

# School Health Team 2020-2023 Report



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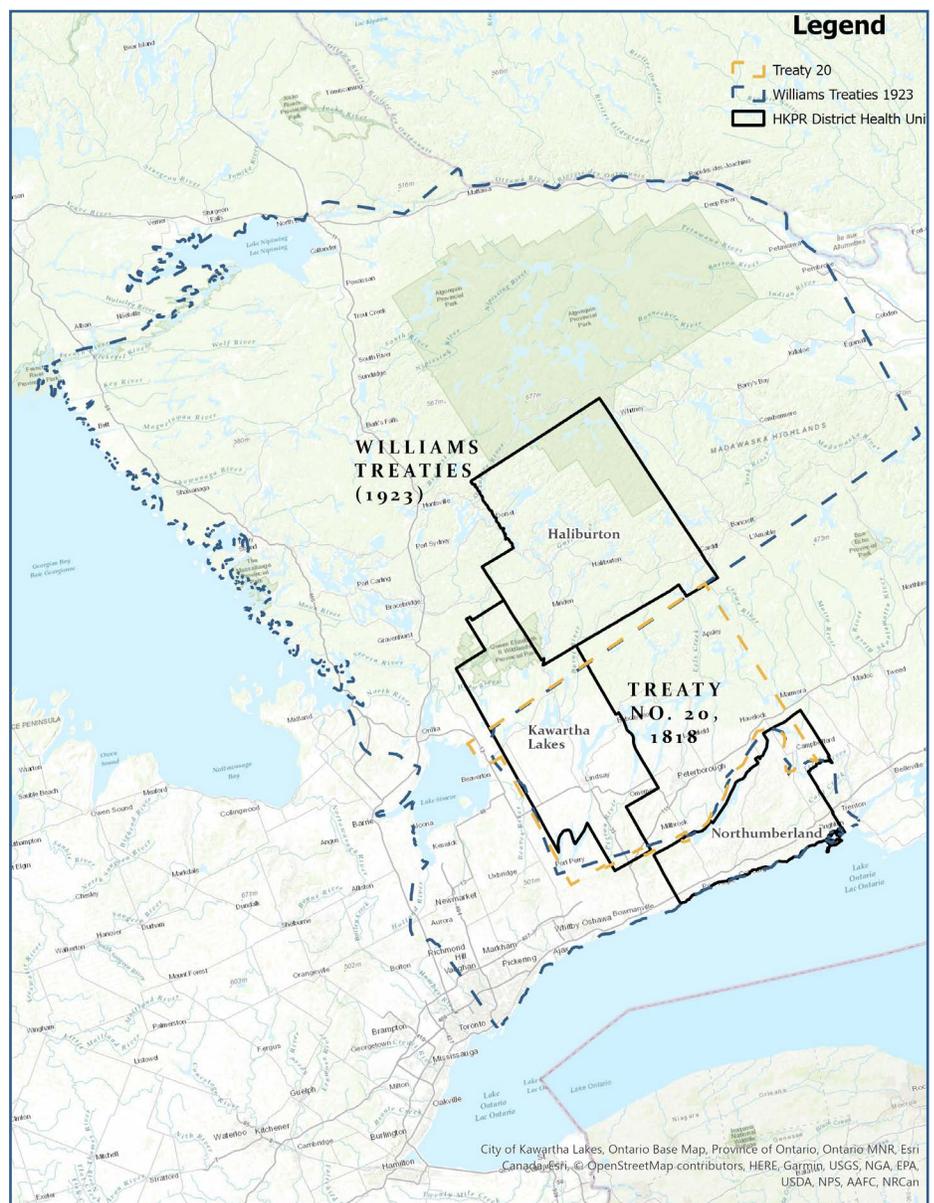
**Vision** | Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities

**Mission** | We actively & collaboratively engage with our partners using the foundations of a healthy school approach to build healthy and equitable school communities.

**Values** | We actively demonstrate our Health Unit Values with an emphasis on Teamwork, Collaboration and Engagement as a team and with our partners.

## Land Acknowledgement

The Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge (HKPR) District Health Unit is situated on the traditional territories of the Michi Saagiig and Chippewa Nations. This includes the territories of Treaty 20 and the Williams Treaties. We respectfully acknowledge that these Nations are the stewards and caretakers of these lands and waters for all time and that they continue to maintain this responsibility to ensure their health and integrity for generations to come. The HKPR District Health Unit recognizes the many harms done to Indigenous Peoples and our collective responsibility to right those wrongs. As an organization that is rooted in a colonial system, we are committed to change, to building meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities and in improving our understanding of local Indigenous Peoples as we celebrate their cultures and traditions, serve their communities, and responsibly honour all our relations.



**Note to the reader: This map was developed using the following sources:**

[Government of Canada, Williams Treaty](#)

[Land Information Ontario, Treaty 20](#)

[Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Boundaries](#)

## 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 School Years

The School-Focused Nursing Initiative was announced in August 2020 with provincial funding for eight contract positions for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit (HKPRDHU).

The School Health Team (SHT) worked in collaboration with school boards, schools, and families to ensure the implementation of COVID-19 guidelines with respect to school closures, cohort dismissals and isolation requirements. Existing partnerships were strengthened, and new partnerships forged, in this high stress environment.

## 2022/2023 School Year

In June of 2022, HKPRDHU committed to five permanent school health nurse positions with the intent to broaden the team's scope beyond the COVID-19 response to address the School Health Program Standard and related [Guidelines and Protocols of the Ontario Public Health Standards](#).

Based on the work of the Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health and the Ontario Ministry of Education's Foundations for a Healthy School, the SHT developed a framework reflecting its approach to comprehensive school health. Evidence-based implementation processes were also created in collaboration with Peterborough Public Health.

The fall of 2022 focused on relationship building at the school level as well as conducting brief and in-depth assessments to identify school health needs. Program and resource identification and development to address the identified needs continued over the 2022/2023 school year. The SHT also began providing tailored support to schools based on these assessments. Programming included responding to school consultations, sessions focused on socio-emotional learning and mental health, and investigation into additional best practice programs to address identified needs.

The SHT was also highly involved with the implementation of the School Based Immunization Program (SBIP). SBIP ensures the provision of up-to-date immunizations according to the current [Publicly Funded Immunization Schedules for Ontario](#) and in accordance with the Immunization of School Pupils Act through school-based clinics.

### School Health Team Key Facts



**80**

schools that our  
staff service  
in our communities



**16**

approximate number  
of schools per  
Public Health Nurse



**4**

number of  
partnering  
Public Health Units

<b>Consultations</b>	<b>268</b> Completed	<b>Themes:</b> Mental Health, Immunization, Healthy Eating
<b>Brief Assessments</b>	<b>53</b> Completed	<b>Themes:</b> Social, communication skills, Self-regulation, Conflict resolution, Bullying
<b>In-Depth Assessments</b>	<b>25</b> Completed	
<b>Programs*</b>	<b>4</b> PALS	
<b>Events**</b>	<b>5</b> Brain Day Workshops (all secondary schools)  <b>10</b> WTK and Welcome to Grade 9 Events	
<b>Presentations ***</b>	<b>19</b> Vaping Prevention Presentations  <b>19</b> Social Emotional and Mental Health Presentations	

## \*Programs

Programs are defined as activities implemented in all schools OR including multiple sessions/components in one or more schools and require the most extensive planning and engagement of SHT initiatives.

### **Playground Activity Leaders in Schools (PALS)**

PALS is an elementary school, student leadership program. It provides opportunities to help foster a sense of belonging and inclusion among students, while engaging them in physical activity in the school yard. The program motto is "There's always room for one more."

### **Not An Experiment (NAE)**

NAE is a health promotion initiative that aims to prevent the initiation and escalation of vaping among youth.

### **You're the Chef (YTC)**

You're the Chef (YTC) is a hands-on cooking program that develops the skills and confidence for Grade 5, 6, 7 and 8 students to prepare tasty recipes emphasizing vegetables and fruit.

## \*\*Events

Events are defined as one-time activities with a broader scope than presentations in that they involve more than one classroom e.g. all grade 9s, whole school assemblies, etc. and/or additional members of the school community such as staff and/or parents.

## Brain Day

Workshops for all Grade 9 students in a school focusing on mental health and injury prevention. Students are engaged in the planning and implementation.

## Welcome to Kindergarten (WTK)

WTK events are opportunities to engage with parents/students on a variety of health-related topics applicable to Kindergarten-aged students. (i.e. oral health, nutrition, immunization, prevention of the spread of illness, childhood development).

## \*\*\*Presentations

Presentations are defined as one-time education sessions with an individual classroom or group of students.

## 2023/2024 School Year

Evidence-informed, programming expanded in the 2023/2024 school year with a continued focus on mental health. The focus on vaping increased in response to school-based assessments and the inter-related nature of increased vaping and mental health concerns reflected in the literature. One of our HKPRDU Registered Dietitians (RD) also joined the team. The SHT RD is responsible for supporting the three School Nutrition Program committees within HKPRDHU and leading school programming related to Healthy Eating. Implementation of the Playground Activity Leaders in Schools program began with pilot schools in 2023. In addition, the Not an Experiment vaping prevention program was provided to all Grade 4 students. A pilot of the You're the Chef program was also completed in the Spring of 2024.

The role of the SHT with SBIP expanded this school year to include a Lead role in school-based clinics. Our team also provided extensive support to the enforcement of the Immunization of School Pupils Act which was resumed this school year and included all grades and all vaccines in a concerted effort to "catch up" students from COVID-19.

## School Health Team Key Facts



Significantly more HKPRDHU youth 12-17 report drinking alcohol and smoking in the past 12-months than Ontario as a whole.



During the 2022-23 school year, 1,917,259 meals were served by school nutrition programs in the HKPRDHU region.



In 2019, slightly over one fifth (15.3%) of children or youth (1-17 years old) were marginally, moderate or severely food insecure.

<b>Consultations</b>	<b>700</b> completed	<b>Themes:</b> Immunization, Healthy Eating, Mental Health
<b>Brief Assessments</b>	<b>53</b> Completed	<b>Themes:</b> Mental health, Violence and bullying, Vaping, Healthy relationships/healthy coping, Social emotional learning, Interpersonal relationships, Food insecurity, Healthy sexuality, Infectious disease prevention/hygiene
<b>In-Depth Assessments</b>	<b>26</b> completed	
<b>Programs</b>	<b>5</b> PALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· You're the Chef pilot with one school</li> <li>· NAE provided to all Gr 4 classes</li> </ul>
<b>Events</b>	<b>24</b> Events:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· 6 Brain Day</li> <li>· 12 Booth Displays (ie Parent Teacher nights, Welcome to Kindergarten)</li> <li>· 2 Gr 9 Day Orientation</li> <li>· 2 RD Great Big Crunch Events</li> <li>· 2 Day Professional Development for PVNCCDSB (Vaping and Substance Use)</li> </ul>
<b>Presentations</b>	<b>152</b> Presentations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· 62 NAE</li> <li>· 22 Topic Requested Presentations (ie. grade 7/8 school health committee, health and wellbeing, kindness, healthy relationships)</li> <li>· 2 Parent Council Presentations</li> <li>· 66 Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Presentations (primary division)</li> </ul>
<b>SBIP Clinics</b>	Total hours: <b>533.25</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Fall SBIP total hours: 352.25</li> <li>· Spring SBIP total hours: 181 (note two unfilled SHT positions during this time)</li> </ul>
<b>ISPA Support</b>	Total hours: <b>485</b>	
<b>School Nutrition Programs</b>	Total schools with programs: <b>80</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Total meals served: 2,462,378</li> <li>· Amount of locally raised funds provided to SNPs: \$57,966</li> </ul>

## Qualitative Evaluations

### PALS

Staff facilitators indicated that students demonstrated increased leadership skills and physical activity as well as decreased staff time required to deal with conflicts at recess after PALS was implemented.

#### Staff/Administration response to what went well:

- The partnership with the health unit
- There was lots of student interest and participation.
- The leadership in the students – leaders became great leaders
- “Keep it going, so proud of this program”

#### What worked well from Student PALS Leaders:

- Playing games decreased boredom at recess
- Warm up and tag games
- Younger students listened to the PALS leaders

### Gr 8 Mental Health Promotion Leadership Pilot (based on School Mental Health Ontario modules)

#### Feedback from Gr 8 Student Leaders:

- All felt included in the planning and program development.
- Breaking into small groups worked well.
- The younger students had fun, especially with the yoga activities.
- The breathing techniques had the most impact and were good in showing them how they can calm themselves.

#### Feedback from Teachers:

- The overall experience and leadership opportunities were very good & appropriate for the age ranges.
- The youth engagement approach right from the start that students led the planning process was very positive.
- Interested in seeing this started earlier in the year with more sessions on an ongoing basis.

### Partnerships

HKPRDHU maintains Memorandums of Understanding with all three School Boards and the partnering PHUs. The SHT maintains a significant level of partnership and engagement with the school community for the purpose of collaboration on programming and emerging issues through the formal committees listed below as well as individual engagement at the school level.

## School Health Team Key Facts



85% of Ontario children and youth do not consume adequate vegetables and fruit.



In 2021, 19% of students in grades 7 to 12 in Ontario reported using a vaping device and 9% reported using a tobacco cigarette in the past year.



Students who used vaping devices in the past year rated their overall mental or emotional health as “fair” or “poor” at a higher percentage than those who did not use any vaping device (59% vs. 34%)

## Local

- Each SHT nurse supports a core pool of schools with a focus on engaging the school community in comprehensive school health.
- The SHT RD supports School Nutrition Program partnerships in each of the three counties served by the Health Unit.

## Regional

- **Mental Health Working Group**  
Durham Region Health Department (DRHD), Peterborough Public Health (PPH) and HKPRDHU
- **Joint DSB-LPHA**  
KPRDSB, PVNCCDSB, DRHD, HKPRDHU, Hastings Prince Edward Public Health (HPEPH), PPH
- **TLDSB-SMDHU-HKPR**  
Trillium Lakelands District School Board (TLDSB), Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) and HKPRDHU
- **Memorandums of Understanding**  
Agreements with DSBs and partnering PHUs outlining the commitment of public health and education to collaborate and work together to positively influence the lives of children and youth and their families.

## Provincial

- **Ontario School Health Managers in Public Health**  
School Health managers from across the province, Ministries of Health and Environment reps, Public Health Ontario rep.
- **Ontario Dietitians in Public Health – School Nutrition Working Group**  
Dietitians from across the province.

## Next Steps

Further investigation into evidence-informed programming to address substance use at the school level was completed in the summer of 2024 to inform planning for the next school year. This will include the integration of formal evaluation into established program models. The SHT will continue to ensure the alignment of its framework and programming with the existing and revised Ontario Public Health Standards as outlined below.

## Ontario Public Health Standards Addressed by the SHT

Current OPHS	Draft OPHS <i>(update when final available)</i>
School Health Standard Requirements 1. 2. 3. 4. 8. 9. 10.  School Health Guideline	Comprehensive Health Promotion Standard  Requirements 1. 2. 3. 4. with emphasis on 2. & 3.  Comprehensive Health Promotion Protocol  Health Promotion Surveillance Requirement 1.  Comprehensive Health Promotion Strategies  Requirements 1. with emphasis on b) iii
Substance Use and Injury Prevention Standard Requirement 2.	Substance Use Prevention and Harm Reduction  Requirements 1. 2.
Infectious and Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Requirement 2.	Immunization  Requirements 1.c) 2. 5. 7. 8.
Chronic Disease Prevention and Well-Being Standard  Requirements 1. 2.	Partnership, Collaboration, Coordination, and Knowledge Exchange  Requirements  1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

### School Health Team Key Facts



Most students who used cigarettes (85%) or vaping devices (74%) in the past year expressed desire to discuss mental health or emotional problems with someone but were uncertain where to seek help.



Psychological distress was significantly higher among students who vaped in the past year, compared to their non-vaping peers.



The COVID-19 pandemic was reported to have negatively impacted the mental health of students who had used cigarettes and vaping devices in the past year compared to their peers.

## References

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Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS), 2016/2017. Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), HKPRDHU over-sample.

Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health. [JCSH Foundational Documents – Joint Consortium for School Health](#)

Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS), 2015, 2017. HKPRDHU and the Institute for Social Research (ISR), York University.

Snapshots. Public Health Ontario. Available at: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/DataAndAnalytics/Snapshots/Pages/default.aspx> [Retrieved, 24 September 2018; 27 March 2019].

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