

**Ever Active Schools
Program Evaluation:
Final Report**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ever Active Schools (EAS) program is a membership-based program that is available to all school communities in Alberta. In partnership with Alberta school communities, its mission is to “*contribute to the development of children and youth by fostering social and physical environments that support healthy active lifestyles*”¹. The EAS program is now in its fourth year of operation year and felt that it was time to assess program effectiveness and barriers through program evaluation. In 2004-2005 the program contracted Howard Research & Management Consulting Inc. to conduct this evaluation.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The program evaluation had three **primary objectives**:

- 1) To assess the effectiveness of the Ever Active Schools Program
- 2) To identify obstacles to growth
- 3) To provide evidence for the need to improve or modify services

These three themes were interrogated across the following four groups:

- 1) Ever Active Member Schools – Schools that have completed and submitted an Ever Active Schools membership application package.
- 2) Ever Active Registered Intent Schools – Schools that have expressed interest in the EAS program and have received an information package, but have not completed the Application Package.
- 3) Non-member Schools – Schools that have not indicated any interest in the EAS program.
- 4) Key Stakeholders – Identified by the program coordinator as Steering Committee members.

METHODOLOGY

While a primarily qualitative approach was used to gather data for the evaluation, both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to collect the data. Interviews, case study, and surveys were utilized.

A total of ten semi-structured, telephone interviews were conducted with key stakeholders—all members of the Steering Committee identified by the program coordinator.

A mail-out survey was administered to the following stakeholder groups:

1. Ever Active member schools
2. Registered intent schools
3. Non-member schools

¹ Ever Active Schools Program 2004-2005 Business Plan, p. 4.



The response rates for each group are presented in Table 1.0 below.

Table 1.0 Survey Response Rates

Stakeholder Group	Number of Surveys Sent	Number of Surveys Returned	Response Rate
Member Schools	97	48	50%
Registered Intent Schools	35	8	23%
Non-member Schools	100	36	36%
<i>Total</i>	232	90	39%

Finally, a case study was conducted with an Ever Active member school. The case study consisted of a visit to the school by the evaluator to talk with teachers, staff, students, and school administration about the Ever Active Schools program and changes that had occurred in the school as a result of their involvement in the program. Where possible, activities and initiatives that were taking place or had been undertaken in the past were observed.

The school was selected by the Ever Active Schools coordinator as an exemplar school based on its commitment to the program and effort to incorporate Ever Active principles into its functioning.

KEY FINDINGS

Program Value

It is clear that the Ever Active Schools program provides value to all stakeholder groups. Member school survey respondents, registered intent school survey respondents, interview participants, and case study participants all reported that the program was valuable. Resources and ideas, professional development opportunities, and on-going support were cited as some of the most valuable aspects of the program.

Satisfaction with and Success of Activities, Services, and Resources

Overall, stakeholders were satisfied with activities, services, and resources provided by the program, and felt that the majority of the program's initiatives were successful.

Stakeholders interviewed indicated that the EAS program had established many different partnerships with a variety of government departments and ministries, similar or related initiatives and programs, and private organizations. A total of 30 partnering organizations were identified. Overall, these partnerships were viewed as successful. The EAS calendar was most often cited as an example of a successful partnership initiative. The most commonly mentioned challenge related to developing and maintaining partnerships was lack of resources (particularly staff time).



All stakeholders were, for the most part, satisfied with the resources and services provided by the EAS program to member schools. Resources in the form of paper materials, manuals, the website, Promising Practices documents², the EAS bulletin, and the registration package were referred to by interview participants as key resources provided and as important components of leadership. All of these resources and services were viewed as effective.

Overall, member school survey respondents were most satisfied with the information resources that were provided to them. The highest level of satisfaction reported across all areas interrogated was associated with the information provided on the EAS website (91.5% of respondents reported satisfaction), followed by information provided through the EAS bulletin (89.4%), and thirdly with the resource package, or EAS binder (83.3%).

Opportunities for professional development, such as Energizer Days³ and workshops, were viewed as valuable by all stakeholder groups. Interview and case study participants consistently cited Energizer Days as an example of a valuable form of leadership provided, and member school survey respondents were highly satisfied with Energizer Days as well (80.9% reported satisfaction with Energizer Days). It is noteworthy that this was the area that received the highest proportion of “very satisfied” responses from member school survey respondents—48.9% of respondents reported that they were “very satisfied” with Energizer Days.

The lowest levels of satisfaction reported by member school survey respondents were associated with the areas of support and communication from the program, with the exception of email communication (80.9% of respondents reported satisfaction with email communication received). Survey respondents were least satisfied with feedback received on Game Plans⁴ and growth reports (41.3% reported satisfaction) and with the assistance received completing growth reports (43.8% reported satisfaction).

Barriers to Membership

Lack of staff time was considered a major barrier to program membership. Inadequate staff resources was reported as the most significant barrier to membership, and of all barriers interrogated, received the highest proportion of respondents indicating that it was a “very significant” by both member school and registered intent survey respondents. Registered intent schools also reported that the length and complexity of the membership application was prohibitive—this sentiment was also reflected in some comments from interview participants.

Cost of membership was seen as the least significant barrier by both member school and registered intent survey respondents.

² Promising Practices were developed through “consultation with teachers, administrators, community leaders, parents, researchers, students, and other existing programs” with the intent of sharing good practices with Ever Active schools. Examples are intended to provide a starting point for schools to generate ideas that will work for them. (*Ever Active Schools School Membership Guide and Application 2004-2005*, p3.)

³ Energizer Days are opportunities for professional development for school communities hosted by the Ever Active Schools program.

⁴ Game Plans are developed by member schools based on critical reflection of areas where the school is doing well and areas where improvement could be made. A Game Plan contains goals and objective for the year to become an Ever Active school (*Ever Active Schools School Membership Guide and Application 2004-2005*, p3.)



Areas for Improvement

Stakeholders felt that there was room for program improvement primarily in the following six areas:

1. Resources
 - provide more resources and ideas
 - update resources (e.g., Promising Practices and Ever Active Everywhere resources)
 - offer more Energizer Days and workshops, and other professional development opportunities
 - revamp the website to keep it current and make it interactive
 - increase the number of program staff
2. Communication
 - more communication on a regular basis between the program and schools
 - increased personal contact with schools and follow-up
 - improved tracking of communication with schools
3. Feedback and Support
 - more feedback related to developing Game Plans and preparing growth reports
 - continue or increase on-going support that is provided
4. Processes
 - simplify the membership application
 - streamline the process for developing Game Plans and growth reports
5. Recognition
 - improve recognition for Ever Active member schools (e.g., provide a banner that schools can hang in their gyms)
6. Awareness and Coordination
 - increase program awareness in schools and the community
 - raise the program's profile through use of the media
 - coordinate and develop linkages with other similar or related initiatives to reduce repetition and facilitate joint activities (e.g., joint awareness weeks)

Facilitators to Successful Implementation by Schools

Stakeholders identified several key factors that facilitate successful and sustainable program adoption in schools.

Program support from an administrative level (e.g., school division, superintendent, principal) as well as buy-in from front line staff (i.e., teachers and school staff) is key. The higher level support was viewed as particularly important to establishing a successful program.



Staff time and dedication to the philosophy behind the EAS program were also identified as key facilitators of success. If teachers simply do not have the time to reflect on areas for improvement in their own school and to incorporate EAS program goals and principles into school functioning, successful implementation of the program is unlikely.

Future Direction and Challenges

There was no question among stakeholders that the Ever Active Schools program would grow in the future. Introduction of the Daily Physical Activity (DPA) Initiative⁵ and an increasing focus on a comprehensive health model for schools were seen as driving this growth. Stakeholders felt that schools would increasingly look to the EAS program for leadership in these areas.

However, limited resources (staff and funding) were seen as a challenge that would only become more pronounced with program growth. There was uncertainty around the ability of the program to continue to provide quality services to an increasing number of schools with the current program structure and resources. Also, the ability of the program to retain its unique focus on facilitating active living in schools in an environment of limited provincial resources was questioned—one stakeholder was concerned that the program may be required to “merge” with other health-related initiatives and adopt a broader mandate encompassing other areas of health as scarce resources prohibit the funding of multiple initiatives.

All data indicate that the Ever Active Schools program is valued but strained—a key request from schools is increased contact and support/feedback but staff resources and time are limited. There is tension between program growth and capacity to handle this growth—an issue that will likely become more pronounced with the coupling of continued growth and restricted resources.

CONCLUSIONS

- The program was valued by all groups.
- Member schools were satisfied with the majority of resources and services provided by the program. Stakeholders felt that services provided by the program were effective.
- Member school respondents found significant value in the resources and ideas that were provided to them.
- Member schools were less satisfied with communication and support than with other areas of service interrogated. All data indicated that support is a key component of the program.

⁵ “In September 2005, Alberta Education will implement a requirement for 30 minutes of Daily Physical Activity (DPA) for all students in grades 1-9. The DPA Initiative is part of a broader Wellness Framework, which is currently under development to help Alberta students adopt healthy lifestyles. Schools will make individual decisions on the best way to integrate daily physical activity.” Source: <http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/ipr/DailyPhysAct.asp> March 14, 2005.



- Member school and registered intent survey respondents felt that lack of staff time was the biggest barrier to program membership.
- Simplifying processes associated with the program, including the application process and requirements to develop a Game Plan and growth reports, may be a way to encourage membership among registered intent schools.
- Stakeholders expressed that partnerships were successful, but that limited staff and funds serve as barriers to increasing partnerships. The majority of participants felt that the partnerships provided a valuable mechanism for networking and information sharing.
- Increasing linkages between Ever Active schools may serve to build schools' support networks.
- According to stakeholders leadership activities embarked on by Ever Active Schools were successful. Energizer Days and Promising Practices were viewed by stakeholders as particularly successful. Stakeholders felt that providing networking opportunities to schools is a key component of leadership.
- Challenges associated with providing leadership to member schools occur at the resource level and at the school level.
- According to stakeholders the profile of the program needs to be raised and more awareness built.
- Support from higher levels such as the school district, superintendent, and principal is a key facilitator of program success at the school level.
- Implementation of the program can lead to the development of capacity in a number of areas in schools.
- Implementation of the program can facilitate collaboration by parents, staff, teachers, administration, and the community.
- The creative use of space in schools can provide increased opportunities for physical activity.
- There will be opportunity and likely necessity for program growth with the introduction of the Daily Physical Activity Initiative (DPA). EAS may be called upon to provide guidance and support to schools as the DPA is implemented. However, growth will be dependent on the resources available to support it.



INTRODUCTION

The Ever Active Schools program is a membership-based program that is available to all school communities in Alberta. In partnership with Alberta school communities, its mission is to “*contribute to the development of children and youth by fostering social and physical environments that support healthy active lifestyles*”⁶.

Beginning with a pilot year that included 40 schools in 2000-2001, membership in the program increased to 184 schools in 2003-2004 with an additional 63 schools that expressed interest in the program. The Ever Active Schools (EAS) program is now in its fourth year of operation and felt that it was time to assess program effectiveness and barriers through program evaluation. In 2004-2005 the EAS program contracted Howard Research & Management Consulting Inc. to conduct this evaluation.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The program evaluation had three **primary objectives**:

- 1) To assess the effectiveness of the Ever Active Schools Program
- 2) To identify obstacles to growth
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These three themes were interrogated across the following four groups:

- 1) Ever Active Member Schools – Schools that have completed and submitted an Ever Active Schools membership application package.
- 2) Ever Active Registered Intent Schools – Schools that have expressed interest in the EAS program and have received an information package, but have not completed the Application Package.
- 3) Non-member Schools – Schools that have not indicated any interest in the EAS program.
- 4) Key Stakeholders – Identified by the program coordinator as Steering Committee members.

Data collected from the above groups in relation to the stated objectives are presented in this report. A list of conclusions can be found on page 45.

⁶ Ever Active Schools Program 2004-2005 Business Plan, p. 4.



METHODOLOGY

DATA COLLECTION

While a primarily qualitative approach was used to gather data for the evaluation, both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to collect the data. Interviews, case study, and surveys were utilized.

Interviews

Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders of the EAS program (i.e., EAS Steering Committee members) over the telephone. Interview participants represented the following organizations:

- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Alberta Education
- Alberta Health and Wellness
- Health and Physical Education Council (HPEC)
- Community Recreation and Parks
- Schools Come Alive
- Ever Active Schools
- Alberta Community Development

A semi-structured interview guide was developed and can be found in Appendix A. All interviewees were contacted first via email and invited to participate in the interview, and then received a follow-up phone call to schedule the interview time. All interviews were audio taped and transcribed for content (not verbatim).

Case Study

In March 2005 a case study was conducted on an Ever Active Schools member school who had been involved in the program since the pilot year (2000-2001). The case study consisted of a visit to the school by the evaluator to talk with teachers, staff, students, and school administration about the Ever Active Schools program (also referred to as “the program”) and changes that had occurred in the school as a result of their involvement in the program. Where possible, activities and initiatives that were taking place or had been undertaken in the past were also observed.

The school was selected by the Ever Active Schools coordinator as an exemplar school based on its commitment to the program and effort to incorporate Ever Active principles into its functioning.

Discussions took place with the following individuals:

- school principal,
- physical education teacher and program champion,



- parent council president, and
- four students who were involved with activities associated with the EAS program.

Survey

A mail-out survey was administered to the following stakeholder groups:

4. Ever Active member schools
5. Registered intent schools
6. Non-member schools

A brief survey instrument was developed for each of the three groups (instruments can be found in Appendix A). Schools that were to receive the survey were selected by the EAS program coordinator (all EAS member and registered intent schools were included in the initial selection). Approval for survey administration was then sought from school divisions associated with the selected schools via letter and telephone contact by the program coordinator. Subsequently, surveys were sent to schools in the divisions that granted approval along with a self-addressed, stamped return envelope. Approval was requested from a total of 35 school districts and was obtained from 26⁷.

A letter of introduction from the program coordinator accompanied all surveys. Member and registered intent schools that did not return the survey by the requested deadline received a minimum of one follow-up phone call. Surveys were re-sent via fax or email to schools upon their request. Table 2.0 outlines the response rate achieved for each stakeholder group.

Table 2.0 Survey Response Rates

Stakeholder Group	Number of Surveys Sent	Number of Surveys Returned	Response Rate
Member Schools	97	48	50%
Registered Intent Schools	35	8	23%
Non-member Schools	100	36	36%
<i>Total</i>	232	90	39%

DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative Data Analysis

All interview, case study, and open-ended survey data were content analyzed. First level analysis identified meaning units within each interview or response. Second level analysis identified common themes within each group by area of inquiry. This method supported drawing insights and conclusions from a comprehensive assessment of perspectives.

⁷ Note that the time required to go through the approval process in two districts was not realistic for this project, and thus approval was not followed up on in these two cases.



Frequency counts were not conducted on qualitative interview and case study data. Rather than tracking the number of times a comment was made, for example, the range and diversity of comments were documented.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis included basic descriptives using SPSS 11.5.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Results are presented in four sections as listed below. Findings in the first three sections are organized according to questions asked and theme of responses.

Section 1: Findings from EAS member school, registered intent school, and non-member school surveys.

Section 2: Findings from stakeholder interviews.

Section 3: Findings from the case study conducted.

Section 4: Conclusions.

Additionally,

Appendices: Additional information including a) all data collection instruments and b) frequency tables for all open-ended survey questions.



FINDINGS: MEMBER, REGISTERED INTENT, AND NON-MEMBER SCHOOL SURVEYS

The surveys of Ever Active member schools, registered intent schools, and non-member schools were administered via letter mail (and subsequently fax or email, if requested) from January 31 to March 11, 2005. All survey instruments can be found in Appendix A.

Appendix B contains frequency tables for each close-ended question that was included in each of the three surveys. All percentages reported in this section are valid percentages⁸.

FINDINGS: MEMBER SCHOOL SURVEY

A total of 48 surveys were returned by EAS member schools. The findings from these surveys are presented in the following sections.

Satisfaction with Services and Resources

EAS member schools were asked about their level of satisfaction with a variety of services and resources provided by the Ever Active Schools program. Responses are detailed in this section and a summary of responses is outlined in Table 3.0 on page 12.

Note: In the remainder of this section, percentage satisfied includes all respondents who reported being either “very satisfied” or “quite satisfied” with the resource or service area unless otherwise indicated.

Satisfaction with Information Resources and Workshops Provided

Overall, survey respondents were most satisfied with the information resources that were provided to them. The highest level of satisfaction reported across all areas interrogated was associated with the information provided on the EAS website (91.5% of respondents reported satisfaction), followed by information provided through the EAS bulletin (89.4%), and thirdly with the resource package, or EAS binder (83.3%).

The majority of respondents (80.9%) were satisfied with Energizer Days, and it is noteworthy that this was the area that received the highest proportion of “very satisfied” responses—48.9% of respondents reported that they were “very satisfied” with Energizer Days. Seventy-three point nine percent (73.9%) were satisfied with the Promising Practices documents, although there was a fairly high level of unawareness associated with this resource (13.0% of respondents reported that they were unaware of the Promising Practices documents).

⁸ Valid percentages are based on the number of valid responses received for a particular question. Missing values are not included in valid percentages. That is, if a respondent did not answer a question he or she is not included in the valid number of individuals responding to that question.



Satisfaction with Communication and Support

The lowest levels of satisfaction reported were associated with the areas of support and communication from the program, with the exception of email communication (80.9% of respondents reported satisfaction with email communication received). Satisfaction with personal contact, such as phone calls received, was much lower (47.9%), and 31.3% of respondents indicated that they were either unaware of this service (12.5%) or that they did not use it (18.8%).

Survey respondents were least satisfied with feedback received on Game Plans and growth reports (41.3%) and with the assistance received completing growth reports (43.8%). In each of these areas high levels of respondents reported that they were unaware of the service or did not use it, as outlined in Table 3.0 below.

Satisfaction with Processes

Two process areas were included in the satisfaction component of the survey: the process for developing a Game Plan and recognition received. Relatively high levels of satisfaction were reported in both areas—66.7% of respondents were satisfied with the process for developing a Game Plan and 64.6% were satisfied with recognition received.

Table 3.0 Summary of Satisfaction With and Use of Services and Resources

Service or Resource Area	% Satisfied*	% Slightly Satisfied	% Not At All Satisfied	% Who Do Not Use	% Unaware
Information provided on the EAS website	91.5	4.3	0	4.3	0
Information provided through the EAS bulletin	89.4	8.3	2.1	0	0
Promising Practices documents	73.9	6.3	2.1	4.2	12.5
Resource package (EAS binder)	83.3	6.3	4.2	0	6.3
Energizer Days	80.9	6.4	0	6.4	6.4
Email communication	80.9	14.9	2.1	0	2.1
Personal communication (e.g. phone calls)	47.9	18.8	2.1	18.8	12.5
Assistance received completing annual growth reports	43.8	16.7	2.1	25.0	12.5
Feedback on Game Plans and growth reports	41.3	30.4	4.3	6.5	17.4
Process for developing a Game Plan	66.7	25.0	0	0	8.3
Recognition received	64.6	18.8	0	2.1	14.6

* Includes respondents reporting “very satisfied” or “quite satisfied”.



Areas Most Satisfied With

Survey respondents were asked to list the three aspects of the Ever Active Schools program that they were most satisfied with. Areas identified as most satisfactory by over 10% of respondents included

- 1) Energizer Days – identified by 39.6% of respondents;
- 2) resources (including resources in general and the resource package/binder specifically) – identified by 31.3% of respondents;
- 3) the EAS website and Promising Practices documents – each identified by 18.8% of respondents;
- 4) the EAS bulletin – identified by 16.7% of respondents;
- 5) the development of a Game Plan – identified by 12.5% of respondents; and
- 6) communication (including email communication and communication in general) – identified by 10.4% of respondents.

Other areas that respondents were most satisfied with, presented in descending order of frequency, included

- the calendar;
- increased activity and education/awareness of activity;
- the program coordinator;
- assistance, suggestions, and ideas provided;
- recognition received;
- networking opportunities;
- provision of direction/focus/guidance;
- increasing promotion and prominence in school communities;
- involvement of other agencies, including Schools Come Alive;
- emphasis on the active school environment;
- promoting positive school spirit and environment;
- improving students' well-being;
- Do It Daily For Life (active living shoe program);
- workshops;
- the EAS program overall;
- involvement of families;
- Ever Active day at the school; and
- relevancy and succinctness of information and emails provided.

Areas for Improvement

Member school survey respondents were asked to identify the top three areas that could be improved by the Ever Active Schools program. Responses grouped into seven key themes, presented in order of frequency of response:

7. Resources and Ideas
8. Communication
9. Recognition
10. Feedback and Support
11. Professional Development
12. Processes



13. Awareness and Coordination

Although theme areas did emerge among responses to the question, there was little consistency in the specific suggestions made under each theme. Specific areas for improvement that were identified are detailed in Table 4.0 on the following page, presented in descending order of frequency in each theme area.



Table 4.0 Areas for Improvement

Theme Area	Specific Areas Identified
<p>Resources and Ideas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More resources and ideas in general • Access to posters and banners • Ideas to implement mandatory physical education • Ideas for large physical education classes • More monthly challenges • Website – needs to be more specific • Calendar – set up monthly for entire year • Create a template on website for monthly tracking of activities and link to growth reports <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Theme Area Total: 31.9% of Respondents</i></p>
<p>Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send letter mail or hard copies rather than email communication • Communication in general • Send information more regularly • Increase personal and school contact • Improve communication between EAS and district physical education coordinators <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Theme Area Total: 21.3% of Respondents</i></p>
<p>Recognition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Ever Active schools with an EAS banner (e.g., banner to hang in school gym) • Recognition for program participation in general <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Theme Area Total: 14.9% of Respondents</i></p>
<p>Feedback and Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on game plans and next steps • Feedback and assistance with goals • Follow-up on growth plans and guidance for year two • More reminders to help keep “on top” of the program • Increased support from parents, community, and public <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Theme Area Total: 12.8% of Respondents</i></p>
<p>Professional Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Energizer Days, possibly at professional development sessions • More workshops • More professional development opportunities <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Theme Area Total: 10.6% of Respondents</i></p>
<p>Processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify membership application process • Streamline Game Plan process <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Theme Area Total: 8.5% of Respondents</i></p>
<p>Awareness and Coordination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More public/media awareness • Coordinate with other initiatives to reduce repetition and facilitate joint awareness weeks <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Theme Area Total: 6.4% of Respondents</i></p>



Barriers to Program Membership

Member school survey respondents were asked to identify the level of significance of a number of barriers related to becoming an EAS member school. Results are summarized in Table 5.0 on page 17.

Note: In this section percentage perceiving a barrier as significant includes all respondents who reported that the barrier was either “very significant” or “quite significant” unless otherwise indicated.

Program Process and Requirements

Several areas related to program process and requirements were perceived as significant barriers by a fairly high proportion of survey respondents. The requirement to prepare an annual growth report was indicated as the greatest barrier in this area (37.8% of respondents reported that this was a significant barrier), followed by the requirement to develop a Game Plan (indicated to be a significant barrier by 34.0% of respondents). Twenty-five percent (25.0%) felt that the process associated with completing a membership application was a significant barrier to membership. The cost of membership was reported as the least significant barrier overall, with only 2.1% of respondents indicating significance.

Resistance/Lack of Interest

Overall, resistance from staff, students, and parents was not viewed as a significant barrier to membership. Of these barriers, resistance from staff was identified as the most significant (18.8%) followed by resistance from parents and students (6.3% each). Resistance from students received the highest proportion of respondents reporting that it was “not at all significant” of all barriers interrogated (87.5%). Similarly, lack of interest by the school was not perceived as a significant barrier to membership (reported as significant by only 10.4% of respondents).

The most significant barrier reported in the area of resistance and lack of interest was not enough involvement from the community and/or parents. Twenty-nine point eight percent (29.8%) of survey respondents felt that this was a significant barrier to program membership.

Resource Issues

Inadequate staff resources was reported as the most significant barrier to membership, and, of all barriers interrogated, received the highest proportion of respondents indicating that it was a “very significant” barrier (62.5% and 25.0% respectively).

Twenty-five point five percent (25.5%) of survey respondents reported that lack of time for extra activities was a significant barrier to program membership.



Table 5.0 Summary of Barriers to Membership (Member Schools)

Barrier	Very Significant (%)	Quite Significant (%)	Somewhat Significant (%)	Not At All Significant (%)
Cost of membership	0	2.1	36.2	61.7
Process of filling out a membership application	4.2	20.8	41.7	33.3
Developing a Game Plan	6.4	27.7	51.1	14.9
Requirement to prepare an annual growth report	6.7	31.1	44.4	17.8
Resistance from staff	0	18.8	37.5	43.8
Resistance from parents	0	6.3	20.8	72.9
Resistance from students	2.1	4.2	6.3	87.5
Lack of interest by school	0	10.4	39.6	50.0
Not enough involvement or support from community/parents	6.4	23.4	29.8	40.4
Not enough staff resources	25.0	37.5	27.1	10.4
No time for extra activities	6.4	19.1	44.7	29.8

Other Barriers

Several respondents identified a number of other barriers to membership, including

- involvement in other, similar initiatives;
- confusion with other, similar initiatives;
- support from staff, especially at the administrative level;
- lack of clarity around how to become involved;
- time and personnel constraints;
- the membership application;
- a focus on other areas, e.g., art; and
- inadequate gym space for the school population.

Program Value and Impact

Program Value

Overall, member school survey respondents found the EAS program to be valuable. The majority of respondents (74.5%) reported that the program was “very valuable” and 25.5% indicated that it was “somewhat valuable”. No respondents felt that the program was “not at all valuable”.

Survey respondents were asked to identify three aspects of the Ever Active Schools program that they found to be the most valuable. The most common area of value identified across respondents related to resources and ideas—66.7% of respondents indicated a response that fell within this theme. Specific responses related to resources focused on

- resources in general,



- monthly calendars,
- fresh games and ideas,
- the EAS bulletin,
- Promising Practices documents,
- the website,
- posters, and
- program staff.

The second most common response areas were professional development opportunities, including Energizer Days, and the philosophy and approach surrounding the program—each reported by 22.9% of respondents. Specific responses related to program philosophy and approach included the

- promotion of physical activity for everyone everywhere;
- emphasis placed on health, physical activity, and nutrition;
- idea of daily physical education;
- focus on a healthy, active school environment; and
- realistic approach to implementing activity.

Opportunity for improvement in the school was the third most common area of value identified by survey respondents—reported by 20.8% of respondents. Responses in this area encompassed opportunity for school and personal development, the creation of school spirit, and a sub-theme focused on the Game Plan as a tool to evaluate current physical education programs and policies.

Other areas of value that were reported by 10% or less respondents, presented in order of descending frequency, included

- networking;
- communication;
- community involvement;
- support provided by the program;
- relationship building among staff, students, and parents;
- recognition received by schools; and
- the increasing prominence of the program in school communities.

Final comments offered by survey respondents demonstrated that, overall, respondents found the program to be very valuable. For example,

“We feel very lucky to be a part of the program.”

“It has been a big plus for our school.”

“Keep it up. We love it!”

“This program has greatly contributed to school-wide interest in [physical education] and has helped to show staff and parents that physical education is an important part of education.”



“Lots of super ideas.”

Program Impact

Survey respondents were asked to rate the progress that their school had made toward becoming a healthy, active school community since becoming an EAS member. Most survey respondents indicated that they had made either “very significant” or “quite significant” progress (29.2% and 52.1% respectively). Only 18.8% reported that they had made “somewhat significant” progress and no one reported that they had not made any progress since joining the program.

Respondents were also asked to identify the primary contributor(s) to this progress. Respondents were provided a list of five primary contributors to choose from (more than one selection could be indicated). The results were as follows:

1. The Ever Active Schools program – selected by 89.6% of respondents
2. Provincial school policy – selected by 33.3% of respondents
3. Initiatives undertaken by the school independently of any outside program or policy – selected by 75.0% of respondents
4. Not applicable/no changes have occurred – selected by 4.2% of respondents
5. Other – selected by 25.0% of respondents

The Ever Active Schools program was the most common primary contributor to progress made selected (89.6%), followed by initiatives undertaken by the school independently of any outside program or policy (75.0%).

Other primary contributors that were identified by survey respondents included

- support from parents, staff, and the community;
- an active staff;
- administrative support;
- the focus of the school division;
- program champion within the school;
- personal interests and beliefs of staff involved; and
- influence of individuals from other Ever Active schools.

FINDINGS: REGISTERED INTENT SCHOOL SURVEY

A total of eight surveys were returned by EAS registered intent schools. The findings from these surveys are presented in the following sections. Due to the low sample size of the registered intent group all data should be interpreted with caution.

Barriers to Program Membership

Registered intent school survey respondents were asked to identify the level of significance of the same barriers to EAS program membership that were posed to member school survey respondents. Results are summarized in Table 6.0 on page 21.



Note: In this section percentage perceiving a barrier as significant includes all respondents who reported that the barrier was either “very significant” or “quite significant” unless otherwise indicated.

Program Process and Requirements

As was the case with member school survey results, the requirement to prepare an annual growth report and develop a Game Plan were reported as quite significant barriers to membership (62.5% and 50.0%, respectively, indicated that these were significant barriers). Twenty-five percent (25.0%) of respondents reported that the process of completing a membership application was a significant barrier to membership and 14.3% indicated that the cost of membership posed a significant barrier.

Resistance/Lack of Interest

In the areas of resistance and lack of interest, the only barrier identified as significant by registered intent survey respondents was lack of involvement or support from the community and/or parents (42.9% indicated that this was a significant barrier).

No respondents reported that either a) resistance from staff, parents, or students, or b) lack of interest from the school were significant barriers. As was the case with the member school survey, resistance from students received the highest proportion of respondents reporting that it was “not at all significant” of all barriers interrogated (87.5%).

Resource Issues

Survey respondents reported that inadequate staff resources was the most significant barrier to membership (75.0% of respondents indicated that it was significant). Also, of all barriers interrogated, this is the one that received the highest proportion of respondents indicating that it was “very significant” (50.0% of respondents).

Fifty percent (50.0%) of survey respondents reported that lack of time for extra activities was a significant barrier to program membership.



Table 6.0 Summary of Barriers to Membership (Registered Intent Schools)

Barrier	Very Significant (%)	Quite Significant (%)	Somewhat Significant (%)	Not At All Significant (%)
Cost of membership	0	14.3	28.6	57.1
Process of filling out a membership application	12.5	12.5	62.5	12.5
Developing a Game Plan	12.5	37.5	50.0	0
Requirement to prepare an annual growth report	37.5	25.0	37.5	0
Resistance from staff	0	0	37.5	62.5
Resistance from parents	0	0	25.0	75.0
Resistance from students	0	0	12.5	87.5
Lack of interest by school	0	0	62.5	37.5
Not enough involvement or support from community/parents	14.3	28.6	42.9	14.3
Not enough staff resources	50.0	25.0	25.0	0
No time for extra activities	0	50.0	33.3	16.7

Specific Barriers Preventing Membership

Registered intent survey respondents were asked to indicate what factors, specifically, had prevented them from becoming an EAS member. Lack of time was the most common response to this question, along with the process required to complete the application. One respondent indicated that their school was already doing what was suggested by the EAS program and saw membership as redundant.

When asked what the Ever Active Schools program could do differently to encourage membership, responses were reflective of the barriers identified above. Specifically, respondents suggested that the program could

- make the membership application less time-consuming to complete,
- reduce the Game Plan and annual growth report forms,
- “provide support without all of the hoops”, and
- make the process of joining easier.

One respondent also suggested that the program could provide more professional development opportunities for staff in schools and link with Teachers’ Convention.

Program Value and Future Interest

Results pertaining to the overall value of the EAS program were somewhat mixed. While 40.0% of registered intent survey respondents reported that the program was “very valuable”, 60.0% reported that it was “somewhat valuable”. No respondents indicated that the program was either “quite valuable” or “not at all valuable”.



Comments offered by respondents indicated that the program was a good idea and that it should continue to be promoted.

Survey respondents were asked to identify the level of progress they felt their school would make towards creating a healthy, active school community. Results were as follows:

- 57.1% reported that they would make significant progress,
- 42.9% reported that they would make some progress, and
- 0% reported that they would not make any progress.

Registered intent survey respondents were also asked whether they thought that their school would complete the membership application and become an Ever Active school in the future. Forty-two point nine percent (42.9%) answered “yes” and 57.1% answered “don’t know”. No respondents answered “no”.

FINDINGS: NON-MEMBER SCHOOL SURVEYS

A total of 36 surveys were returned by EAS non-member schools. The findings from these surveys are presented in the following sections.

Ever Active Schools Program Awareness

Of non-member school survey respondents, 65.7% reported that they had heard of the EAS program before and 34.3% reported that they had not. Respondents who reported that they had heard about the program were asked where they had heard about it and were presented with a list of five options (more than one selection could be made). The options that were presented and the proportion of participants that selected each option were as follows:

1. The Ever Active Schools website – selected by 14.3% of respondents
2. Teachers’ Convention – selected by 28.6% of respondents
3. Word of mouth – selected by 47.2% of respondents
4. Schools Come Alive workshop – selected by 25.0% of respondents
5. Other – selected by 8.6% of respondents

Word of mouth was the most common selection made for how respondents heard of the EAS program (47.2%), followed by Teachers’ convention (28.6%), and a Schools Come Alive workshop (25.0%).

“Other” places that respondents had heard about the EAS program included a previous school, district email, and school division Comprehensive School Health meetings.

Value Statements

Four “value statements” were presented to survey respondents who were then asked to identify their level of agreement with each statement. The statements corresponded to either



the philosophy of the EAS program or to the resources and supports provided through the program. The level of agreement reported for each statement is discussed below.

1. *Our school has adequate policies and programs in place to create a healthy, active environment for students.*

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
44.4%	55.6%	0%

Answers reported indicated that all respondents felt their schools had some kind of policies and programs in place to create a healthy, active environment for students.

2. *Resources should be dedicated to providing education and opportunities for physical activity for students, beyond what the school is currently providing.*

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
33.3%	58.3%	8.3%

A large majority of survey respondents indicated that more resources should be dedicated to providing students with education about and opportunities for physical activity.

3. *Resources should be dedicated to providing education and opportunities for healthy eating for students, beyond what the school is currently providing.*

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
47.2%	38.9%	13.9%

A large majority of respondents reported that more resources should be allocated to providing students with education and opportunities for healthy eating.

4. *Our school would appreciate receiving support in creating a healthy, active environment.*

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
69.4%	25.0%	5.6%

Almost all survey respondents indicated that they would appreciate receiving support to create a healthy, active school environment.

Future Interest

When asked if their school would be interested in joining the Ever Active Schools Program in the future, 40.0% answered “yes”, 8.6% answered “no”, and 51.4% answered “don’t know”.

Reasons provided by those who answered no were varied and included the following:

- students represented a demographic with a healthy lifestyle;



- lack of time;
- would require more information about the program and provincial resources to implement it; and
- the school was located in a low socioeconomic area and felt that the program only catered to more affluent schools.

Most respondents (86.1%) indicated that they would like Ever Active Schools to send them more information about the program. A list of these schools, along with the contact information provided, was forwarded to the Ever Active Schools Program Coordinator.



FINDINGS: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Interview participants were asked questions around five themes structured around the EAS program objectives, identified in the following sections (the complete interview guide can be found in Appendix A). The themes were as follows:

1. Partnerships
2. Leadership
3. Services to facilitate quality programs
4. Program improvement and value
5. Future directions

Interview data are organized according to the above themes.

PARTNERSHIPS

Key Objective: The EAS program strategically partners with healthy living advocates and stakeholders.

Interview participants were asked questions around existing partnerships, successes and challenges associated with those partnerships, as well as other partnerships that should be pursued.

Partnering Organizations

According to participants, the EAS program has established partnerships with a variety of government departments and ministries, similar or related initiatives and programs, and private organizations.

Government Partners

Participants identified the following government partnerships that have been established by the EAS program:

- the three funding ministries
 - Alberta Community Development
 - Alberta Health and Wellness
 - Alberta Learning
- Alberta Children's Services
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Parks and Recreation
- Alberta Sport, Recreation, Park and Wildlife Foundation
- Capital Health



Other Initiatives, Programs, Associations, and Organizations

A large number of other initiatives, programs, associations, and organizations were identified as partners of the Ever Active Schools program. These partners are listed in the following table:

Associations and Organizations	Programs and Initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberta Teacher’s Association • College of Alberta Superintendents • University of Alberta • University of Calgary • Alberta Active Communities • Schools Come Alive • Alberta Milk • Canadian Association for Health Physical Education Recreation and Dance (CAHPERD) • Health and Physical Education Council (HPEC) • Alberta Coalition for Healthy School Communities (ACHSC) • Safe Healthy Active People Everywhere (SHAPE) • Summer Active Resources • Alberta Centre for Active Living Network • Alberta Healthy Living Network • Active Living agencies in Alberta • Active Living Portfolio • Active Living Alliance • Various sports associations • Dieticians of Canada • Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) • Alberta and/or Edmonton Regional Professional Development Consortium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be Fit for Life: Active Living Challenge (program out of the U of A that provides fitness testing and workshops for schools) • Go for the Green • Outside the Box • Beyond an Apple a Day (BAAAD – Alberta Milk Project) • Daily Physical Activity Initiative • Active Communities Project (coordinated by Alberta Recreation and Parks)

Private Sector Partners

While the majority of interview participants suggested that the EAS program had partnered with private sector organizations, few cited specific examples. Several indicated that all businesses that had sponsored a page in the EAS calendar (described in the next section) were considered partners. One individual stated that Morgex was a partner of the program.

Partnership Effectiveness and Success

All interview participants indicated that the partnerships established by EAS were successful. One individual indicated that communication with government funding partners in particular had been open and effective. Another participant felt that cross-ministry commitment had been good and had contributed to expanding the role of EAS, and that the Steering Committee provided a good example of that collaboration.

The majority of participants felt that the partnerships provided a valuable mechanism for networking and information sharing:



“There’s always the information sharing and networking with other leaders in the province.”

One individual suggested that the partnerships served to expand capacity within Alberta through opportunities for interaction and learning, such as Energizer Days.

The Ever Active Schools calendar was most often cited as a specific example of a successful partnership initiative. Each page in the calendar was sponsored by a private business or organization, and the calendar was then sent out to over 35,000 homes in Alberta. The calendar contained tips for activities that families could do to stay healthy and active throughout the year.

The partnerships with the Alberta Coalition for Healthy School Communities and the Active Living Portfolio were also mentioned as examples of successful partnerships. The former has involved assisting with a conference and sharing ideas, and, as the latter is made up of a number of different organizations who are involved in active living, it has provided opportunity for networking and resource sharing.

Reasons that were offered for successful partnerships included open communication, working together in a common initiative (i.e., EAS), and involvement of EAS in the partnering organizations. As one individual stated,

“I think one of the reasons they are successful is when EAS has a chance to sit around those tables there’s an increased awareness or profile of what the program is and the work of the schools that are members of the program.”

Challenges Associated with Partnerships

The most commonly cited challenge related to developing and maintaining partnerships was lack of resources. Limited staff and funds were seen as a barrier to increasing partnerships as well as school membership. With only 1.5 FTE staff, participants felt that there is only so much that can be accomplished. One individual suggested that having two people occupy the role of program coordinator would ease some of the challenges associated with time constraints.

“There’s just not enough time to do it all and to contribute in a meaningful manner to all the initiatives that would be beneficial.”

One participant indicated that because EAS is a province-wide initiative, optimal program development requires much travel—however, the amount of travel that can be done in reality is limited by human and monetary resources. This individual emphasized that travel to the school communities is particularly important during the initial phase of membership for the school in order to get the school “off the ground”.

Other challenges that were identified included

- each department or ministry that is involved in the program has its own specific focus;



- it can be difficult to develop a budget and business plan based on a three to five year funding strategy—*“sometimes we feel quite vulnerable because we’re never really sure that the ministries are going to fund again next year”*;
- many elementary schools do not have physical education specialists and it is important to have “experts” in the school to implement changes and guide curriculum development—without these “experts” more training of school staff is required by the EAS program;
- lack of infrastructure or executives to deal with on an on-going basis—many are quasi-volunteer groups;
- securing a corporate partner to sit at the table; and
- when schools are involved in similar initiatives, such as the Calgary-Rocky View Comprehensive Health Partnership, they may not be interested in becoming a part of another initiative or may not be aware that they can do both.

Despite the challenges identified, interview participants were on the whole positive about the partnerships and associated progress. As one individual stated, *“they are not challenges that produce conflict, but challenges that produce cohesiveness.”*

Additional Partnerships

The most common suggestion around other organizations that would be valuable to partner with was regional health authorities. One individual thought that the program could partner specifically with school program managers from health regions as they oversee the school health nurses.

Other possibilities for partnerships that were put forth included

- more local ministries such as Municipal Affairs and Transportation;
- the new wellness coordinator for the province (shared role between Alberta Health and Wellness and Alberta Education);
- more private companies and corporations;
- major universities in the province including the University of Alberta, University of Calgary, and University of Lethbridge;
- other initiatives focusing on comprehensive school health; and
- nutritional/healthy eating partnerships.

While participants felt that establishing these partnerships would be valuable, several raised again the issue that it may be difficult to do with the current resource restraints:

“There’s a lot of work in attaining partnerships and I don’t know whether the EAS office has the appropriate staff to deal with the legwork that’s needed here.”



LEADERSHIP

Key Objective: The EAS program provides leadership and advocacy to school communities for healthy, active living.

Interview participants were asked a number of questions around the leadership that the EAS program provides to school communities, the effectiveness of this leadership, and challenges associated with the provision of leadership.

Leadership Activities

Participants identified a wide variety of leadership activities that the program currently engages in. The activities can be grouped into the following four main categories:

1. registration-related activities,
2. resources and workshops,
3. ongoing support, and
4. other.

Registration-related Activities

Several participants indicated that the registration package that is provided to schools interested in joining the program, coupled with the process around registration, was a good example of leadership to schools. According to participants, the registration package provides schools with a starting point to examine what they are currently doing and to develop an action plan (Game Plan) to move them toward creating a more healthy, active school community. The development of that package and the provision of tools and a template for schools to create their own Game Plan was viewed as an act of leadership by the program.

Participants also emphasized the importance of the feedback that is provided by EAS to the schools on their Game Plan. This feedback, which includes tips and advice around how they can create a more healthy, active school community and better meet the goals that they identify, was viewed as a valuable component of program leadership.

Resources and Workshops

Resources and workshops provided by EAS were viewed as one of the most important forms of leadership provided by the program. These resources take the form of paper materials, manuals, the website, Promising Practices documents, the EAS bulletin, and the registration package. The proactive provision of information and resources to member schools was identified by one individual as a strong example of leadership.

Workshops were also viewed as a valuable form of leadership that the EAS program offers to schools and other related initiatives. Energizer Days were specifically mentioned as an activity that stood out for several participants. Attendance by EAS at in-services and sharing information around physical activity were identified as other examples of leadership engaged in by the EAS program.



Ongoing Support

On-going support and communication that is provided to member schools by the program was a third component of EAS leadership identified by interview participants. Availability of EAS staff to respond to questions and concerns from schools and to provide them with ideas was viewed as a valuable resource.

Other

Participants suggested that the EAS program is engaged in several other leadership activities, including

- partnerships that the program is involved in;
- providing opportunities for networking through Energizer Days and other workshops;
- involvement in other provincial initiatives (identified in the Partnerships section above and including the Daily Physical Activity Initiative); and
- taking advantage of other opportunities for funding for projects, for example, the *Motivators in Motion* project.

Vision of How Ever Active Schools Should Provide Leadership

When participants were asked how they envisioned the EAS program providing leadership, many suggested that they should continue with what they are currently doing. In particular, continuing to promote the Promising Practices documents and Energizer Days were thought to be good ways to provide leadership.

One participant indicated that leadership provided by the program should focus on two areas:

- a) advocating for healthy, active living in school communities on a public and political level; and
- b) providing support to individual schools.

Additional areas of focus for leadership were also suggested and are discussed below.

1. Involve the community more and facilitate partnerships with parents and not-for-profit organizations. Take advantage of opportunities to work with other agencies and be connected with other initiatives that aim to support healthy, active schools.

“This kind of project has to involve the community, the school, and other partners – that’s where the leadership has to come from.”

“You have to know what’s happening if you’re going to lead, so being connected with what’s happening and what’s on the horizon provincially to support healthy, active schools.”

2. Raise the program’s profile through increasing program awareness, becoming more visible in the community, and utilizing the media (e.g., for press releases).



3. Focus on providing networking opportunities for schools and on developing linkages between school champions to increase schools' support networks beyond just the EAS staff.
4. Provide workshops on daily physical activity and how to build an active, healthy school community.
5. Work closely with existing initiatives, for example the Alberta Coalition for Healthy School Communities, as these organizations already have established networks that include links to parent groups, etc.
6. Expand the program so that the message reaches more schools and provincial leadership by EAS grows. However, funding and staff constraints were mentioned once again as a barrier to achieving this growth.
7. Possibly offer joint training. For example, when the EAS program offers training to schools include people from the area of park spaces and school yard design in the training to share information around the importance of indoor and outdoor environment when promoting physical activity.

Leadership Effectiveness and Success

All interview participants felt that the leadership activities undertaken by the program were successful. Energizer Days and the Promising Practices resources were consistently cited as examples of this success. Expanding the Energizer Days from two locations in the province (Edmonton and Calgary) to five locations (Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, Grande Prairie, and Lethbridge) was mentioned as evidence of successfully improving leadership. Two "mini Energizer Days" were also held in the province at the request of specific school districts (a district in Medicine Hat and St. Paul school district).

Other workshops and networking opportunities, the EAS bulletin, the website, the Summer Active Resource Guide, providing links to resources, on-going support, and involvement in various committees were identified as other examples of successful leadership. One participant felt that it was the role of this evaluation to determine the successfulness of leadership provided by the program.

Challenges Associated with Leadership

Participants identified challenges associated with the provision of leadership at two levels: the resource level and the school level.

Resource-level Challenges

In relation to resources, inadequate staff and funding were identified as the biggest challenges. Several participants suggested that inadequate time to accomplish everything is a significant challenge associated with leadership. Participants mentioned two specific challenges related to time, including 1) difficulty keeping current on resources and research related to the program, and 2) distances between schools in the province—long distances



mean that program staff simply cannot go everywhere for free and sometimes need to charge a nominal fee to cover costs.

Having the right personnel in place was also cited as an important component to providing effective leadership. Most participants indicated that the program currently does have the right personnel for the job. One participant indicated that having the right personnel was not enough and that appropriate support also needed to exist:

“You can’t separate leadership qualities from the environment that allows those qualities to come to the fore.”

School-level Challenges

Several challenges were identified at the school level. The first of these was that schools needed to be committed to thinking about issues related to health and well-being before they would even begin the membership process, as becoming a member was described as “*very time consuming for schools*”. This commitment was viewed as something that required a shift in the culture of schools, which was identified as ultimately being the school’s responsibility. However, sharing success stories from current Ever Active schools was suggested as a starting point to increase awareness of the program and promote the EAS message more widely.

A second part of this culture shift that was identified focused on encouraging school districts, superintendents, and principals to see the value in the EAS program so that it is viewed “*not as a hindrance to the academic accomplishments of the students, but as an enhancement*”.

Another school-level challenge related to leadership identified by a participant was the current model for program support that existed in many schools. In this model it was the school champion that promoted the program and moved it forward in the school. However, if this individual left the school the program would often disappear along with the champion. The participant suggested that engaging support within the school at a higher level (i.e., through the school district, superintendent, and principal) would increase program sustainability. It was suggested that combining this higher level support with interest from teachers at the school level would produce the best results:

“In an ideal world, we would want to have the passion coming from the top, as well as from below, and having them meld and meet in the middle.”

A third challenge that was identified in relation to schools was maintaining consistent communication with school personnel due to the high turnover of staff and administration within schools. Also, meeting the varied needs of different schools and learning exactly what these needs are was identified as an issue for the EAS program. It was suggested that policies, needs, and expectations would likely be different for each school in the province and tailoring resources and leadership to each school was not very viable. There was uncertainty expressed around how to address that particular challenge, other than to increase staff.

SERVICES TO FACILITATE QUALITY PROGRAMS

Key Objective: The EAS program will support member school communities by providing services that facilitate quality programs.

All interview participants were queried about the support that the EAS program provides to school communities to facilitate quality programs, the effectiveness of the services offered, and areas of service that may be beneficial but are not currently offered.

Services Currently Provided by the Ever Active Schools Program

Many of the services provided by the EAS program to member schools to “facilitate quality programs” that were identified by participants were also identified earlier as leadership activities and resources.

The website, Promising Practices documents (which are also listed on the website), and professional development opportunities were most commonly listed as services provided to member schools.

The website was viewed as

- providing on-going support to members;
- a valuable point of access for information about in-services and other upcoming professional development events available;
- a convenient way to access Promising Practices resources;
- a place to access information on relevant statistics, nutritional information, and resources such as power point presentations to use with parent groups; and
- a good way to connect to other related groups and initiatives, such as Schools Come Alive.

“The website connects the professional development component that schools can access, which is on-going support then, and that’s really important...the website allows them to access that on-going support.”

In terms of professional development opportunities, the workshops and in-services that the EAS program provides (including Energizer Days), and the conferences that it attends (e.g., Teachers’ convention) were identified as services directed at facilitating quality programs. In-services provided by EAS in conjunction with other partners were mentioned specifically as a valuable service. In-services were viewed as an opportunity for member schools to connect with other schools involved in the EAS program and build their own networks.

Other services identified focused around printed resources provided by the program, including the

- EAS bulletin,
- EAS application package and Game Plan template,
- Family Fun Calendar,
- Ever Active Everywhere resource package,
- Ever Active Schools guide and information package,



- feedback provided to the schools on their Game Plans, and
- resources that are sent to schools via mail and email lists.

Program staff and the on-going support and follow-up provided to schools were also mentioned as services available to member schools that help to produce quality programming.

Effectiveness of Services

The majority of participant responses indicated that the services provided by the EAS program were effective, although little additional detail was provided. One participant suggested that a difficulty with the services provided is that they tend to reach only those schools that are already involved in the program and are thus “preaching to the converted”. This individual felt that that the services should also aim to reach other schools that are not yet involved in the program.

Another participant suggested that some of the program’s resources need to be updated – the Promising Practices and Ever Active Everywhere documents were mentioned in particular.

One individual was unsure whether or not the services were effective. This participant mentioned that some feedback suggested that the application package was too long, but that the length may be effective as it encourages schools to think about the program and their own individual goals. This person indicated that the website was a good resource, but was not sure how many people actually accessed it.

Other Services to Provide

Most participants felt that the services already being offered by the EAS program were for the most part sufficient. Suggestions for additional services, or for service improvement, included

- maintaining closer contact with schools to identify gaps in support;
- endeavouring to determine exactly what schools need;
- offering schools more information, more ideas, and more “how-to and what-to”;
- providing resources and support around how to design schools – inside and out, including classrooms – to facilitate physical activity;
- facilitating linkages between schools to promote inter-school support;
- securing partnerships to provide funding as well as after-school and lunch time activities for students;
- providing something for schools to display (e.g., a banner) as a form of recognition;
- providing public recognition for member schools (e.g., recognition in a local newspaper or at a provincial active living awards program); and
- promoting a curriculum that encourages physical activity in all subjects and utilizes a mobile learning environment (e.g., going on a nature walk in biology or visiting a pond to examine the aquatic environment).



PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT, VALUE, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The final area that was discussed with interview participants focused on improvements that could be made to the EAS program, program value, and future directions and anticipated challenges.

Program Improvement

There was little consistency across suggestions for program improvement offered by participants. The following suggestions were made:

- establish linkages with initiatives that are already happening in the province;
- increase the number of EAS staff;
- enable more stability in program leadership (e.g., through securing an annual funding commitment);
- improve record keeping (note: comments suggest that the admin assistant has been helpful in this area);
- improve communication tracking with schools, possibly through implementing client management software;
- ensure the approach to membership is a process that works for schools and is not so time consuming or onerous that it becomes a barrier to participation in the program;
- expand the focus of the program to include more healthy eating and/or lifestyle issues;
- ensure that all schools know they have the option of joining and can become involved in the program in a manageable way;
- increase awareness that EAS is a school-based program moving schools towards a comprehensive health model, and that it is available to parents, community, staff, and students;
- develop an evaluation tool to measure growth in schools beyond the current growth reports;
- implement a regular evaluation mechanism for the program as a whole;
- increase follow-up with schools after interest in the program is indicated and after the school submits an application, and provide feedback on an on-going basis;
- revamp the website so that material is more current, more information and examples are included, it is more interactive, and member schools can connect with one another;
- update resources;
- ensure that the program is very highly publicized; and
- offer visible awards or recognition (e.g., a flag that can be hung in the gym) to member schools that they are proud to display as a means of encouraging program participation – *“there has to be something in it for the school even if it’s as simple as hanging a flag/banner in the school with pride. That’s what’s going to make EAS really hit stride”*.



Program Value

Participants were asked what they felt the most valuable aspect of the EAS program was. The following three areas were identified across responses to the question:

1. the support that is provided to schools through the EAS program;
2. the fact that the program is based on a comprehensive health model and that the importance of involving the entire school community is included in the model; and
3. that the program is provincial in nature and does not restrict the type or number of schools that can participate.

Other valuable aspects of the program were also identified, including

- providing networking opportunities;
- enhancing the physical education and health curriculum;
- employing an approach that recognizes the unique needs of each school and enables them to focus on areas where they feel improvement is needed (i.e., not using a “cookie-cutter” approach to schools);
- building capacity within schools;
- providing a lens through which schools can critically examine their practices, communication, and how well they promote a healthy, active lifestyle;
- bridging provincial-level interests and policies related to active living with the individual school community level;
- promoting active living on behalf of the province;
- developing collaboration between ministries; and
- focusing on creating a mindset in youth where physical activity becomes part of an individual's daily routine, for life.

Future Directions and Anticipated Challenges

Almost all participants felt that the role of the Ever Active Schools program would grow in the future, particularly with a) the introduction of the Daily Physical Activity Initiative⁹ (DPA) and b) an increasing focus on a comprehensive health model for schools. Many of the participants felt that EAS would be looked to for leadership and support as schools begin to implement the DPA: *“I think it is the tool to support Daily Physical Activity”*. One individual suggested that the DPA would become another opportunity to profile the EAS program.

Another participant indicated that the EAS program would likely expand its focus by both growing in numbers and by directing more attention to healthy eating and lifestyle issues. One individual felt that the future of the program would ultimately be determined by funding, and that increased funding would be testament to the positive program impact.

⁹ “In September 2005, Alberta Education will implement a requirement for 30 minutes of Daily Physical Activity (DPA) for all students in grades 1-9. The DPA Initiative is part of a broader Wellness Framework, which is currently under development to help Alberta students adopt healthy lifestyles. Schools will make individual decisions on the best way to integrate daily physical activity.” Source: <http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/ipr/DailyPhysAct.asp> March 14, 2005.

Anticipated future challenges focused primarily around resource issues. While many individuals felt that the program would grow, they also felt that obtaining resources (i.e., sustainable funding) to deal with this growth could be a challenge. Inadequate funding and staff were cited as the biggest obstacles the program would face in the future. Uncertainty was expressed around the ability of the program to continue to provide a high level of service to an increasing number of schools. One individual offered a comment that provides a good summary of how many participants viewed the future of the EAS program:

“The province is looking at wellness as a whole, and I think EAS is going to be looked again upon as a model since they deal not only with physical activity, but with nutrition and creating environments for healthy living. They’ll be called upon by schools around the province to help out with this, so they’re going to need more staffing to be able to respond to those kinds of questions.”

One participant questioned the ability of the program to retain its unique focus on facilitating active living in schools in an environment of limited provincial resources. This individual suggested that the program may be required to “merge” with other health-related initiatives and adopt a broader mandate encompassing other areas of health as scarce resources prohibit the funding of multiple initiatives.

Several other future challenges were identified by participants. One individual felt that the DPA may perpetuate the notion that EAS is just an active living program rather than a program that focuses on comprehensive health and health issues, and that more work would have to be done to create awareness around the entire program focus. Two other participants suggested that the biggest challenge would come in trying to achieve recognition that physical activity is an important contributor to a student’s academic life and has the same worth as other subjects. Finding the time to continue to build partnerships, and continuing to stay current and viable for schools were also identified as challenges that the program would be faced with in the future.

FINAL COMMENTS

Overall, interview participants felt that Ever Active Schools was a valuable program that would likely continue to grow in the future.

Final comments from participants focused on program value, the importance of increasing the profile of the program, and the “*outstanding job*” that current program staff were doing. One participant commented that current EAS membership represented a very small proportion of all Alberta schools, and was uncertain whether current membership should be considered success. However, this individual thought that at present there may be constraints, such as limited resources, that are a barrier to increased membership.



FINDINGS: CASE STUDY

Discussion with case study participants focused around the who, what, when, where, why, and how of being an Ever Active school (specific areas of inquiry that were pursued are included in the Case Study Protocol in Appendix A). Essentially, the following questions were interrogated:

- What does it mean to be an Ever Active school? What has happened/changed in the school as a result of membership?
- Who is involved in the Program? Who is impacted by it?
- What are some challenges? What are some facilitators of success?
- What is the overall impact on the school and the school community?



A number of themes emerged in response to the above questions and are presented in the following sections.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE “EVER ACTIVE”?

Imagine a school that is constantly working towards creating new opportunities for activity for students; a school that is dedicated to providing students with healthy choices related to food, drink, and ways to spend spare time; a school that has made a commitment to creating a healthy, active school community. For the school that was visited, all of these factors comprise what it means to be an Ever Active school.

School administration indicated that it was important to examine current practices and policies and to focus on areas that could be improved. For example, offering more non-traditional activities (such as a dance unit in the physical education program) was cited as an area for improvement. The importance of providing opportunity for activity was emphasized by staff and students, as was the opportunity to build awareness around health and well-being.

New Opportunities for Physical Activity and Well-being

A number of new opportunities and changes that occurred in the school as a result of membership in the Ever Active Schools Program were identified. The three most commonly cited, or “biggest” changes, included

1. creation of a fitness centre available to students, staff, and community groups;
2. a comprehensive Health Fair that occurred in spring 2004; and
3. biannual Ever Active Days.

Fitness Centre

The fitness centre (funded through grants) is an addition to the school that everyone was excited about. It consists of a variety of weight training and cardio machines that exert minimal impact on joints and are thus safe for users. According to students, the fitness centre houses the “*best equipment in Canada*”. The facility is open to students in the morning before school as well as after school, is available for staff use after 4:30 p.m. daily, and is available for use by community clubs (such as the tae kwon do and volleyball clubs) in the evenings. According to participants the centre caters to a wide audience and attracts some students who aren’t necessarily the most athletic individuals—these students could likely derive much benefit from using the facility.



The fitness centre is used not only to improve physical condition, but also to develop work-related skills and responsibility in students through a work experience program. Through the program students become responsible for four pieces of equipment and take on the job of wiping the equipment down several times a week, as well as ensuring that there are clean towels out for fitness centre users. The program provides an example of how a new opportunity for physical activity can be used to develop valuable life skills—in this instance, work-related skills and experience for students.

Health Fair

All case study participants pointed to a Health Fair that was presented at the school in spring 2004 as a valuable new opportunity to learn about health and well-being. The Health Fair was an enormous undertaking consisting of 96 different sessions related to health, activity, and nutrition. Each student selected six sessions to attend (three health, two active, and one nutrition) and school staff also had an opportunity to attend various sessions. All sessions were facilitated by community volunteers.

Attendance at the Health Fair was very good, and according to students, the day presented a fun opportunity for everyone to get involved. Students commented specifically on the nutrition session as they learned how to make nutritious snacks and were even able to prepare and sample baked yams and banana milkshakes.

Ever Active Days & Family Nights

Participants indicated that since becoming an Ever Active school, the school has offered two Ever Active Days a year. The first of these is the “Wacky Olympics” which occurs in the fall and is intended to be a “mixer” to encourage students from all grades to interact and be

active together. Events at the Wacky Olympics are non-sport specific so that everyone can be involved and have a good time, regardless of skill level or athletic ability.

The second Ever Active Day occurs later in the spring and makes use of resources available in the community. For example, a swimming or skating night might be organized.

Other Opportunities

In addition to the larger events and activities that have been discussed above, the school has also made an effort to incorporate new opportunities for activity and well-being into its regular functioning. Most of these efforts fall into four areas: 1) the physical education program, 2) nutrition, 3) extracurricular activities, and 4) family nights.

Physical Education Program

As the grade nine students are a recent addition to the school, a new physical education curriculum was designed for the grade nine classes. The curriculum includes more activities that are spread into the community such as

- swimming,
- pool,
- broomball,
- skating,
- curling,
- bowling,
- hockey, and
- golfing.

Students involved in the grade nine physical education program were very positive about it and suggested that some of their peers had become more involved in various activities as a result of it. For example, some students had joined the bowling club and others used the fitness centre more often.

Incorporating other non-traditional activities into the physical education curriculum, such as a dance unit, was also mentioned as an area of focus by the school principal.

Nutrition

The school has given a focus to nutrition and the choices for healthy eating that it offers to students. Some big changes have been made by the school, including

- 1) removing soda pop from all vending machines in the school and replacing it with juice and water;
- 2) initiating a breakfast program that is free of charge for students and offers them healthy choices such as bagels, toast, and juice each morning; and
- 3) planning to re-examine the choices that are offered through the hot lunch program to ensure that healthy choices are available.



Extracurricular Activities

The school encouraged students to be active outside of school hours, or in addition to school curricular requirements, by providing organized opportunities for activity. Every morning activities were available from 7:15 to 8:45 and practices or try-outs for the various sports teams were held after school. Intramurals were offered at lunch throughout the week. The school also initiated a lacrosse league in response to interest that was generated in the sport through the Health Fair.

Family Nights

Family nights were organized by the school to enable students and their families to take part in fun events that allow the whole family to be active together. The family event that was cited by the school principal was called "Passport to Fun" and was set up with "silly olympic" events. Similar to the Wacky Olympics, these events were non-sport specific so everyone could become involved, regardless of skill level. Participation was encouraged by offering a prize to the class that had the most involvement in the event.

Maximizing Use of Physical Space

Teachers and administration indicated that since becoming an Ever Active school they have focused on ways to use the available physical space creatively to provide more opportunity for physical activity.

The fitness centre is an obvious illustration of maximizing space for physical activity, but there were also other examples present throughout the school including



- table tennis set up in the common room for student use at lunch and before school,
- a basketball court that was recently created in the school yard through playground grant money,
- soccer and football fields, and
- plans to create walking trails around the school yard in the near future.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAM AND WHO DOES IT IMPACT?

For the case study school, involvement in the Ever Active Schools program extends not only to school administration, staff, and students, but also to parents, community members, and local government. Level of involvement from, and impact on, each group is discussed in this section.

School Administration and Local Government

Discussion with the school principal and teachers demonstrated that there was administrative support not only for the Ever Active Schools program, but also for the whole

philosophy of activity and well-being that surrounds the program. Staff indicated that this higher level support is an important component of successfully incorporating the EAS philosophy into school programming. Administration even created a Teaching Assistant (TA) position for the physical education program to provide assistance with some of the additional activities that were taking place, particularly at other facilities in the community.

The school division also played a role in the school programming that occurred as a result of the EAS program. Specifically, the school division provided a bus to be used to transport students to community facilities such as swimming pools, hockey arenas, curling rinks, etc. The individual in the new TA position was responsible for driving the bus to and from the school.

One case study participant indicated that there was program buy-in from a local MLA. This support played an important role in getting the fitness centre off the ground.

Teachers and Other Staff

The role of the physical education teachers in supporting the EAS program and moving the school forward to become Ever Active was significant. These individuals, along with the school principal, created many of the opportunities for activity and provided momentum to the program. For example, the majority of organization of the Health Fair was done by a physical education teacher, intramurals are coordinated through the physical education department, and the primary responsibility for the fitness centre lies with the physical education department.

Other school staff are also involved in initiatives related to the EAS program. The breakfast program is coordinated by the school librarian with the help of staff volunteers. All staff have the opportunity to become involved in activities like Ever Active Days and the Health Fair. In sum, it is the school staff that play the primary role in facilitating the initiatives and activities that take place in the school.

Students

Students are perhaps the most obvious benefactor of EAS-related opportunities and activities. Students participate in the activities offered and benefit from the use of the facilities created, such as the fitness centre and basketball courts.

Student participants in the case study indicated that the school emphasizes to students the various camps that are available over the summer months and activities that are available after school. According to one student, "*the school makes a big point in getting active over the summer and after school*".

Parents and the Community

Case study participants suggested that Ever Active School-related activities provided an opportunity for both parents and other community members to get involved. The parent council provides opportunities for parents to volunteer for special activities such as Ever Active Days, and parents and siblings can become involved in family night activities.



New initiatives served to move the school into the community more through the expanded grade nine physical education program, the use of the fitness centre by community clubs, and by bringing in volunteers from the community and surrounding areas for the Health Fair.

CHALLENGES AND FACILITATORS TO SUCCESS

The school identified several challenges and facilitators to success that have emerged through their journey to become an Ever Active school.

Some challenges that were identified include d

- limitations of physical space as one gymnasium does not provide adequate space for a school of 600 students;
- reaching the kids that do not get enough physical activity, particularly outside of school hours;
- identifying fresh, new areas to focus on after several years of involvement in the EAS Program—the changes become smaller, or less noticeable, over time after the initial “big changes”;
- securing enough parent volunteers when needed for special events;
- continuing to use community facilities as user fees increase and liability issues become more pronounced and prohibitive;
- competition with other departments, such as music and drama, as the school continues to grow; and
- the need for the philosophy around physical activity and well-being to be supported at home.

The following factors were identified as facilitators to successfully incorporating Ever Active goals and activities into the school:

- support from the school principal and higher level administration (e.g., the school district);
- willingness by staff to try something new;
- congruence with personal philosophy; and
- support from the parent council.

OVERALL IMPACT ON THE SCHOOL AND SCHOOL COMMUNITY

All comments offered by case study participants suggested that the overall impact of the EAS program was very positive. Being an Ever Active school meant that there was awareness created around the benefits of a healthy, active lifestyle for students, parents, and staff.

It was evident that through membership in the EAS program the school was able to build capacity in a number of areas:

1. Capacity for physical activity – Membership in the EAS Program enabled the school to make significant progress in terms of building capacity for physical activity. As a



result of this progress staff felt more confident that they would be able to effectively respond to the Daily Physical Activity Initiative and provide daily physical education. As one staff stated, “a year and a half ago I would have said no, [daily physical education] is impossible to do in our school”. However, several individuals indicated that they now felt confident that they would be able to respond to the Initiative.

2. Capacity for staff initiative – One individual commented that as staff has become aware of the administrative support that has been offered to EAS-related initiatives in the school, staff other than those in the physical education department were beginning to feel comfortable in offering suggestions for activities that could be done or changes that could be made and taking the initiative in making those suggestions happen. For example, a staff member that is interested in nutrition may come forward with an idea for how nutrition could be improved and follow it through with support from the administration.
3. Capacity to respond to student needs on an individual level through tailored activity – The resources that have become available in the school have been used to respond to individual student needs. For example, the principal spends the first part of each day playing basketball or using the fitness centre with students who have difficulty focusing in class. Engaging these students in physical activity early in the morning has seemed to help them focus throughout the rest of the day, as well as build relationships between the students and principal.

Several students commented that since various changes had been made in the school they had begun to see changes in the behaviour of their peers. For example, when pop was removed from the vending machines students indicated that fellow students weren’t “as hyper” and weren’t “bouncing off the walls so much”.

AREAS FOR EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

Overall, all case study participants were very happy with the EAS program and felt that it was a valuable resource. Comments such as “it’s a fabulous program”, “it’s awesome for the kids”, and “I think it’s a great program” are indicative of the feelings expressed about the program.

However, both teachers and the school principal felt that increasing program awareness was an area for improvement. Specifically, increasing awareness among a) the public, and b) schools that are not yet involved in the program were mentioned.

One individual commented that due to limited resources EAS personnel seem to have a hard time getting to all of the schools to provide media support for various events and activities that take place. Increased media support as a means of increasing public awareness of the program was cited as an area for improvement.



CONCLUSIONS

The following represents a list of conclusions drawn from across all data sources:

- The program was valued by all groups.
- Member schools were satisfied with the majority of resources and services provided by the program. Stakeholders felt that services provided by the program were effective.
- Member school respondents found significant value in the resources and ideas that were provided to them.
- Member schools were less satisfied with communication and support than with other areas of service interrogated. All data indicated that support is a key component of the program.
- Member school and registered intent survey respondents felt that lack of staff time was the biggest barrier to program membership.
- Simplifying processes associated with the program, including the application process and requirements to develop a Game Plan and growth reports, may be a way to encourage membership among registered intent schools.
- Stakeholders expressed that partnerships were successful, but that limited staff and funds serve as barriers to increasing partnerships. The majority of participants felt that the partnerships provided a valuable mechanism for networking and information sharing.
- Increasing linkages between Ever Active schools may serve to build schools' support networks.
- According to stakeholders leadership activities embarked on by Ever Active Schools were successful. Energizer Days and Promising Practices were viewed by stakeholders as particularly successful. Stakeholders felt that providing networking opportunities to schools is a key component of leadership.
- Challenges associated with providing leadership to member schools occur at the resource level and at the school level.
- According to stakeholders the profile of the program needs to be raised and more awareness built.
- Support from higher levels such as the school district, superintendent, and principal is a key facilitator of program success at the school level.
- Implementation of the program can lead to the development of capacity in a number of areas in schools.
- Implementation of the program can facilitate collaboration by parents, staff, teachers, administration, and the community.
- The creative use of space in schools can provide increased opportunities for physical activity.



- There will be opportunity and likely necessity for program growth with the introduction of the Daily Physical Activity Initiative (DPA). EAS may be called upon to provide guidance and support to schools as the DPA is implemented. However, growth will be dependent on the resources available to support it.



Appendix A: Instruments

EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAM MEMBER SCHOOL SURVEY

The Ever Active Schools program is conducting a program evaluation to determine what it is doing well, what could be improved, and what some barriers to growth may be. As part of the evaluation, the Program would like input from member schools who are familiar with the Ever Active Schools Program. Please take a few minutes to complete the following brief survey.

SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES

1. How **satisfied** are you with the following aspects of the Ever Active Schools Program?

	Very satisfied	Quite satisfied	Slightly satisfied	Not at all satisfied	Don't Use	Not aware of this
Information provided on the Ever Active Schools website	1	2	3	4	DU	NA
Information provided through the Ever Active Schools bulletin	1	2	3	4	DU	NA
<i>Promising Practices</i> documents	1	2	3	4	DU	NA
<i>Energizer Days</i>	1	2	3	4	DU	NA
Assistance received completing annual growth reports	1	2	3	4	DU	NA
Communication that you have received from the Ever Active Schools Program including:						
a) Resource package (Ever Active Schools binder)	1	2	3	4	DU	NA
b) Email communication	1	2	3	4	DU	NA
c) Personal contact (i.e., phone calls)	1	2	3	4	DU	NA
The process for developing a <i>Game Plan</i>	1	2	3	4	DU	NA
Recognition your school has received for accomplishments or goals achieved	1	2	3	4	DU	NA
Feedback on Game Plans and growth reports	1	2	3	4	DU	NA

2. Which three aspects of the Ever Active Schools Program are you **most satisfied** with?

3. In your opinion, what are the top three areas that could be **improved** by the Ever Active Schools Program?

PROGRAM VALUE

4. Overall, how **valuable** do you feel that the Ever Active Schools Program is?
 Very valuable Somewhat valuable Not at all valuable

5. Which three aspects of the Ever Active Schools Program do you feel are the **most valuable**?

POTENTIAL BARRIERS

6. In your opinion, how significant are the following **barriers** to becoming an Ever Active School?

	Very significant	Quite significant	Somewhat significant	Not at all significant
Cost of membership	1	2	3	4
Process of filling out membership application	1	2	3	4
Developing <i>Game Plans</i>	1	2	3	4
Requirement to prepare an annual growth report	1	2	3	4
No time for extra activities	1	2	3	4
Resistance from staff	1	2	3	4
Resistance from students	1	2	3	4
Resistance from parents	1	2	3	4
Lack of interest by school	1	2	3	4
Not enough staff resources (e.g. time)	1	2	3	4
Not enough involvement or support from community/parents	1	2	3	4

7. Are there any other barriers to becoming an Ever Active School?

8. How significant do you feel that the progress your school has made toward becoming a healthy, active school community has been since joining the Ever Active Schools Program?

- Very significant
- Quite significant
- Somewhat significant
- Not at all significant

9. What have been the **primary contributors** to becoming a healthy, active school community? *Check all that apply*

- The Ever Active Schools Program
- Provincial school policy
- Initiatives undertaken by your school independently of any outside program or policy
- Not applicable/No changes have occurred
- Other – please specify:

10. Do you have any other comments regarding the Ever Active Schools Program?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. YOUR INPUT IS IMPORTANT FOR IMPROVING THE EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAM.

If you have questions or concerns about this survey, please contact

Doug Gleddie
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or

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EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAM REGISTERED INTENT SCHOOL SURVEY

The Ever Active Schools program is conducting a program evaluation to determine what it is doing well, what could be improved, and what some barriers to growth may be. As part of the evaluation, the Program would like input from schools who have requested information about the Program but have not completed a membership application. Please take a few minutes to complete the following brief survey.

SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES

PROGRAM VALUE

1. Overall, how **valuable** do you feel that the Ever Active Schools Program is?
- o Very valuable o Somewhat valuable o Not at all valuable

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

2. In your opinion, how significant are the following **barriers** to becoming an Ever Active School?

	Very significant	Quite significant	Somewhat significant	Not at all significant
Cost of membership	1	2	3	4
Process of filling out membership application	1	2	3	4
Developing <i>Game Plans</i>	1	2	3	4
Requirement to prepare an annual growth report	1	2	3	4
No time for extra activities	1	2	3	4
Resistance from staff	1	2	3	4
Resistance from students	1	2	3	4
Resistance from parents	1	2	3	4
Lack of interest by school	1	2	3	4
Not enough staff resources (e.g. time)	1	2	3	4
Not enough involvement or support from community/parents	1	2	3	4

3. Are there any other barriers to becoming an Ever Active School?

4. What, specifically, has prevented your school from taking the next step and submitting an application form and game plan?

5. In the future, do you think that your school will:
- Make significant progress towards creating a healthy, active school community
 - Make some progress towards creating a healthy, active school community
 - Remain at the point it is at today
6. In the future do you think that your school will complete the membership application and become an Ever Active School?
- Yes No Maybe

7. **If no**, why not?

8. What could the Ever Active Schools Program do differently to encourage schools to become members?

9. Do you have any other comments regarding the Ever Active Schools Program?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. YOUR INPUT IS IMPORTANT FOR IMPROVING THE EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAM.

If you have questions or concerns about this survey, please contact

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EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAM NON-MEMBER SCHOOL SURVEY

The Ever Active Schools Program is a membership-based program that is available to all school communities in Alberta. It is designed to assist schools in addressing and creating healthy school environments and to contribute to the healthy development of children and youth by

- fostering social and physical environments that support improving the quality and quantity of active living programs in Alberta schools;
- supporting and enhancing physical education and health curricula;
- recognizing and rewarding schools that focus on physical activity and well being in their school communities; and
- providing resources, assessment tools, and tracking mechanisms to help schools critically reflect and measure current practices, policies, and environments.

The Program is conducting an evaluation to determine what it is doing well, what could be improved, and what some barriers to growth may be. As part of the evaluation, the Ever Active Schools Program would like input from schools that are not involved in the Program. Please take a few minutes to complete the following brief survey.

1. Have you heard of the Ever Active Schools Program? Yes No

2. **IF YES:** Where did you hear about the Program?

- Website
 - Teacher's Convention
 - Word of mouth
 - Schools Come Alive Workshop
 - Other, please specify: _____
-

3. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree
Our school has adequate policies and programs in place to create a healthy, active environment for students	1	2	3
Resources should be dedicated to providing education and opportunities for physical activity for students, beyond what the school is currently providing	1	2	3
Resources should be dedicated to providing education and opportunities for healthy eating for students, beyond what the school is currently providing	1	2	3
Our school would appreciate receiving support (e.g. material resources, guidance, best practices information, ideas) in creating a healthy, active environment	1	2	3

4. In the future, do you think that your school would be interested in joining the Ever Active Schools Program?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

5. **If no**, why not?

6. Would you like the Ever Active Schools Program to send you information about the Program?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please indicate contact name and mailing address:

Name: _____ School Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email: _____

7. Do you have any other comments?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. YOUR INPUT IS IMPORTANT FOR IMPROVING THE EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAM.

If you have questions or concerns about this survey, please contact

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Ever Active Schools Program Evaluation Interview Guide

1. What is your role in the Ever Active Schools Program?

Partnerships

2. One of the objectives of the Program is to “partner with healthy living advocates and stakeholders”. Who has the Program partnered with so far?
3. Have these partnerships been successful? Specific examples?
4. Have there been any challenges around these partnerships?
5. Are there any partnerships that have not yet been pursued that you think would be valuable?

Leadership

6. Another objective of the Program is to provide “leadership and advocacy to school communities for healthy, active living”. What activities does the Program do to accomplish this?
7. How do you envision the EAS Program providing leadership?
8. Have these activities been successful? Specific examples?
9. Are there any challenges associated with providing leadership and advocacy to school communities? How can these challenges be addressed?

Services to Facilitate Quality Programs

10. A third objective of the Program is to “support member school communities by providing services that facilitate quality programs”. What kind of services does the Ever Active Schools Program offer to accomplish this?
11. Are these services effective?
12. Do you think that there are any other services that the Program should offer?

Program Improvement/Value/Future Directions

13. What areas of the Program could be improved and how?
14. In your opinion, what is the most valuable aspect of the Program?
15. What does the future hold for EAS? How do you see the Program evolving as it grows and what challenges will it face in the future?
16. Any other comments?

Ever Active School Case Study Protocol

Areas of Inquiry

- a) **Who**
 - Who is involved in the Program?
 - Teachers, principal, students, parents, community involvement?
 - Who “keeps it going”; essentially runs it?
 - Who derives value from it?

- b) **What**
 - What activities does the school do as a result of being an Ever Active Member school?
 - What changes have been made in the school as a result of membership?
 - What are the benefits?
 - What are the challenges?
 - What does the program mean to students, staff, parents, the community, the school as a whole?
 - What difference has it made?
 - What value does it hold?

- c) **When**
 - When do EAS activities take place?
 - When are teachers involved?
 - When are students involved?
 - When are parents involved?
 - When is the community involved?

- d) **Where**
 - Where do activities take place? (e.g., inside, outside, classroom, community, activities to “take home”)

- e) **Why**
 - Why did the school become involved in the Program?
 - Why is the program good? Not good?
 - Why do students, staff, parents, community members participate?

- f) **How**
 - How does the program work?
 - How has the school/community changed as a result of it?
 - How has it affected:
 - knowledge?
 - health?
 - activity levels?
 - other factors?

Appendix B: Survey Frequency Tables

FREQUENCY TABLES: MEMBER SCHOOL SURVEY

1. How **satisfied** are you with the following aspects of the Ever Active Schools program?

	Very satisfied		Quite satisfied		Slightly satisfied		Not at all satisfied		Don't use		Not aware of this	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Information provided on the Ever Active Schools website	13	27.7	30	63.8	2	4.3	-	-	2	4.3	-	-
Information provided through the Ever Active Schools bulletin	16	34.0	26	55.3	4	8.5	1	2.1	-	-	-	-
<i>Promising Practices</i> documents	13	28.3	21	45.7	3	6.5	1	2.2	2	4.3	6	12.5
<i>Energizer Days</i>	23	48.9	15	31.9	3	6.4	-	-	3	6.4	3	6.4
Assistance received completing annual growth reports	5	0.4	16	33.3	8	16.7	1	2.1	12	25.0	6	12.5
Resource package (Ever Active Schools binder)	16	33.3	24	50.0	3	6.3	2	4.2	-	-	3	6.3
Email communication	16	34.0	22	46.8	7	14.9	1	2.1	-	-	1	2.1
Personal contact (i.e., phone calls)	10	20.8	13	27.1	9	18.8	1	2.1	9	18.8	6	12.5
The process for developing a <i>Game Plan</i>	8	16.7	24	50.0	12	25.0	-	-	-	-	4	8.3
Recognition your school has received for accomplishments or goals achieved	11	22.9	20	41.7	9	18.8	-	-	1	2.1	7	14.6
Feedback on Game Plans and growth reports	5	10.9	14	30.4	14	30.4	2	4.3	3	6.5	8	17.4

4. Overall, how **valuable** do you feel that the Ever Active Schools program is?

	Very valuable	Somewhat valuable	Not at all valuable
Frequency	35	12	-
Percent	74.5	25.5	-

6. In your opinion, how significant are the following **barriers** to becoming an Ever Active School?

	Very significant		Quite significant		Somewhat significant		Not at all significant	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Cost of membership	-	-	1	2.1	17	36.2	29	61.7
Process of filling out membership application	2	4.2	10	20.8	20	41.7	16	33.3
Developing <i>Game Plans</i>	3	6.4	13	27.7	24	51.1	7	14.9
Requirement to prepare an annual growth report	3	6.7	14	31.1	20	44.4	8	17.8
No time for extra activities	3	6.4	9	19.1	21	44.7	14	29.8
Resistance from staff	-	-	9	18.8	18	37.5	21	43.8
Resistance from students	1	2.1	2	4.2	3	6.3	42	87.5
Resistance from parents	-	-	3	6.3	10	20.8	35	72.9
Lack of interest by school	-	-	5	10.4	19	39.6	24	50.0
Not enough staff resources (e.g. time)	12	25.0	18	37.5	13	27.1	5	10.4
Not enough involvement or support from community/parents	3	6.4	11	23.4	14	29.8	19	40.4

8. How significant do you feel that the **progress** your school has made toward becoming a healthy, active school community has been since joining the Ever Active Schools program?

	Very significant	Quite significant	Somewhat significant	Not at all significant
Frequency	14	25	9	-
Percent	29.2	52.1	18.8	-

9. What have been the **primary contributors** to becoming a healthy, active school community?

	Ever Active Schools program	Independent initiatives	Not applicable	Not at all significant
Frequency	16	36	2	12
Percent	33.3	75.0	4.2	25.0

FREQUENCY TABLES: REGISTERED INTENT SCHOOL SURVEY

1. Overall, how **valuable** do you feel that the Ever Active Schools program is?

	Very valuable	Somewhat valuable	Not at all valuable
Frequency	2	3	-
Percent	40.0	60.0	-

2. In your opinion, how significant are the following **barriers** to becoming an Ever Active School?

	Very significant		Quite significant		Somewhat significant		Not at all significant	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Cost of membership	-	-	1	14.3	2	28.6	4	57.1
Process of filling out membership application	1	12.5	1	12.5	5	62.5	1	12.5
Developing <i>Game Plans</i>	1	12.5	3	37.5	4	50.0	-	-
Requirement to prepare an annual growth report	3	37.5	2	25.0	3	37.5	-	-
No time for extra activities	-	-	3	50.0	2	33.3	1	16.7
Resistance from staff	-	-	-	-	3	37.5	5	62.5
Resistance from students	-	-	-	-	1	12.5	7	87.5
Resistance from parents	-	-	-	-	2	25.0	6	75.0
Lack of interest by school	-	-	-	-	5	62.5	3	37.5
Not enough staff resources (e.g. time)	4	50.0	2	25.0	2	25.0	-	-
Not enough involvement or support from community/parents	1	14.3	2	28.6	3	42.9	1	14.3

4. In the future, do you think that your school will...

	Frequency	Percent
Make significant progress towards creating a healthy, active school community	4	57.1
Make some progress towards creating a healthy, active school community	3	42.9
Remain at the point it is at today	-	-

5. In the future, do you think that your school will complete the membership application and become an Ever Active school?

	Yes	No	Maybe
Frequency	3	-	4
Percent	42.9	-	57.1

FREQUENCY TABLES: NON-MEMBER SCHOOL SURVEY

1. Have you heard of the Ever Active Schools program?

	Yes	No
Frequency	23	12
Percent	65.7	34.3

2. If yes, where did you hear about the program?

	Website	Teachers' Convention	Word of mouth	Schools Come Alive workshop	Other
Frequency	5	10	17	9	3
Percent	14.3	28.6	47.2	25.0	8.6

3. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements...

	Strongly agree		Somewhat agree		Disagree	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Our school has adequate policies and programs in place to create a healthy, active environment for students	16	44.4	20	55.6	-	-
Resources should be dedicated to providing education and opportunities for physical activity for students, beyond what the school is currently providing	12	33.3	21	58.3	3	8.3
Resources should be dedicated to providing education and opportunities for healthy eating for students, beyond what the school is currently providing	17	47.2	14	38.9	5	13.9
Our school would appreciate receiving support (e.g. material resources, guidance, best practices information, ideas) in creating a healthy, active environment	25	69.4	9	25.0	2	5.6

4. In the future, do you think that your school would be interested in joining the Ever Active Schools program?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Frequency	14	3	18
Percent	40.0	8.6	51.4

6. Would you like the Ever Active Schools program to send you information about the program?

	Yes	No
Frequency	31	5
Percent	86.1	13.9