



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release – March 21, 2006

HOWE SOUND SCHOOL DISTRICT PLAYS LEADING ROLE IN PROMOTING STUDENT FITNESS AND HEALTH

Student fitness and health have been growing concerns in North America for a number of years, and the Howe Sound School District, situated in the 2010 Olympic Corridor, has embarked on an ambitious program to do something about it.

During its recent Throne Speech, the BC Government announced that it will now act to integrate physical fitness and healthy eating habits throughout B.C.'s public schools and will establish new standards to ensure all students have a minimum level of activity in every school.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Rick Erickson said the Howe Sound School District already has a varied and comprehensive set of programs in place to promote student fitness and health, including several that are locally developed. In addition, the School District is one of only a few districts in the province to have a health and fitness coordinator.

“With the coming of the 2010 Winter Olympics, there has never been a better time to encourage our students to exercise regularly, eat nutritiously, and get involved in recreational and sporting activities,” Dr. Erickson said.

Health and Fitness Coordinator Eric Jones, a teacher at Howe Sound Secondary, applauded the work being done at the school level. “We believe in a grass roots approach where schools take the lead. My job is to support their work.”

The District has three locally developed programs. “Kids in the Kitchen” is an interactive nutrition program for children aged six to 11 and is being piloted by Squamish and Stawamus Elementary Schools with the support of the teaching kitchen at Howe Sound Secondary.

Another program piloted by Howe Sound and Don Ross Secondary Schools helps grade 10 students get a head start on their graduation portfolio by completing the health related requirements before their grade 11 year. A third program piloted by Howe Sound Secondary helps grade 8 students to gain an understanding of portfolio assessment with an emphasis on health and fitness. Students are required to complete a month-long activity log as part of their Planning 8 course.

Other programs being offered in the district include:

- **Heart Smart Kids**, a classroom based heart and health program for kindergarten through grade 6 students developed by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC;

- **Action Schools! BC Program**, a best practices physical activity and health eating model designed to assist elementary schools in creating individualized action plans to promote health living;
- **Peter Twist Core Conditioning Program** to help PE teachers and coaches integrate the latest research into curriculum, physical education and sports practices;
- **Gymnastics BC Kids Can Move Program** designed to help teachers provide their students with the type of gymnastics that will enable them to achieve a level of physical “literacy” and confidence necessary to participate in any sport or recreational activity; and
- **SportsFit Program** which promotes healthy, active lifestyles and increases sports awareness through an online sports education program that connects students personal preferences and physical attributes with a number of winter and summer sports.

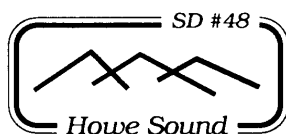
To complement these school programs, the School District has developed a number of partnerships with community recreation groups to offer summer camps for students interested in exploring recreation, sports and culture. A 2010 Legacies Now grant helps to fund these camps.

A joint partnership with Brennan Park Recreation Centre in Squamish has made it possible to offer a playground leadership program specifically designed for Squamish elementary schools. The program is funded by a Dodge Diabetes grant.

In partnership with Coast Garibaldi Health, the School District has formed a Health Committee which advises the Board of School Trustees on health related policy, regulation, procedures, services and curriculum development and implementation.

For further information contact Dr Rick Erickson, Superintendent of Schools (604-892-5228).

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