-nutrition-handbook.pdf>.

² Alberta Health Services. (2010). *Marketing Healthy Food Choice*. Alberta: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-marketing-healthy-choices.pdf>.

³ Canadian Public Health Association. (2010). Supportive Environments for Learning: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Within Comprehensive School Health. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 101.

⁴ Alberta Health (2012). *Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth*. Retrieved from <http://www.healthyalberta.com/NutritionGuidelines-Sept2012.pdf>.