

Success Story

GEORGES VANIER ELEMENTARY
Surrey, BC



Action Schools! BC

Georges Vanier Elementary, a Surrey Community School of 500 students, has been registered with Action Schools! BC since 2005. Action Schools! BC is a framework for action, providing diverse physical activity, physical education and healthy eating opportunities in six Action Zones.



recess in the gym. Each day, a different grade spends 15 minutes double and single rope skipping and Chinese jumping with the help of grade 5 student leaders. Ms. Bertholm has noticed significant changes since introducing the skipping. Whereas before, students were not that active at recess and lunch, she now sees a great increase in activity, particularly skipping, on the playground.

Physical activity opportunities for students are provided throughout the school day at Georges Vanier. The morning begins with 15 minutes of student-led activity. Elsie Bertholm, the Vice-Principal and healthy living champion, booked the Action Schools! BC Indoor Student Leadership Training in which a trainer taught 20 student leaders how to lead and create their own aerobic sequences. Since then, they have embraced the responsibility and visit other classes every morning to lead aerobics using their own music and posters they made identifying personalized sequences of moves. Everyone loves the morning workouts and some students who were arriving late before now make sure to get to school on time!

At lunchtime, students are encouraged to head to the gym - intramurals, badminton, and outdoor games like hopscotch and four square are offered throughout the year. During class time, the gym is used for Physical Education (PE) and many teachers share the gym with other classes in order to double up on their PE time. Local facilities also provide a venue for physical activity. The Newton Wave Pool and Ice Rink are nearby – grades 1 and 4 students walk to the pool for 3 weeks of swimming lessons in June and all classes go to the rink a few times a year.

Many teachers also integrate physical activity into their classrooms throughout the school day. The school booked its first teacher-based Action Schools! BC Workshop in 2005 – a Classroom Action (Physical Activity) Workshop for grades 4 to 7 teachers. Three years later, another workshop was booked, this time for the entire staff of K to 7 teachers. The workshop focused on creative, alternative physical activities that can be done in a classroom, multi-purpose room or outside. The corresponding complimentary bins sent with the workshop were filled with equipment (such as skipping ropes, hand grippers, bean bags and scarves), and a variety of books, posters, CDs, and DVDs. The most popular resources are the dance CDs, Yoga Kit for Kids, grippers, skipping ropes, skipping circuit and Jump 2bFit skipping manual and CD.

Staff at Georges Vanier promote healthy living with the support of community members and families. The school's Community School Coordinator organizes Power Kidz, a club that teaches students about healthy eating and cooking. She also supervises open gym time after school, providing a wide variety of physical activities and games.

Warmer weather allows the school's running and walking club to flourish. Students, teachers, parents and even grandparents run and walk together every day after school in the fall and spring.

Recess provides another opportunity for physical activity. From early January to Spring Break, students can skip during

Action Schools! BC in-services, resources and equipment support the staff at Georges Vanier in providing physical activity opportunities for students during class, recess, lunch time and after school. By taking advantage of all that Action Schools! BC has to offer, Georges Vanier Elementary is excelling at integrating healthy living into the fabric of their school community in unique and creative ways.



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