

**Featuring: Youth Engagement: Why It's Important and How Do You Do It?****SECTION 1: WHAT'S NEW?****Income Differences in Canada**

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released *Timing is Everything: Comparing the earnings of Canada's highest-paid CEOs and the rest of us* by CCPA research associate Hugh Mackenzie. The study finds that by 9:46AM on January 2nd Canada's 100 highest-paid CEOs will have reaped, on average, \$38,010 in pay. That equals the average annual earnings of workers in Canada. By 6:00 they will have pocketed nearly \$70,000. The news release for the study is pasted below. The entire study can be downloaded from the CCPA web site at <http://www.policyalternatives.ca> and at the Growing Gap web site at [www.growinggap.ca](http://www.growinggap.ca)

**CCL Survey Reports that Half of Parents thinks Schools are Doing Enough on Bullying**

The annual Survey of Canadian Attitude toward Learning (SCAL) was designed in cooperation with, and sponsored by, the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL). More than 5,000 adults aged between 18 and 74 responded to the survey. The preceding analysis only includes the views of parents of children aged 5 to 24. CCL has prepared a report with further analysis of the findings on learning in the elementary and secondary years. The report is available online ([www.ccl-cca.ca/scal](http://www.ccl-cca.ca/scal)).

**Canada's Principals also Concerned with Bullying**

A June 2006 report from Statistics Canada noted that nearly one-third of principals cited problems with students disrupting classes and with student tardiness and apathy. About 44% cited problems with bullying.

**Statistics Canada reports increase in Disabled Population.**

An estimated 4.4 million Canadians—one out of every seven in the population—reported having a disability in 2006, an increase of over three-quarters of a million people in five years, according to a new report. The report was based on data from the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS). Data showed that the number of people who reported a disability increased 21.2% from 3.6 million in 2001, the last time the survey was conducted. In 2001, 12.4% of the population re-

**RESEARCH, REPORTS & SCHOOL HEALTH KNOWLEDGE****Research Roundup**

List of Evidence Based Physical Activity related intervention studies have been compiled to help to generate ideas and discussion among individuals interested in improving children's physical activity levels in schools and throughout the community. See: <http://www.activekidsns.ca/evidencebaselist.cfm>.

The Ethno-Racial Minority Youth Research Project was formed in 2004, through the Sexuality Education Resource Centre (SERC) Manitoba, to address the gap in information related to ethno-racial minority (ERM) youth concerns about sexuality and intergenerational communication and conflict. The ERM youth involved in the research process conducted focus groups and interviews with their peers on issues related to intergenerational conflict, cultural communities and their experiences within mainstream Canadian society. The project found that ERM youth face major challenges related to intergenerational communication on sexuality issues, in particular with respect to parental expectations about dating, sexual activity, and gender roles. Findings of the research project are available at: <http://www.serc.mb.ca/erm/y/researchreport.html>

**CCL – Lessons in Learning: Media literacy for children in the internet age**  
Today, children are born into a wired world where they are as likely to pick up a computer mouse as a book. In 2004, Canadian children aged six to 11 spent an average of two hours per day in front of a screen of some kind (including computers, video games and televisions), while adolescent children between the ages of 12 and 17 logged an average of nearly three hours per day. What are the implications? [http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Reports/LessonsInLearning/LinL20071129\\_MediaLiteracy?Language=EN](http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Reports/LessonsInLearning/LinL20071129_MediaLiteracy?Language=EN)

January 15, 2008 **Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Métis and First Nations, 2006 Census** presents new findings on population, aboriginal languages, housing and related health issues.

For example:

- In 2006, Aboriginal people, First Nations, Métis and Inuit, accounted for almost 4% of the total population of Canada. Internationally, the share of Aboriginal people in Canada's population is second to New Zealand where the Maori accounted for 15% of the population. Indigenous people made up just 2% of the population of Australia and of the United States.
- The Aboriginal population in Canada is younger than the non-Aboriginal population. Almost half (48%) of the Aboriginal population consists of children and youth aged 24 and under, compared with 31% of the non-Aboriginal population.

**From the United Nations Association in Canada**

Talking Back to Grownups: Healthy Children, Healthy Communities. A

ported a disability. By 2006, this rate had increased to 14.3%. The report suggested that one factor in the increase was the aging of the population, but that this played only a partial role. Another factor may have been increased social acceptance of the reporting of disabilities.

### Phys-Ed Classes Changing Course

A growing number of educators have ditched traditional physical-education curricula, which emphasize team sports, in favor of a new brand of exercise that targets life skills. Three teachers at one Washington high school—one for science, one for language arts, and one for physical fitness—teach students in the same classroom for several hours a day. The result is an interdisciplinary experience that allows students to connect subjects, contribute to the community, and enhance the long-term health and wellness of students. *Seattle Times*, 1/13/08

### Study: Obesity and the eating habits of the Aboriginal population, 2004

Statistics Canada reported on January 28 that off-reserve Aboriginal people aged 19 to 50 living in Ontario and the Western provinces in 2004 were two and a half times more likely to be obese or overweight, compared with their non-Aboriginal contemporaries, according to a new study.

### Study: Female offenders

Statistics Canada has released 2005 data on female offenders. The report showed that females aged 12 and older accounted for about 1 out of every 5 people accused by police services of committing a violation against the Criminal Code. The findings are based on data from a subset of 122 mostly urban police services located in nine provinces. Almost half (47%) of these females were accused of committing a property crime, while another 28% were accused of committing a violation against a person. In comparison, 39% of males were accused of committing a property offence, and were 34% accused of a violation against a person.

### Health Curricula Under Review

The Ontario education ministry is reviewing its Health and Physical Education curriculum and is inviting comment from Ontario stakeholders in a consultation process. Two other jurisdictions, Newfoundland and Saskatchewan, have recently completed similar reviews. The Ontario curriculum policy documents can be found at: elementary curriculum and secondary curriculum The Saskatchewan curriculum documents can be found here. The Newfoundland documents can be found at health

report on the Social Determinants of Health and Middle Childhood in Canada 2007, by Kathryn White, Maria Sterniczuk, Garbriel Ramsay, and Alison Warner. This report presents findings of a community based research project on the perceptions and priorities of young people from a social determinants of health perspective. Key recommendations are to:


1. Make young people's health a priority
2. Emphasize the social determinants of health
3. Focus on emotional well-being
4. Strengthen communities to improve health outcomes
5. Make the health of Aboriginal young people a priority

### Resources:

A new information pamphlet titled STI: Sexually Transmitted Infections, is now posted online at the Public Health Agency Sexual Health/STI website.

This educational resource provides information on STIs and sexual health issues for a target audience aged 12-18, and replaces the What you need to know about Sexually Transmitted Infections pamphlet. The pamphlet has already been distributed to all the country's Provinces and Territories, but if you would like to request additional copies, please contact the Canadian HIV/AIDS Information Centre by calling 1-877-999-7740 or e-mailing [aidsida@cpha.ca](mailto:aidsida@cpha.ca).

The Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Learning Resource is a Kindergarten to Grade Twelve (grade-by-grade) set of healthy eating and physical activity classroom-based lesson plans for the BC public school system. The goal of the learning resource is to support students in all grades, to gain the knowledge and skills to make healthier choices and develop a life-long healthy lifestyle. For more information visit:

[http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health\\_publications.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health_publications.htm) 

Public health messages about healthy eating and active living, while key to health promotion initiatives, can be misinterpreted by some children. Studies show 30% of girls and 25% of boys, aged 10-14 years were dieting to lose weight despite being within a healthy weight range. The Student Body (produced under the leadership of the Hospital for Sick Children) is a teacher training module designed to help alert teachers (and parents) to the factors that can trigger unhealthy dieting among children, and ways to prevent it. Find out more about The Student Body at: [www.aboutkidshealth.ca/thestudentbody](http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/thestudentbody).

My Food Guide Online - "My Food Guide Online", a Web-based interactive tool launched as part of the new Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide package, is now available to print in multiple languages. "My Food Guide online" allows users to personalize information based on their age and sex, as well as food and activity preferences. Canadians now have the option of completing this activity in English or French, and printing their copy of 'My Food Guide' in 10 other languages. For more information visit: <http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/myfoodguide>

### CSH Knowledge Network News

School Health Communities of Practice are being initiated by the Canadian Association for School Health and partners. They include: Nutrition; Physical Education/Physical Activity; Safe Schools; Substance Abuse Prevention; Disadvantaged Communities; Mental Health; Aboriginal School Health; and Sexual Health. If you are interested in connecting with others from across Canada working in these important areas, please con-

curriculum and PE Curriculum.

## **CANADIAN TEACHERS' FEDERATION**

(<http://www.ctf-fce.ca/>) has posted the most recent issue of the "Health and Learning" magazine produced in cooperation with the Canadian Association for School Health. CTF invites articles for the Health and Learning magazine. The magazine reaches teachers in all schools K-12. Articles about comprehensive school health or specific topics are welcomed. Articles should be no more than 1500 words and written for teachers and principals. For more information contact Noreen O'Haire at [nohai@ctf-fce.ca](mailto:nohai@ctf-fce.ca).

## **Healthy Active School Communities –**

Winter Edition provides information about promoting healthy, active lifestyles in the home, school and community. Download this and other Healthy Active School Communities resources in English and French from <http://www.everactive.org>.

## **Health Canada**

The First Nations and Inuit Health Branch of Health Canada recently formed the Office of Inuit Health to advise Health Canada on programs and policies, and provide a more coordinated approach to Inuit health. See attached brochure.

## **Steroid Tests to Begin in Texas High Schools**

Steroid testing of Texas high school athletes could start next month, state officials said Thursday after adopting rules for the program that will collect random urine samples from about 23,000 students each year. Student athletes who test positive the first time will be suspended for 30 days from competition. A second positive test result would lead to a one-year ban from competition. Any student athlete returning from a suspension must pass a follow-up steroid test before returning to competition. Houston Chronicle, 1/11/08

## **Giving Disorganized Boys the Tools for Success**

With girls outperforming boys these days, educators disagree about whether there is a crisis in the education of boys. Some suggest the need for more single-sex schools, more male role models, or new teaching techniques. But while they debate, some tutors focus on organizational skills because boys generally seem to have more difficulty getting organized and multitasking than girls do. New York Times, 1/1/08

tact Cindy Andrew at [candrew@cash-aces.ca](mailto:candrew@cash-aces.ca) for more information.

National School Health Conference & Symposia: the fourth annual school health will be held in Ottawa/Gatineau at the Sheraton Conference Centre in Gatineau/Ottawa. Pre-conference symposia will enable extensive, hands-on discussions for an evening and a day on these topics: nutrition/healthy eating, physical activity, tobacco/lung health, safe schools, substance abuse, sexual health, mental health, schools in disadvantaged communities; and aboriginal students. The conference program will address common aspects of school health promotion including school health literacy/education, assessments and indicators, coordination of programs and services and other similar issues. For more on the conference see: [www.safehealthyschools.org/shconferences](http://www.safehealthyschools.org/shconferences).

## **Events**

Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre Conference 2008

February 28, 29 & March 1, 2008

Westin Bayshore, Vancouver, BC

Seeing Ourselves in the Mirror: Giving Life to Learning. The conference will feature promising practices and programs in Aboriginal lifelong learning. Also, a town hall meeting will provide an opportunity for feedback from the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre Consortium, National Advisory Committee members and Associate members.

Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada

February 13/14, 2008

Inukvik, Northwest Territories,

Sexual Health Conference. Theme: to develop community-based sexual health promotion.

Go to the link above for information and a general call for presenters.

Click here for call to Inuit youth to participate through the National Inuit Youth Council.

## **Proposals Calls/Nominations**

Aboriginal Girls on the Move

Request for Applications

Submission Deadline: Monday, February 18, 2008 4:00pm (Pacific Standard Time)

The Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS), in partnership with the Aboriginal Sport Circle, is seeking opportunities to collaborate with six communities to develop and implement On the Move physical activity programs for Aboriginal girls and young women. Communities across Canada are invited to submit an application.

National Aboriginal Health Organization

Request for Nominations

The National Aboriginal Role Model Program is asking aboriginal youth to nominate their First Nations, Inuit, and Métis 2008 role models. Click here for details about the program and nomination process.

**FEATURE ARTICLE****Youth Engagement: Why It's Important and How Do You Do It?**

While there is a substantial need for high quality scientific research to assess whether there is a causal relationship between youth-led interventions and the achievement of desired outcomes, it is clear that the meaningful involvement of youth plays a role in youth's development and appears promising, if not critical, to school-based and community health promotion efforts aimed at enhancing the health and well-being of young people. This brief article provides a brief overview of youth engagement and its significance to School Health and provides web links to an array of research, resources and tools.

The Centre of Excellence For Youth Engagement (CEYE) defines youth engagement as: "the meaningful participation and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity which has a focus outside of him or herself." An expert on youth participation, Roger Hart (author of the landmark UNICEF 1992 paper: "Children's Participation: from Tokenism to Citizenship") has described such involvement in an eight step Ladder of Participation. The bottom three rungs describe youth involvement that is not true participation whereas the top five rungs describe true participation.

Youth engagement is often closely linked with youth development. According to the Konopka Institute for Best Practices in Adolescent Health at the University of Minnesota: "Youth engagement has also been identified as a key factor related to resiliency and a youth development approach in which assets are the focus rather than the negatives/risk behaviours. In its document "The Youth Development Approach in the California Tobacco Control Program, the California Department of Health notes "the key to successful youth development programs is to involve youth in a meaningful fashion".

The Search Institute notes that there are external and internal assets that are critical to youth development. The first 20 (of 40) Developmental Assets focus on positive experiences that young people receive from the people and institutions in their lives and many of these, including 'empowerment' and 'constructive use of time' relate directly to youth engagement. (For more on Youth Development see: Promoting Positives Through A Developmental Assets Approach (CASH, 2006).

School connectedness is often discussed in relation to youth engagement. For example, in "School Connectedness Means Less Risky Behavior: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health" (Center of Adolescent Health and Development, University of Minnesota) the guidelines for fostering connectedness are noted and include student involvement. The McCreary Centre Society provides a comprehensive look at the rationale for youth engagement (the McCreary Centre Society (<http://www.mcs.bc.ca>). Such rationale includes:

- Youth Have a Right to Participate
- Participation Promotes Resiliency
- Participation Reduces Risks
- Participation is Central to Positive Youth Development
- Participation Enhances Youth Health
- Participation Improves Youth Programs and Service
- Participation Promotes Commitment in community development and health promotion
- Strategies for Success in Engaging Youth Meaningfully:

As noted by the BC based McCreary Centre Society, "meaningful youth participation involves recognizing and nurturing the strengths, interests, and abilities of young people through the provision of real opportunities for youth to become involved in decisions that affect them at individual and systemic levels.

Successful youth participation involves shared decision-making and collaboration with adults who can serve as mentors for youth. As the Ladder of Participation illustrates, genuine youth participation moves beyond tokenism (such as inviting a young person to sit on a committee without real capacity to influence decisions) towards a process where youth have meaningful involvement in decisions affecting their welfare, in an environment which allows them to access and learn from the experience and expertise of adults.

Features of successful youth participation include:

- Respect (a non-judgmental, inclusive and inviting environment)
- Skills and tools (there is something for the young people involved to get out of)
- Models that work (have a vision, but be flexible to change)
- Things to do (tasks)
- Variety of expression (interesting and engaging)

## Support

Challenges of youth participation  
Tokenism (youth do not have ownership/buy-in)  
Age definition (who is a youth?)  
Lack of support (finances, monitoring, resources)  
Turnover and fluctuating membership  
Poor representation (lack of diversity of age, sex, abilities)  
Shortage of meaningful opportunities“

The Process of Youth Engagement - Youth Engagement Factors (2003) from the CEYE provides a snapshot of a model of the process of youth engagement, including initiating and sustaining factors as well as the barriers to remaining engaged. Also included are individual, organizational and community and social factors.

TeenNet, a University of Toronto based research project works to generate new knowledge and develop practical tools for engaging youth in health promotion using interactive technology has identified 5 significant ingredients for success in any youth promotion initiatives: 1) Guided by sound theoretical models; 2) Interactive, fun and stimulates self directed learning; 3) Youth lead - involves youth at all stages (participation, social influence) ; 4) Systematically evaluated, and improved; 5) Comprehensive and ongoing related to a breadth of health issues using an ongoing approach (no 'silver bullet' or one hit fix). The following “Lessons from the field” from the Forum for Youth Investment provide helpful insight in to what works in supporting meaningful youth engagement:

Infuse youth at many different levels and in many different roles. Develop pathways for increasing youth engagement. Be thoughtful in shaping roles for youth and in selecting a diverse range of young people in to these roles. “Young people need to see the rungs of the ladder clearly. Many ladders are missing the bottom rungs – so kids can’t even get started.”

Train adults to effectively carry out their work. Partnering effectively with youth is a set of skills that must be learned. (See “Mega Planner Toolkit” for more on this). As noted repeatedly in relevant writings, one of the primary components of effective youth engagement is partnerships with adults. The crucial word is partnership. The Search Institute’s 2005 publication: The Power of Youth and Adult Partnerships and Change Pathways for Youth Work underscores that “the normative expectation for partnerships between youth and adults has been re-routed from an assumption that adults are responsible for ‘fixing’ youth’s problems to that of lending a helping hand – or even stepping aside – so that youth themselves take responsibility for personal, peer and community life.

Train youth to effectively carry out their work. Opportunities to build skills, motivation and opportunities are all critical ingredients to young people’s success.

Begin engagement by focusing on youth’s daily experiences.

Secure resources for youth engagement efforts. To work effectively, young people need access to resources just as adults do. Often they need only a modest amount of money to support training, coordinate events or produce materials. Perhaps it is space rather than money. The bottom line: for a youth to have a fair footing in impacting change, tangible resources must be secured that allow them to be productive and to engage a broader constituency of their peers in their efforts.

Link with outside groups such as non-profit organizations that work with youth to establish or enhance a project, and support training and implementation of youth engagement initiatives. Many of these organizations have developed tools and strategies for action engaging young people and many are finding that a combination of insider and outsider organizational strategies increase the success and reach of youth engagement efforts.

Additional Items of Interest: In addition to the above cited organizations’ works, readers are encouraged to review the following:

Youth Engagement and Health Outcomes: Is there a link? From CEYE summarizes, synthesizes, and critically evaluates empirical research that has demonstrated direct connections between youth engagement and health outcomes. Linking Research to Policy and Practice for Children and Youth in Saskatchewan Schools student engagement in Saskatoon (2002) reports on how active student engagement has become the foundation for important change in Saskatoon within our schools, our systems and our community partners. The ABCs of Classroom Engagement (CEYE, 2002) describes effective practices and principles of creating engaging classroom environments.

From the Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health (US) new Youth Participation handbook and quiz: Is your organization supporting meaningful youth participation in collaborative team planning?

<http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/PDF/pbAMPQuizBrochure.pdf>

Best practices for increasing meaningful youth participation in collaborative team planning

<http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/PDF/pbAMPYouthParticipation.pdf>

The Laidlaw Foundation has published a checklist to assist organizations assessing their capacity to engage youth. This checklist has been excerpted from their resource entitled: "Youth Engagement Programme Evaluation Toolkit for Building and Organization's Capacity to Engage Youth". Several other checklists are included in the full document.

Adult Roles in Community-Based Youth Empowerment Programs: Implications for Best Practices, (Family & Community Health. 28(4):320-337, October/December 2005

Checkoway, B., Dobbie, D., & Richards-Schuster, K. (2003a). Involving young people in community evaluation research. Community Youth Development, 4(1). Available at <http://www.cydjournal.org/2003Spring/checkoway.html>.

Working Together: Giving children and young people a say – encourages the involvement of children and young people in decision-making processes. It provides advice for local education authorities, governing bodies and schools on the principles and practice to support work on consultation with pupils when taking decisions which affect them. The principles set out in this guidance are aimed at securing greater involvement of pupils in the general life of the school and of the wider community, not just on consultation exercises. (Source: YoungMinds, the (UK) national charity committed to improving the mental health of all children and young people; [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)).

The Search Institutes report "The Power of Youth and Adult Partnerships and Change Pathways for Youth Work" (2005) illustrates that there does appear however to be an emerging view that there is a broadening of focus from looking solely at individual-level outcomes for participating youth to examining both changes in the external conditions that enable and support youth involvement and the organizational and community-level impacts that result.

Youth Action Guide for Tobacco Projects (2004) from the TeenNet Research Project is tobacco focused and specifically related to engaging youth through youth-serving agencies, but the majority of its content is helpful for schools and other settings. Practical steps helpful in effective youth engagement are outlined so too recommended evaluation strategies which engage youth.

The NB Advisory Council on Youth has undertaken several initiatives and is working in partnership with community and government organizations in order to represent matters of concern to New Brunswick's youth.

Lambton County Student Wellness Council Manual is a tool to support those working with youth in school communities produced by the Lambton Community Health Services Department.

"Working with Youth on Comprehensive School Committees" produced by the York Region (ON) Health Department is a resource geared to helping public health professionals and others working in school health. For more information contact: [annamaria.ga@york.ca](mailto:annamaria.ga@york.ca).

The Canadian Association of Health, Physical Education Recreation and Dance (CAHPERD) has an issue of "The Clipboard" focused on engaging youth in school health. For more on that contact CAHPERD