

Promising Practices  
A Self-Reflection Guide to  
Implementing Physical Education and Health  
In the Midst of a Pandemic

Fall 2021

PHE Saskatchewan

*“There is a reason your windshield is bigger than your rear view mirror. What is in front of us is much more important than what is behind you!”*

Chris Freytag

The purpose of this document is to support decision-making and implementation planning for K-12 health and physical education instruction within the province of Saskatchewan. The ideas presented in this resource are meant for teacher self-reflection in order to support instructional decisions around planning and implementation for school start-up during the Fall of 2021.

Guidelines as set down by the Saskatchewan Health Authority (Chief medical Officer), the Government of Saskatchewan (Re-Open Saskatchewan Living Document), the Ministry of Education (RPT), and Boards of Education along with their Senior Leadership Teams must be adhered to at all times and will ultimately supersede all recommendations here.

Establishing and communicating new safety protocols is important to beginning the new school year. The following organizations have a wealth of information and resources to support the school environment, facilities cleaning, physical spaces, and equipment usage.

[www.phecanada.ca](http://www.phecanada.ca)

[www.speaonline.ca](http://www.speaonline.ca)

[www.shea.ca](http://www.shea.ca)

## [Sport for Life | Developing physical literacy and delivering quality sport](#)

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020-2021 school year in Saskatchewan was unprecedented. Schools were faced with health and safety situations that were unique and educators were not trained or felt adequately prepared for the challenges of teaching health and physical education with the fluid health and safety protocols placed upon them and their students. In the areas of school environment, facilities cleaning, physical spaces and equipment usage, educators and school leaders were able to gather a wealth of information through experiences as to what worked well, when it worked well, and lessons were learned from past mistakes.

*“STOP looking back! Whenever the past calls, do not pick up—it has nothing new to say.*

Joseph Simmons

Schools and educators have learned from the past school year. Use the knowledge and skills you have acquired and use them to keep your students safe and engaged by focusing on the present and adapting to whatever learning environment is placed upon you.

### **Programming and Curricular Implementation**

- Focus on what you can do rather than on what is not possible. Now is a great time to expand the depth and breadth of the learning outcomes through enhanced scrutiny of learning outcome indicators.
- Timetable physical education to reflect provincial curriculum standards and time allocations.

- Encourage UbD planning that supports formative assessment practices in order to guide planning and instruction to respond to the learning and physical education needs of the students.
- This is an opportunity to encourage cross-curricular competencies and to support the health and wellness of children holistically throughout the school community.
- Prepare for a blended instructional approach to ensure that no matter what health guidelines are in place, all students will have an opportunity to enhance their health, physical activity, and physical literacy (ensuring inclusionary practices for learning remain in place no matter the learning environment).

### **Thoughts to Ponder—Lessons Learned**

1. An **increase in outdoor play!** Due to indoor health restrictions over the past 17 months, there was a marked increase in the amount of physical education and play held outdoors.

Free and unstructured play (especially outdoors) should be encouraged and may be beneficial to the overall mental and physical health of students returning to school after a lengthy lockdown.

Remember to keep students as safe as necessary, not as safe as possible. Outdoor risky and unstructured play has many hidden benefits that will support students during this pandemic.

2. **Physical education plays an important role in improving the overall mental health of students.**

*“We placed a lot of focus on self discovery in Wellness this past school year. What brings you joy? What makes you feel well? Students loved the idea of pursuing a common goal but discovering their strengths and challenges in wellness along the way.”*

*“Each student was given a designated area of the gym marked by a number. This was their space, space for their water bottle, a place to do their warmups etc. Students appreciated having a space of their own—a place they could go if they needed a break, mental or physical.”*

*Mel Gesell*

3. **Due to health restrictions, more students played and were physically active with their parents,** siblings and caregivers (grandparents and extended family).

*“This year we found ways to flip the Phys. Ed. classroom so parents and families were involved in the learning alongside the students.”*

*Amanda Kornaga*

4. **Physical and health education at school extended into the home and community.** Theory became active and was put into practice very quickly.
5. **Health education suddenly became very important and at the forefront of curricular implementation and instruction within all areas of the school, home and community.**

*“Embrace the vulnerability of teaching health education in both a synchronous and asynchronous online learning environment.”*

*Although many outcomes in health education may be sensitive (suicide and tragic death, sexual health, romantic relationships, addictions etc.) in nature, providing opportunities for students to critically think about these issues is essential in developing the health literacy of self, family and other.”*

*“Creating relationships in an online environment is essential. In order to activate student voice and celebrate diversity, teachers have to become creative when building connections with students. Every Friday morning, our grade 9 team would host games (Scategories, Family Feud, Jeopardy, Scribble io etc.) to promote social connections between students that were learning from home. Students and learning mentors were able to “drop in” to Google Meets during office hours for feedback on assignments, to ask questions, of have someone to talk to.”*

*“Engaging parents as learning mentors during online learning provide the opportunity to learn more about the culture and diversity of our students.”*

*“The pandemic shifted the landscape of health education. The health and well-being of staff and students was highlighted with safety protocols and procedures at every level. Health and education are reciprocal.”*

*“By using the Inquiry for Healthy Decision Making Model, found within the Health Education Curricula, I was able to engage students in learning about health while providing choice on assignments and assessment.”*

*“Teaching online allowed me the opportunity to learn more about educational technology tools including Canva, Padlet, Wakelet, Moodle, Jamboard, Flip Grid and WeVideo, to further improve my teaching while engaging students in learning.”*

*Kendra Beliveau*

6. **Formative assessment practices will become very important as students return to school during the pandemic.** Students will be arriving at school this fall with an array of skills, experiences, fitness levels and educational experiences. There are going to be gaps in their learning.

*“Always look at what you have left. Never look at what you have lost.”*

*Robert H. Schuller*

The COVID-19 pandemic has imposed many barriers for students, but it has also facilitated solutions to these setbacks. From a student perspective, creativity in the modes of assessments has been a significantly positive change in light of the pandemic.

*“Instead of sanctioning coveted summative exams, many teachers have turned to ways that better suit students’ strengths and ways of expressing what they know, resulting in greater student success.”*

*Carter Orioux*

Resources such as the suite of PLAY tools will be important to use in this area.

<https://play.physicalliteracy.ca/play-tools>

7. Once you use various formative assessment strategies to gather information for your students **it will be important to differentiate your instruction to meet individual learning needs.**
  
8. **Build relationships first, at every level, as you begin the new school year.**
  
9. **Health and physical education needs to support all subject areas. Physical literacy is a foundational construct that supports the wholistic development of children in school!**
  
10. **Happy, healthy children is our goal.**