

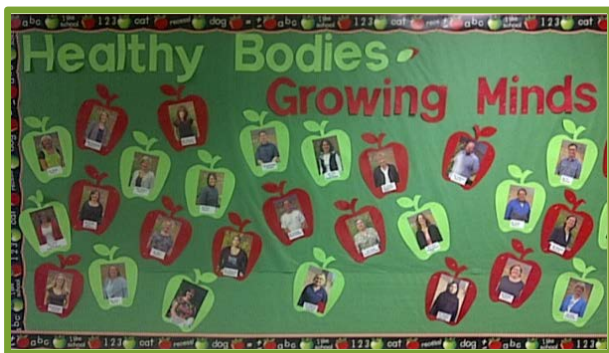
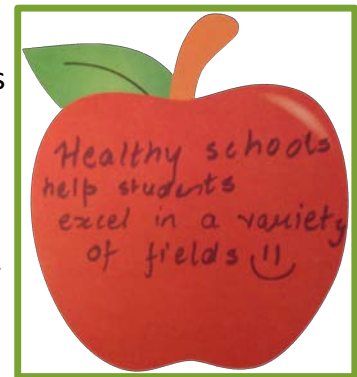
Principals' Leadership in Comprehensive School Health

Principals have the ability to influence a school culture. In order for Comprehensive School Health (CSH) to positively impact a school community, the role of the school principal is vital.^{1,2} Twenty-nine interviews with APPLE Schools principals led to the emergence of five stages of principal support.³ The principals with the greatest success in transitioning between the stages of principal support sufficiently understood APPLE Schools, and understood the school context, had confidence in their leadership abilities, and had pre-established trusting relationships in the school.

Stages of Principal Support	Quotes From Principals
1. Priming cultural change	<i>"...it's a huge role because you really set the vision...everybody is watching you for the leadership so you have to choose carefully the direction that you want to head"</i>
2. Advocating for cultural change	<i>"I think it's reminding everyone about the philosophy of the school...being relentless in talking about who we are"</i>
3. Negotiating, motivating and collaborating	<i>"...you have diametrically opposed views and you need to know how to acknowledge everybody's views but ...still keep the message clear"</i>
4. Monitoring and enabling others	<i>"...if you want people onboard...you need to approach it from a bottom up direction...you need to empower the people"</i>
5. Supporting and sustaining	<i>"... staff understand that this is not something that we can play with...we want to see [this]...in this building ten years from now."</i>

How Sakaw School Succeeds with Principal Supports

At the end of the 2010-11 school year, Mrs. Heather Kennedy, principal at Sakaw School, was approached to join APPLE Schools, finding herself in the thick of *priming for cultural change*. After determining that her values aligned with APPLE Schools, she pitched becoming the project to her staff. “The staff and I discussed it and decided to do it together. I didn’t want to do it unless all the staff supported it. Some of the staff were extraordinary champions”. To *advocate for cultural change* Mrs. Kennedy presented the idea of APPLE Schools to her school council, and spoke to students about how the school could look differently the following year.



As the 2011-12 school year progressed she *negotiated* with parents by collaboratively planning and reflecting on how APPLE Schools could extend into the home, *motivating* staff and students, and *collaborating* with all the school’s stakeholders. She communicated the new vision of a healthy Sakaw School during staff, parent and community member meetings, whole-school assemblies, and through student interactions. “I reminded the school council about healthy fundraising and hot lunches in the beginning.” Mrs. Kennedy worked with her office staff to *monitor* classroom snacks and birthday celebration foods brought in by parents, and *enabled* and empowered her staff to do the same.

Over the next three years, Sakaw School *supported and sustained* CSH by gradually adding healthy initiatives, focusing on student leadership and staying steadfastly committed to a building healthy school. In 2014-15, Sakaw School saw a doubling of the student and staff population. “As a staff we required reminders, and we recommitted.” As an in-tune principal, Mrs. Kennedy saw the importance of reminding the school community of their health commitments by revisiting all five stages of principal support to ensure their continued success as healthy school leaders.



- ¹ Storey K. E. (2013) Implementing Comprehensive School Health: From ‘Doing’ to ‘Facilitating’. Presented at the Ever Active Schools, Fourth Annual Shaping the Future Conference, January, Kananaskis, Alberta, Canada.
- ² Storey, K. E., Spitters, H. S., Cunningham, C., Schwartz, M., & Veugelers, P. J. (2011). Teachers perceptions of the Alberta Project Promoting active Living and healthy Eating: APPLE Schools. *Health and Education Academic Journal*, 3(2), 1-18. Retrieved from <http://ojs.acadiau.ca/index.php/phenex/article/view/1422>
- ³ Roberts, E., Nicole, M., Montemurro, G., Veugelers, P. J., Gleddie, D., & Storey, K. E. (2015, August 19). Implementing comprehensive school health in Alberta, Canada: The principal's role. *Health Promotion International*, 1-10. doi: 10.1093/heapro/dav083