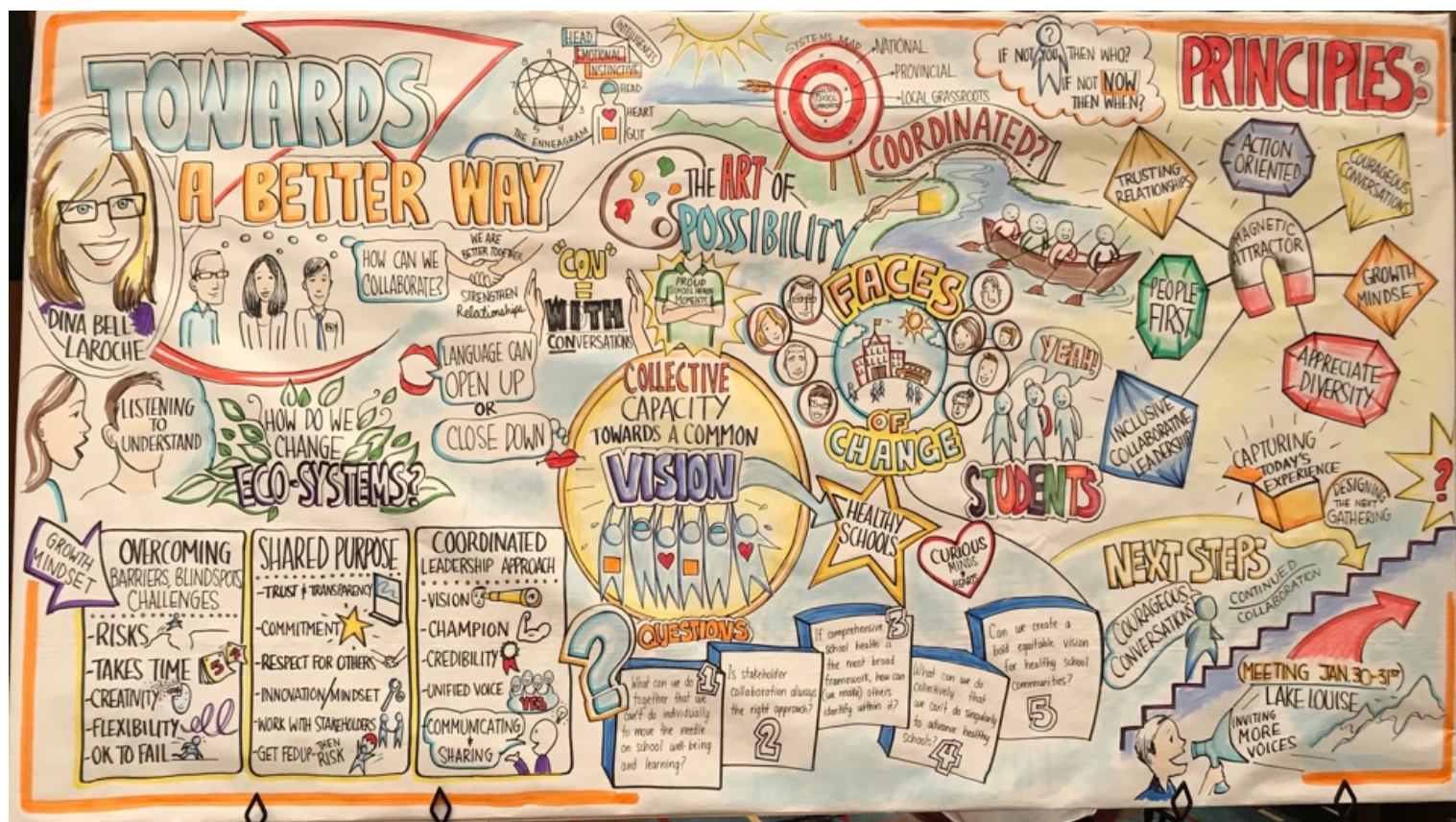


## Towards a Better Way Gathering #2

Notes from our day together

January 30-31, 2018

Lake Louise, Alberta



Hosted By:

## Overview

A gathering of thought leaders from across the country was held on January 30-31, 2018, in Lake Louise, Alberta. This convening session was intended to build off the first session that was held in Ottawa, Ontario on November 1 on the eve of PHE Canada's Healthy School Communities National Forum. The participants came from across the country, representing multiple perspectives and organizations dedicated to the promotion of healthy school communities. Dina Bell-Laroche of the Sport Law & Strategy Group facilitated the session. A list of participants is included in **Appendix A**.

This meeting was co-designed by the small group of organizational leaders who have been exploring ways to work better, together over the past 18 months. With funding support from the McConnell Foundation to host both sessions, Ever Active Schools agreed to provide the necessary logistical support to help organize the 1.5 day gathering in advance of their Shaping the Future Conference.

The workshop was designed to meet the following **outcomes**:

- ✓ Work towards identifying a shared purpose of working together, in a more coordinated manner
- ✓ Strengthen relationships among thought leaders to enhance knowledge exchange and generate meaningful collaboration
- ✓ Build towards a coordinated effort to convene and connect stakeholders across various school health systems and jurisdictions around common priorities
- ✓ Initiate a conversation on the kind of structure required to support our continued growth as a collective
- ✓ Identify collective priorities to 2020

In order to build off the momentum generated in Ottawa, participants were asked to review the following:

- ✓ Letter of invitation
- ✓ Meeting Notes from November 1, 2018 session, including appendices
- ✓ Draft mission, vision, and values statement

Participants were also invited to prepare their “high hope” statement by completing the sentence: ***“My hope for our continued work together is that we ....***

Brian Torrence from Ever Active Schools welcomed everyone and spoke to the process that has been bringing people together for the past 2 years. He shared the following:

- ✓ Struck a leadership team to steward the process

- ✓ Received funding from McConnell Foundation
- ✓ Hired a facilitator to support our work
- ✓ Engaged all participants through a survey
- ✓ Held the first *Towards a Better Way Conversation* Part 1 in Ottawa
- ✓ Meeting notes were shared, along with the graphic art and a 2 page summary
- ✓ Lead to the planning of Conversation Part 2

Brian Torrence then invited Helmer the Elder to open up the meeting through prayer and song. Brian Storey, President of PHE Canada, then spoke to the norms that would support an enriching and productive conversation. These included:

- ✓ Listen to understand
- ✓ Share your truth
- ✓ Be open to the creative process
- ✓ Source multiple intelligences: head, heart, gut
- ✓ Embrace diversity of opinion and perspectives
- ✓ Be present: technology on breaks; move; breathe
- ✓ Have fun

Brian Storey then introduced Dina Bell-Laroche as the workshop facilitator. To support a productive conversation, Dina reminded participants to provide feedback on the draft statement of mission, vision and values for the Collective.

### **Updated Mission, Vision, Values from participants**

**Vision:** Every school in Canada is a healthy school community.

**Mission:** No additional comments were offered by participants. For consideration, the Facilitator has contributed the following comments: The Canadian Alliance for Healthy School Communities advocates for healthy school priorities through coordinated research, relevant professional learning and strategic communications.

**Principles:** No additional comments were offered by participants. For consideration, the Facilitator has contributed the following:

- We are growth minded: We take advantage of opportunities. We learn as we go. We innovate.
- We do good work: We collaborate to leverage opportunities. We advance priorities that make a collective impact. We connect the dots.
- We are inclusive: We are accessible. We are non judgmental. We believe in equity.

- We communicate purposefully: We are transparent. We challenge the norm. We foster a common identity.
- We forge trust: We assume good will. We respect diversity of perspectives. We are self-aware.
- We are hopeful: We put children and youth first. We build for the future. We are purpose driven.

Dina then invited participants to speak to each other's high hopes and their own impressions on that statement. The following **high hopes** were shared:

- ✓ That this group becomes sustainable
- ✓ To be truly honest about where it does and does not make sense to collaborate and to find the key areas where we can work together
- ✓ Move beyond coordinating and communicating to true collaboration
- ✓ That we come together, use our collective resources and support communities that need it the most
- ✓ That we move toward clarity around the central purpose for our collaborative work. What is the problem and how will this work help us solve it?
- ✓ We embed a structure and process for healthy schools sustainably in every school (healthy school committee)
- ✓ We maintain our collective synergies to fulfill the vision
- ✓ Continue to gather the perspectives and suggestions from a diverse group of people who share the vision of an education and system where all students and staff are safe, included and well. That we include top-level decision-makers and front-line staff and students in every step of the process so that progress makes sense and is sustainable for all involved
- ✓ That we recognize that sport in schools is an important component of the physical activity continuum in schools that is far too often left out of the comprehensive school health discussions but should be included
- ✓ Clarity of our purpose
- ✓ Identify at least one short term and one long term action together
- ✓ Get to know everyone in the room so I Can reach out to them, and they can reach out to me ...towards a better way
- ✓ Find a way to collectively speak to policy makers to establish a baseline commitment and accountability model for health in all schools – physical, nutritional and mental
- ✓ We learn about all the good work going on across the country
- ✓ Create a powerful lobby and learning group that can influence the health of child in long-term ways through system change
- ✓ That people in the room find their own value in convening

- ✓ That all students in Alberta can experience an education in schools that value wellness and where they feel connected
- ✓ Leveraging relationship knowledge and perspective to better realize outcomes of students
- ✓ My hope for our continued work together is that we identify concrete, actionable and feasible next steps
- ✓ To better understand how we can leverage resources both locally and nationally
- ✓ That we develop a common language across Canada to improve student/ youth wellbeing and social emotional learning
- ✓ I would like to see the formation of a highly active, loud and powerful voice that is heard and recognized from coast to coast to coast. Our message will be clear and actionable and will have a ripple effect in every province, school and Canadian life. For this to happen, we will need our message to be simple and uncomplicated.

### **Priorities to collaborate on**

Participants were invited to identify the most important actions they could take under each of the five priority areas that had been identified in Conversation Part 1. Please see Appendix B for an itemized list of all the strategies that were identified during the afternoon part of the conversation.

The following five priorities were confirmed, along with desired outcomes:

<b>Priority area</b>	<b>Outcomes to 2020</b>
Research & Evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and early implementation of a research agenda for healthy school communities.</li> </ul>
Communications/Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness amongst school health stakeholders of the existence of a national Alliance</li> <li>• Increased understanding amongst school health stakeholders of the conditions, structures, and processes necessary to foster healthy schools</li> <li>• Provincial conversation amongst school health stakeholders about how to make healthy schools a reality</li> </ul>
Resources/Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased efficiencies in the coordination and dissemination of resources (human, financial...)</li> </ul>

Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professionals equipped to move their schools towards healthier outcomes.</li> <li>• Increased awareness and understanding amongst school health stakeholders of the professional development needs to move schools toward healthier outcomes</li> </ul>
Coordination (COP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A student-centered, coherent national school health strategy that is endorsed by key school health stakeholders</li> <li>• Organizations that have signed off on the above national strategy can demonstrate commitment</li> </ul>

### **Ingredients to sustainable collaboration**

- ✓ A collective identify to rally around – our shared vision
- ✓ Long-term goals that serve a collective purpose (strategy and mission)
- ✓ Funding and resources to support the work (supporting structure and terms of reference)
- ✓ A sense of autonomy – especially when seeding new ideas (terms of reference)
- ✓ Patience – it takes time to get these kinds of initiative off the ground
- ✓ A supporting structure like a Secretariat or Back-Bone that serves as a coordinating mechanism (structure)
- ✓ Lean and minimal bureaucracy (funding mechanism)
- ✓ Will of the people ... trust in each other and the magnetic attractor that brought us together (principles)
- ✓ A plan (strategy)
- ✓ Shared values (principles)
- ✓ A communications plan (identity)
- ✓ Sweat in the game (resources)
- ✓ A clear sense of decision-making (terms of reference)

### **Furthering our work**

- ✓ The group identified the importance of having a ‘name’ or ‘identifier’ to be able to speak about the work of the Alliance. The following name garnered the most support from the participants and has been deemed a working title for now: “Canadian Alliance for Healthy School Communities”
- ✓ It was noted that it might be a smart idea to connect with the now, non-operational CASH (Canadian Association of School Health) to have them re-direct visitors to the future “Alliance” website

- ✓ PHE Canada has offered to continue to have Sharon Jollimore serve as a coordinating mechanism to help support the Alliance
- ✓ The current Stewardship Group also offered to continue to work together over the next year to 18 months to help get the “Alliance” get off the ground in a more formalized manner. Specifically, the Stewardship Group agreed to:
  - Continue to meet
  - Help to organize the next meeting: Conversation Part 3; A number of organizational leaders shared windows of opportunities that could serve as a connecting point over the next several months including OHSC in March, CASSA and CSBA in July. OPHEA has also agreed to serve as a host in support of other options.
  - Explore partnership and leveraging opportunities with existing organizations like the JCSH and PHE Canada. In particular, explore how the JCSH, PHE Canada and others may provide options to host a Secretariat that could help to administer and coordinate the Alliance’s future actions.
  - Provide support to the three key areas: terms of reference, funding models and structure, and development of action plans

## **Next Steps**

**Step1:** Finish meeting notes, write up action plans, tabulate and summarize evaluations and share with group.

**Step 2:** The Stewardship Group to review notes; connect with the JCSH/ PHE Canada and others to identify synergies and possible partnership opportunities; set up calls; identify leads for three key areas (terms of references, organize action plans, identify structures and funding models)

**Step 3:** Invite interested members who signed up for the respective key areas for feedback (Terms of Reference; Funding Models; Action Plans)

**Step 4:** Work on developing an identity of the Alliance.

**Step 5:** Prepare for next meeting (identify other window of opportunities; planning for Meeting #3)

**Appendix A**  
Participants, Towards a Better Way Gathering #2  
Lake Louise, Alberta

Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan, Leanne Keyko

Apple Schools, Jenn Flynn

Canadian Association of School System Administrators, Ken Bain

Canadian School Boards Association, Valerie McLeod & Laurie French

Ever Active Schools, Brian Torrance, Kerri Murray, Chris Fenlon-MacDonald

Government of Alberta, Colleen Wright, Will Roy & Jazmin Bonizzoni

McConnell Foundation, Paul McArthur & Mali Bain

Memorial University of Newfoundland, Dr. Antony Card

Ontario Healthy Schools Coalition, Arlene Morell & Carol MacDougall

Ophea, Chris Markham & Sarah Christie

Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health, Katherine Kelly

PHE Canada Dr. Brian Storey, Sharon Jollimore and Melanie Davis

School Sport Canada, John Paton

University of Alberta, Dr. Kate Storey