

# Healthy Schools Program Annual Report 2021-2022



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Since 2018, Hastings Prince Edward Public Health (HPEPH) has partnered with Hastings Prince Edward District School Board (HPEDSB) and Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic District School Board (ALCDSB) to operationalise the [School Health Guideline, 2018](#) (or as current) in Hastings and Prince Edward Counties (HPEC). Through this collaboration we have jointly established the Healthy Schools Program. This document highlights all the great work we have done together over the past year and will help guide planning for the following school year.

## Healthy Schools Program

School administrators were invited to complete the Healthy Schools Program survey in June to help evaluate the work done over the 2021-2022 school year. The survey respondents indicated they were either very satisfied (70%) or satisfied (30%) with the support provided by HPEPH staff throughout the school year. Respondents were also all very satisfied (60%) or satisfied (40%) with the connection and partnership between their school and HPEPH.

Healthy Schools team members supported the delivery of curriculum in all grades with a variety of evidence-based presentations. Health promoters and nurses co-presented with some educators and promoted the presentations for others to use on their own. The supports most commonly requested from educators included presentations on:

- Vaping – “Not an Experiment” (grades 7&8) – focus on health effects, the vaping industry and harm reduction
- Contraception and Birth Control (grades 8-12)
- Sexually Transmitted Infections (grades 7-12)
- Sexual Consent (grades 9-12)

Healthy Schools team members actively supported the transition to kindergarten for the youngest learners in our region. Staff attended kindergarten orientation events at local schools and provided handouts and education to parents and caregivers. Public Health provided over 200 copies of the [Let's Go to Kindergarten booklet](#) to local families through school requests and events. Staff provided a total of 7 education sessions from the Kids Have Stress Too! program to parents and caregivers at 3 different community organizations that facilitated Kindergarten Readiness programs for children. In collaboration with Kingston, Lennox and Addington Public Health, HPEPH also created and posted a short video called '[Let's Go to Kindergarten! Helping Your Child Manage Stress](#)' based on the Kids Have Stress Too! program, the video has been viewed over 300 times on YouTube.

The Healthy Schools team completed several training and professional development opportunities this year to better equip staff to support schools. These included:

- QUASH – a behavioural approach to youth vaping and smoking cessation,
- Kids Have Stress Too! (preschool and kindergarten program) – to promote social-emotional development and stress-management strategies for children,

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- Kids Have Stress Too! (grade 7-9) – a student-centred inquiry-based approach to teach stress-management strategies and skills and build emotional resiliency,
- ASIST Suicide Prevention Training program – offered through HPEDSB,
- ALCDSB Catholic faith session, and
- Ontario Healthy School Conference.

Additional information for school staff about the healthy schools program can be found at [hpePublicHealth.ca](https://hpePublicHealth.ca).

## Healthy Schools Resources

HPEPH offers a variety of education and curriculum support resources through the [hpePublicHealth.ca](https://hpePublicHealth.ca). These resources included monthly newsletters from HPEPH, newsletter inserts for school distribution, social media resources, lending kits and action guides. All these resources are evidence-based and aimed at supporting educators with their teaching of health-related curriculum.

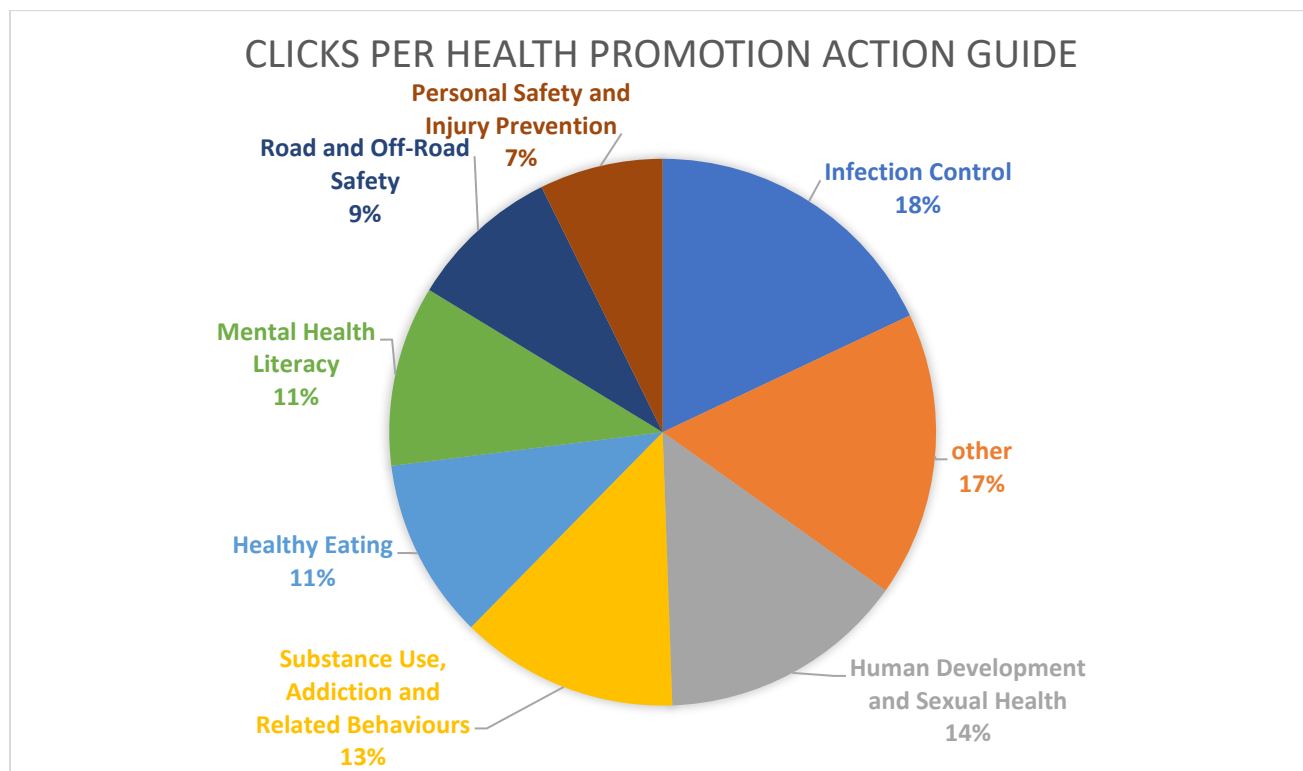
HPEPH offers newsletter inserts and social media templates to schools based on monthly healthy schools themes or other emerging public health topics. These are intended to help schools share health related information with families. All survey respondents were either very satisfied (75%) or satisfied (25%) with these resources. The Healthy Schools Team continued to offer the monthly Healthy Schools newsletters to educators throughout this school year to help promote resources available on the website. Nine newsletters were published and emailed to a subscriber list of 82 recipients. On average 55% of recipients opened the newsletter email. The most requested lending kit was the Glow Germ kit, requested by 11 schools, which supports teaching student's proper handwashing skills.

## Website and Action Guides

From August 2021 to June 2022, the HPEPH Healthy Schools webpage (for educators) had been viewed 680 times and the links on this page had been clicked 309 times. The action guides most frequently viewed were about infection control, human development and sexual health, substance use, addiction and related behaviours. See Table 1 for a full breakdown of which action guides experienced the most website activity. The "other" category in Table 1 includes the following topics: immunization, parent and family engagement, physical activity, sun safety and UV, violence and bullying, oral health and vision screening.

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**Table 1. Percentage of clicks per Health Promotion Action Guide 2021-2022**



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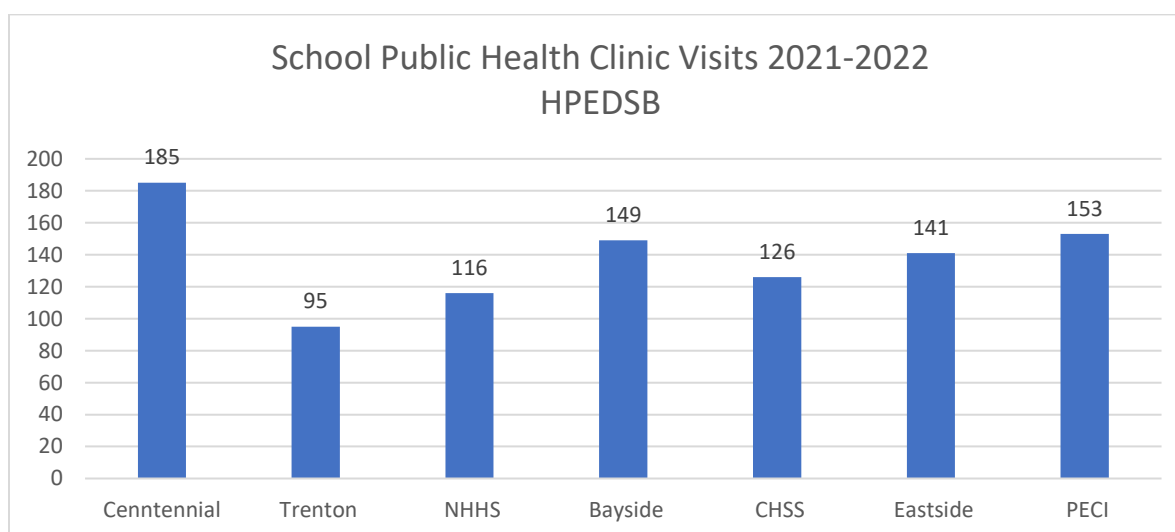
## School Public Health Clinics – HPEDSB

School Public Health Clinics were provided weekly at seven HPEDSB secondary schools. Public Health Nurses provided the following services to support student health and well-being:

- Contraception,
- Emergency Contraception,
- Pregnancy Tests,
- STI Testing and Treatment,
- Tobacco and Vaping Cessation,
- Mental Health Tier 1 Support and Referrals,
- Substance Use Referrals, and
- Immunization.

During the 2021-2022 school year, the public health clinics in HPEDSB schools received a total of 965 visits (Table 2).

**Table 2. School Public Health Clinic Visits from September 2021 to June 2022**



School public health nurses work closely with student success teams, school administrators and social workers to coordinate referrals and care for students. School administrators and school support staff who responded to the survey were either very satisfied (50%) or satisfied (50%) with the services provided to students through the school public health clinics and 100% of survey respondents said they would refer a student to the public health clinics.

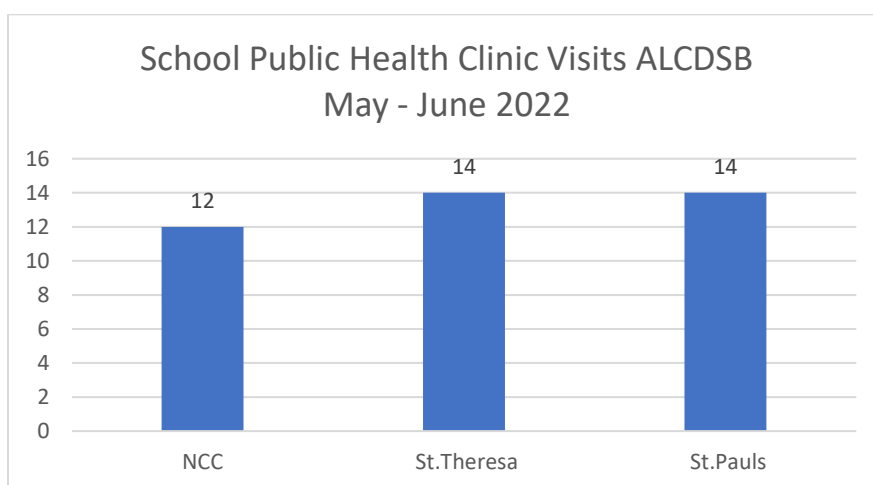
School public health clinics help to “eliminate many barriers for students seeking healthcare services” (PHN) and are “making a difference in these students lives and promoting a healthy school community” (PHN).

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## NEW School Public Health Clinics at ALCDSB

In partnership with ALCDSB, weekly School Public Health clinics were established at the three ALCDSB secondary schools this school year. Public health nurses provided services focused on tobacco and vaping cessation. Public Health Nurses opened the clinics in May 2022 and had a total of 40 visits in May and June 2022 (Table 3) during this soft launch.

**Table 3. School Public Health Clinic Visits from May – June 2022**



Next year the Healthy Schools team looks forward to promoting these clinics to increase uptake and broadening their contributions to the school community.

## Immunization

The Grade 7 School Immunization Program offers school-based vaccinations for hepatitis B, human papillomavirus (HPV), and meningococcal disease. The HPEPH immunization team offered grade 7 catch up clinics in schools this school year, since the program has been paused since March 2020 due to pandemic response and restrictions. These vaccinations were offered to students in Grade 7, 8 and 9 in all local schools (elementary, secondary, and private) to facilitate catching up on vaccinations that were missed during the pandemic. Approximately 1400 students attended these clinics between November to December 2021 and March to June 2022. Additional information for school staff about the school immunization program can be found at [hpePublicHealth.ca](https://hpePublicHealth.ca).

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## Oral Health

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic response, the oral health program in schools was paused from March 2020 to February 2022. When school-based Oral Health (OH) Screening resumed in February 2022, it was decided that all schools would be considered "High Risk" due to pandemic response related service gaps and limitations. As a result, all JK, SK Grade 2, 4, 7 students were eligible for screening. Schools selected for the OH screening were based on data from the intensity of previous oral health screening and Educational Opportunities Index data for HPE. The severity of tooth decay in a population is measured through the average number of teeth which are decayed, filled, or missing (due to cavities). Results from 21-22 school screenings are as follows in Table 4 and 5, Table 5 provides the DMF (decayed, missing, filled) results. Screening was completed at a total of 33 schools between February - June 2022.

**Table 4: 2021-2022 Oral Health School Screening Results**

Indicator	Number of Students	Percentage
Total number of students eligible for screening in schools where it was offered	3847	100%
Total number of students screened	3138	81.5%
Total number of students absent at time of screening	483	12.5%
Total number of students who refused at time of screening	40	1%
Total number of students who were excluded from screening by their caregivers	186	5%

**Table 5: 2021-2022 Oral Health School Screening DMF\* Results**

Indicator	Number of Students	Percentage
DMF* <0 for screening students	1726	55.0%
Decay teeth count for screened students	676 (424 urgent care)	21.5% (13.5%)
Missing teeth count for screened students	297	9.5%
Filled teeth count for screened students	1133	36.0%

\*Decayed, Missing, Filled teeth

Public Health staff followed up with 424 students (13.5%) who were identified as needing urgent dental care and provided support to their families to help them access the dental care that was needed. Additional information for school staff about the oral health school screening can be found at [hpePublicHealth.ca](https://hpepublichealth.ca).

## COVID-19 Pandemic Response

HPEPH offered ongoing support to schools as the COVID-19 pandemic continued throughout the 2021-2022 school year. Public health nurses and health promoters offered infection prevention and control (IPAC) assessments, consultations, education, and management of cases, contacts, and outbreaks. Schools reported

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in the Healthy Schools Program survey that they were all either very satisfied or satisfied with the COVID-19 supports that they received from public health throughout the school year.

## **Outbreaks**

Between September and December 2021 there were 28 confirmed outbreaks of COVID-19 in schools/school bus or child care facilities. A school outbreak is defined as two or more cases with an epidemiological link where one of the cases could plausibly have been acquired within the school environment. These outbreaks ranged from 2 to 19 cases in total being directly connected to the outbreak, with the mean cases per outbreak being 2.29. Of the school/bus/child care facility outbreaks, 18 occurred in Belleville, 5 in Quinte West, 3 in Central Hastings, 1 in Tyendinaga and Deseronto, and 1 in Prince Edward County.

## **Absence Reporting**

At the end of December 2021, due to changes in Ministry of Health guidance, public health no longer declared outbreaks within school settings. From January to June 2022 schools and childcare facilities reported to public health if their illness related absences were greater than 30% above baseline. During this time, 10 such reports were received. and an HPEPH staff member followed up with the location, offered additional infection control support, and provided a letter to inform staff, students and families.

## **COVID-19 Vaccination**

HPEPH also offered COVID-19 vaccination clinics at schools to increase access to vaccines for staff, students and families. 39 clinics were offered between September 2021-May 2022 with a total of 1,840 vaccinations given at these clinics. The majority of these clinics were offered in the fall (26 clinics) and the remaining were offered between January and May (13 clinics).

## 2022-2023 School Year

The Healthy Schools Program continues to grow and respond to the needs of our community. As the need for COVID-19 related support in schools lessens, the Healthy Schools Team will be broadening their contributions to school health. In the coming school year, HPEPH plans to promote and encourage elementary schools to explore the Healthy Schools toolkit to help set well-being goals, as well as continue to provide curriculum supports. In secondary schools, the Team will also be implementing a youth focused Healthy Schools toolkit, continuing to offer school public health clinics and providing students with support related to vaping awareness and cessation.

The Oral Health Team plans to resume full OH screening in all schools and prioritize the screening for schools that did not receive screening in 2021/22.

The School Immunization Program will be offering Grade 7 clinics and catch up clinics again for the 22-23 school year to students in grade 7, 8 and 9.





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On behalf of the Healthy Schools Team at HPEPH, we are excited to continue to build relationships and connections with our school communities and look forward to continuing to work together to establish Healthy Schools in HPEC.

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