

Healthy Schools

Guide for the
education community
and its partners

For the **educational success**,
Health and well-being
of young people

Summary



CAVEAT

Please note that, in all references to “Healthy Schools,” the word “program” should be understood to mean what the French documents refer to as an *approche*, literally “approach.”

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English version

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In spring 2003, the Québec ministers of Health and Social Services and of Education, Recreation and Sports signed a new complementary services agreement¹ between their two networks focusing on a common objective: youth development. The agreement comprises several focuses of intervention, including one dealing with health, well-being and prevention. To update this focus of intervention, the agreement builds on the development and implementation of a comprehensive and concerted intervention in promotion and prevention that begins with the schools. This intervention, now called the "Healthy Schools program," is also one of the measures approved in the *Québec Public Health Program 2003-2012*.

This document provides an overview of the program, and summarizes *Healthy Schools: For the educational success, health and well-being of young people. Guide for the education community and its partners.*

The objective of the Healthy Schools guide is to provide a practical framework that makes it possible to:

- target the factors that determine well-being and educational success
- make the connections between health, well-being and the development of competencies
- create and reinforce connections among the school staff, between the school and families, and between the school and the community

- demonstrate the implementation of the Healthy Schools program by proposing a procedure, methods and tools to:
 - better understand the profile of educational success, health and well-being of the school's young people
 - facilitate the analysis of promotion and prevention actions already in place in the school and the community as well as the identification of existing partnerships
 - carefully select measures to be pursued, consolidated, improved, discontinued or developed
 - integrate the Healthy Schools program into the development or review of the school's educational project and success plan

The guide is intended for the school community (elementary and secondary schools and school boards), the health and social services network (health and social services centres, public health departments) as well as the community in a broader sense, through community, municipal and socioeconomic organizations.

1. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, *Two networks, one objective: The development of youth. Agreement for the complementarity of services between the health and social services network and the education network* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2003).

What does it involve?

The Healthy Schools program calls on the education network and the health and social services network to increase the effectiveness of promotion and prevention interventions in accordance with the school's primary mission.

The Healthy Schools program combines education and health-related concerns:

- by making the promotion of educational success, health and well-being and the prevention of social and health problems central to the school's educational project and success plan
- by inviting partners, including parents, to combine their promotion and prevention actions with those of the school
- by supporting a renewal of practices that reflects educational reform

The Healthy Schools program draws its inspiration from well-known principles and international research findings. It is advocated by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) of the United States as a means of increasing the effectiveness of promotion and prevention measures targeting young people of school age. It also draws on productive experiments conducted in Québec schools over the past few years.

The Healthy Schools program proposes comprehensive and concerted intervention in promotion and prevention in the school. It consists of a set of practical measures developed jointly by the various partners who work together to improve the success, health and well-being of young people.

The intervention is comprehensive in the sense that the key factors of young people's development are acted upon simultaneously through a range of actions. There are two levels of key factors:

- factors linked to the individual: self-esteem, social skills, living habits, safe and healthy behaviours
- factors linked to the environment: school environment, family environment and community environment; prevention services

If they are to reinforce and complement one another, these actions must simultaneously target young people, schools, families and the community.

Concerted intervention is essential, given the need to address several factors at different levels. Partners are therefore encouraged to work together in planning and implementing coherent actions in a coordinated and harmonious fashion.

This intervention strategy calls for a set of appropriate **promotion and prevention** actions. It affects all young people, including those who are vulnerable because they are exposed to health risks or because they are experiencing social maladjustments and learning difficulties.

The comprehensive and concerted intervention in promotion and prevention is planned **first in the school, in collaboration with the school's partners**, and is then developed further in young people's various living environments.

The school assumes a central role in the implementation of the Healthy Schools program while mobilizing the resources of the community. The school represents the preferred place for concerted action among partners and for the integration of actions. Besides the school, the health and social services centre (CSSS) plays an essential role due to its frontline mandate in health and social services among school-age children.

Why healthy schools?

Summary

1. Meet the needs of young people

by dealing with all the key factors influencing the choices young people make and with the problems that affect them by taking consistent, complementary action.

2. Link health and education goals to promote the success of young people

by focusing on the aspects of health and well-being that are conducive to the development of competencies and have a positive effect on level of education achieved, which in turn is an important factor in health protection.

3. Give added value to what is already being done

by reinforcing and maximizing the potential of actions already being carried out by schools and their partners, in such a way that they will contribute even more to creating conditions conducive to young people's educational success, health and well-being.

4. Avoid compartmentalization and prevent burnout

by ensuring that all promotion and prevention actions implemented by each stakeholder are integrated into a coherent, coordinated and harmonious plan in which everyone works toward shared objectives, thus enhancing motivation and ensuring that no one individual is overburdened.

5. Put into practice the recognized conditions for success

by reviewing ways of doing things, by putting into practice the recognized conditions for the success of promotion and prevention at school, and by involving the education community in this process.

Healthy Schools

The School and its Partners

MELS Regional Office • School Principal • Governing Board • Students • Teachers • Complementary Services Staff • Daycare Services • School Boards • CSSS • Municipal Organizations • Parents • Socioeconomic Organizations • Community Organizations • Public Health Department

Develop promotion and prevention actions targeting the key factors related

to individuals

Self-esteem

Social skills

Living habits

Safe and healthy behaviours

to the environment

School, family and community

Prevention services

for the young person, the school, the family and community

with link to

The educational project and the success plan

The Québec Education Program

The complementary educational services

The clinical project

The action plans and activities of partners

Parents' agenda



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What is the focus of the Healthy Schools program?



All partners, in conjunction with the team responsible for the implementation of the Healthy Schools program, are encouraged to work together:

- on the key factors of young people's development which are reflected in the *Québec Education Program* and in complementary educational services programs
- with the young person, the school, the family and the community
- based on actions linked to the situation of the school, parents, young people and partners
- based on a combination of appropriate promotion and prevention actions (e.g. activities, services, programs, policies and rules) adapted to the different phases in young people's development



The procedure proposed in the Healthy Schools programs makes it possible to:

- ensure that the actions implemented are appropriate
- coordinate all actions implemented, make connections between actions and partners, give meaning to the actions, and ensure cohesiveness
- recognize the strengths of different actions and potential problems in applying them
- consolidate or improve the actions implemented
- facilitate the renewal of practices

Above all, it recommends that practices be renewed in keeping with the education reform.

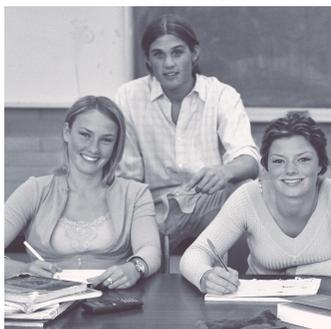
This means:

- choosing and developing, in partnership, the most *integrative* actions possible, that is, actions likely to simultaneously influence several factors, foster the development of young people's competencies and be reinforced at several levels of intervention

- making these actions a part of learning situations, projects and activities that are meaningful to young people
- combining several actions, because no single action can be effective on all factors and at all levels at once
- carefully combining certain *integrative* actions eliminates the need to implement numerous projects; in fact, by developing actions linked to the educational project's orientations and taking into consideration the key factors and the four levels of intervention, one project can be used to achieve several objectives.

The complete version of the guide offers a system of reference for *integrative* actions.

How to proceed?



The Healthy Schools program is integrated into the school's success plan and involves the same steps. In the event that the school is beginning to develop its success plan, and in keeping with the spirit of its primary mission (to provide instruction, to socialize, to provide qualifications), the key factors and levels of intervention proposed in this guide must be taken into consideration and integrated into planning. Where the success plan has already been developed, it should be reviewed, and the recommended targets and methods of the Healthy Schools program should be incorporated as needed.

Although the steps in the process appear to be traditional, they take on new meaning in the way that they are implemented. This process makes it possible to adopt a common vision of educational success, health and well-being, translate it into objectives to be pursued and develop actions and mechanisms to evaluate them.

Those responsible for *integrative* actions must ensure that they are developed:

with a view to acting on several key factors at the same time and at several levels

by various school stakeholders and community partners, in order to integrate several subject areas and complementary educational service programs and to facilitate links with families and the community

They must also ensure that the combination of these actions:

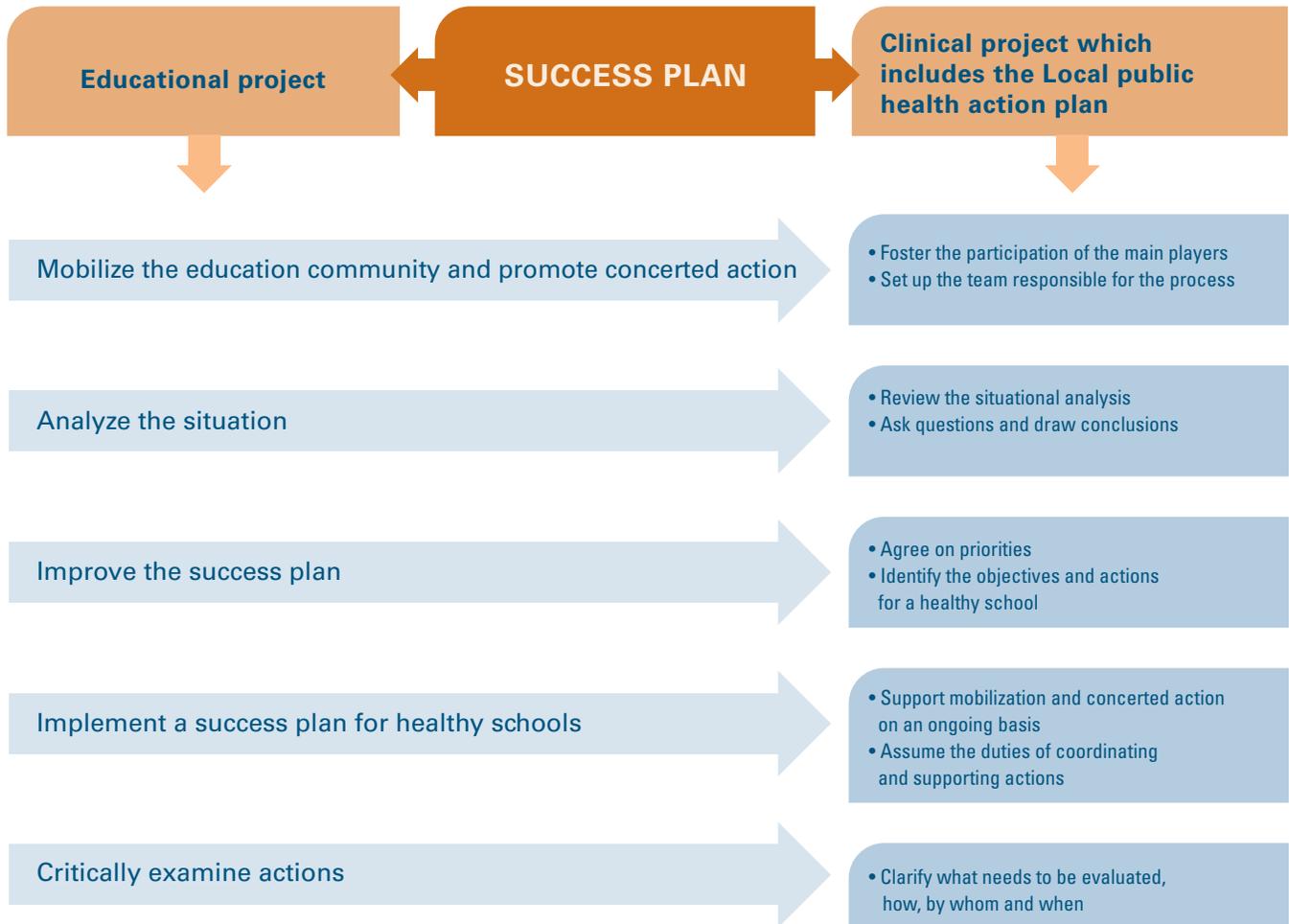
involves the participation of young people

aims to develop the different competencies (e.g. cooperate; use information and communications technologies; learn to communicate appropriately)

Tools are suggested for each stage of the implementation of the program. The tools are to be found in the toolbox distributed during the Healthy Schools Workshop provided as support for the implementation of the program.

An operational procedure for healthy schools

Integrated into the...



CONCLUSION

The Healthy Schools program serves as an integrative force to support schools in carrying out their mission to provide instruction, to socialize, and to provide qualifications.

It is rooted in the school's educational project and success plan.

The guide is a tool that brings people together, fosters commitment on the part of the school and its partners, and facilitates the development of healthy schools in Québec.

Healthy Schools

Renewing our practices together so that young people can fulfill their potential and succeed



Healthy Schools

