

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)**2013 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS)**

- **Purpose:** to identify trends in student substance use, health, risk behaviours and protective factors
- **Method:** student survey (elementary and secondary); part of a national sample.
- **Summary:** Compared to 2009, there is an overall decrease in the use of many drugs and alcohol. In Toronto, use of opioid pain relievers were above the provincial average; alcohol use and binge drinking were below the provincial average. Most Ontario students are in good physical and mental health, but a sizable minority (13%) experience functional impairments. The level of bullying victimization at school has decreased during the past decade; the level of cyberbullying shows no change; there is no improvement in the proportion of students who are overweight or obese (25%).
- **Results** are used by education and health professionals to identify areas of concern and emerging trends, and to create professional learning opportunities for teachers and administrators.

George Hull Centre***Building Emotional Resilience in our Classrooms in Collaboration with Mental Health***

- **Purpose:** to further understand the impact of the *Fun Friends*, a program designed to help young students manage stress
- **Method:** elementary schools (Grade 1 and 2); parent feedback
- **Summary:** George Hull staff collaborated with TCDSB staff to introduce and monitor *Fun Friends*, a play-based cognitive behavioural program that teaches Kindergarten and Primary students to: manage stress and anxiety; building friendships; recognizing feelings and how they affect thoughts, and behavior; relaxation and positive thinking. TCDSB staff found that students have generally improved in their knowledge of good friendships, feelings, positive thinking and some aspects of problem-solving. The George Hull Centre has initiated research involving parents; this work is still in progress.
- **Results** demonstrate that students are able to constructive social techniques and to use them better manage stress and complete complex tasks. Findings are shared with the Mental Health Lead and reviewed at the committee level, as well as the Early Years department to inform programming.

Media Smarts***Young Canadians in a Wired World - Phase III***

- **Purpose:** to understand changes in behaviour, attitude and use with respect to the internet
- **Method:** survey of students (Grade 7 -11); part of a national sample
- **Summary:** The reports contain vast amounts of information. Topics covered include: teacher, youth and parent perspectives about life online; online privacy and publicity; cyberbullying; digital literacy; content accessed etc. Examples of results from one report are highlighted here: More girls than boys have learned how to search for information online from teachers; parents and teachers are the main sources for learning about searching for information online; 80% of students have received instruction in evaluating and authenticating online information; 46% of students, “Downloading music, TV shows or movies illegally is not a big deal”; 36% say that they have had trouble finding something they need for their school work due to filtering software.
- **Results** shared with the 21st Century Academic Information and Communication Technology staff and the Safe Schools department staff to inform program development and PD offerings. Information was shared with principals to bring greater awareness to school staffs.

Niagara University***A Mixed Methods Inquiry into the Actual versus Desired Parent Engagement from Multiple Perspectives: A Focus on Immigrant Status***

- **Purpose:** school based project to determine parental engagement and inform policy
- **Method:** surveys, interviews and focus groups with secondary students and their parents
- **Summary:** The Ontario Ministry of Education announced the *Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools* in 2010 recognizing parents as key partners in education and identifies strategies for engaging and supporting parents in their child’s education. This research described the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers. It was found that all three groups consistently desire higher levels of engagement in all categories (i.e., Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision Making, Collaborating).
- **Results** showed some differences between the types of parent engagement activities sought by new immigrant parents in comparison

with those who have been living in the country for longer periods of time. The participating school published a special edition of their newsletter including these findings. Findings were shared with the Community Relations department staff to inform their work with school communities.

Ontario Cancer Institute, University Health Network

Determinants of Breast Tissue composition in Young Women

- **Purpose:** to educate students regarding factors (lifestyle, diet, physical activity, genes) that affect breast cancer risk later in life
- **Method:** educational component in secondary school, followed by recruitment for participation in a scientific study
- **Summary:** The composition of breast tissue is linked to the risk of developing breast cancer. Women with the highest breast tissue density have a greater risk of developing breast cancer than women with little to no density. This study points to an association between in utero and early life risk factors with variations in breast tissue composition in 15-18-year-old girls. In participating schools, the researchers provided a 30 minute in-class ‘cancer education program’ to explore how factors, in particular lifestyle choices, affect breast cancer risk later in life. Students were provided with a handout entitled “Understanding Cancer” and teachers were provided a copy of the resource *Understanding Cancer: Research and Education* to use throughout the school year.
- **Results** emerging from the study suggest that nutrition in utero and in early life influences the tissue composition of the breast in adolescence and that nutritional intervention in early life may be an approach to breast cancer prevention, a findings that will inform the continued work of the Ontario Cancer Institute.

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto (OISE/UT)

Role and Potential Benefit of Teacher Collaboration in Elementary School

- **Purpose:** to understand the benefits of teacher collaboration
- **Method:** case study involving teacher interviews in one school
- **Summary:** This pilot study examines the place of teacher collaboration in teacher professional development, including the impact of collaboration. Results indicate that teacher collaboration is a good method of building trust between teachers, providing teachers with opportunities to see themselves as active participants in a community, encouraging reflection, receiving feedback, and promoting accountability

to one another.

- **Results** of his study stresses the importance and value of teacher collaboration as an important component of teacher professional development and will inform additional work by these researchers. The new, decentralized model of professional development is congruent with these findings, as teachers determine the types of PD required at the local level in support of student achievement and well-being.

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto (OISE/UT)

Sharing Global Classrooms: An International Experience

- **Purpose:** to assess the impact of an international experience on teacher candidates and students
- **Method:** action research; feedback from intermediate students (science curriculum)
- **Summary:** Two teacher candidates from the Faculty of Education, OISE/UT, visited a school and delivered a ‘mini-unit’ of three lessons, based on experiences from an International Internship. This small project was part of a larger study involving fourteen teacher candidates from OISE/UT, who participated in internship opportunities in India, Costa Rica, and Uganda. Most of the report summarizes experiences from the internships. Regarding the mini-units, the report indicates that the teacher candidates used their experiences, photos, and anecdotes to develop the lessons. The lessons developed a strong sense of global consciousness and helped to dispel many stereotypes students in Ontario schools may have. The internships and subsequent mini-units are in line with international experiences and opportunities supported by TCDSB staff. The project emphasizes the value of international opportunities.
- **Results** have led to increased opportunities for TCDSB teachers to teach in summer programs in Asia. These experiences can assist teachers as they work with growing numbers of International VISA students studying in TCDSB schools.

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto (OISE/UT)

Math for Young Children Project (M4YC)

- **Purpose:** to study how young children learn and are taught mathematics
- **Method:** student interviews, teacher interviews/questionnaire; co-teaching opportunities

- **Summary:** The project is a collaboration between the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat (Ministry of Education) and the Institute of Child Study, OISE/UT, involving 15 teacher-researcher teams in several Ontario School Boards. Central to the model is the integration of four adaptations to the Japanese Lesson Study model: (1) teachers engaging in the mathematics, (2) teachers designing and conducting task-based clinical interviews, (3) teachers and researchers co-designing and carrying out exploratory lessons and activities, and (4) the creation of resources for other educators.
- **Results** suggest that the adaptations were effective in: (1) supporting teachers' content knowledge of and comfort level with geometry and spatial reasoning, (2) increasing teachers' perceptions of young children's mathematical competencies, (3) increasing teachers' awareness and commitment for the inclusion of high quality geometry and spatial reasoning as a critical component of early years mathematics, and (4) the creation of innovative resources for other educators. This work continues to inform the work of mathematics educators in Ontario. This approach has been found to be successful in supporting staff acquire deep content knowledge, broaden conceptualization of geometry and spatial reasoning, and increase teacher interest and commitment to teaching and learning geometry.

**Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto
(OISE/UT)**

Vocabulary Growth in ESL Students: What Develops and How It Can Be Enhanced

- **Purpose:** to gain a better understanding of how vocabulary develops for English Language Learner (ELL) students and the relationship between vocabulary development and comprehension
- **Method:** assessments with students in junior division
- **Summary:** This multi-year longitudinal study was initiated in 2009/2010; data were collected annually, for three years on nonverbal reasoning, vocabulary, decoding and reading comprehension. ELL children who are recent immigrants to Canada, struggle to acquire the English vocabulary knowledge necessary for academic success, they begin to catch up to their English Language speaking (EL1) peers on basic word-level reading skills and reading comprehension and show academic improvements in reading skills by Grade 5.
- **Results** showed an emerging relationship between vocabulary

knowledge and reading skills in both language groups. For ELL children, although reading skills often develop after 4 years, academic vocabulary skills are slower to develop – often lagging behind their English Language speaking peers. Results support the need for programming that focusses on developing vocabulary skills. Researchers have been offering professional development workshops for participating schools.

Rotman Research Institute - Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care
Cognitively Positive Training Games for Kids

- **Purpose:** to measure the impact of a music enrichment component on student outcomes
- **Method:** program and assessment involving a sample of Senior Kindergarten classes
- **Summary:** This study examines the impact of a 6 month computer-based music lesson program on Kindergarten-aged children. The computer music training software, SmarterKids, developed by staff at the Rotman Research Institute, Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care is based research that shows that music training can have positive impact on sound, rhythm, and other music-related concepts as well as language, intelligence, attention, and decision making. TCDSB teachers were trained to deliver the program for 30 minutes, three times per week for six months.
- **Results:** only pre-intervention data were reported – a report with post intervention data is forthcoming. Preliminary analysis and technical validation encourage the researchers to have confidence post-program testing.

University of Waterloo
2012/2013 Youth Smoking Survey (YSS)

- **Purpose:** to understand trends in smoking-related behaviours and attitudes and to inform policy
- **Method:** secondary students; part of a national sample that includes Grades 6, 7 and 8
- **Summary:** 4% of Canadian students in grades 6 to 12 are current cigarette smokers (decreased from 6% in 2010-11). Alcohol use among students in grades 7 to 12 has decreased from 45% to 41% (2010-11 to 2012-13); students reporting drinking excessively (5 or more drinks on

one occasion) has also decreased from 33% to 29% in the same time period. After alcohol, marijuana use was the substance with next highest prevalence among Canadian students grades 7 to 12: 19% reported using marijuana in 2012-13 (no change from 2010-11 but lower than 27% reported in 2008-09). After alcohol and marijuana use, prevalence of psychoactive pharmaceuticals use to get high was third highest: 4% reported using at least one prescription pharmaceutical to get high. Collecting accurate national data to identify trends in smoking-related behaviours.

- **Results** enable educators, public health professionals and policy-makers to evaluate how well policies and programs are working to improve the health of Canadian students and to tailor strategies. Information can support teachers in delivering the Health curriculum in the Intermediate and Senior divisions.

School of Nutrition, Ryerson University

Do sedentary or physically active screen-based activities affect subjective appetite, satiety and food intake control in children?

- **Purpose:** to understand the role of diet composition, exercise and environment on the regulation of food intake, appetite and energy imbalances in children
- **Method:** assessing the food intake of children following different activities (recruitment of students in Grade 4-8)
- **Summary:** This study examined the effects video games and glucose consumption on subsequent food consumption. Boys ranging in age from 9 to 14 were first given either a glucose drink or a drink containing artificial sweetener with no calories. After this, half the students in each drink group participated in a videogame for half an hour; the rest did not. Subsequently, they were given pizza; the experimenters measured the amount of pizza the participants ate. Students who consumed glucose ate less pizza than those who had the artificial sweetener, as expected. In addition, students who played the video games consumed less pizza than those who did not.
- **Results** were not consistent with other work which suggested video games or other visual activities increased food consumption (in adolescents or young adults). The scope of the study is limited to immediate food consumption; additional research is needed to study the long-term impact. Healthy food consumption is an issue of importance for health education and the development of policy and programming.

YouthLink***Finding Assertive Solutions Together (FAST): Evaluating Student Outcomes and Program Experience of Grade 7 and 8 Students in Scarborough***

- **Purpose:** to learn about the impact of this program (FAST) on student outcomes
- **Method:** student, teacher and parent surveys
- **Summary:** This program (formerly the *Anger Management Program*) is offered to Grade 7 and 8 students at risk of leaving school, underachieving or being expelled due to aggressive or inappropriate behaviour. It helps youth understand the origins of their anger and the triggers to violent behaviour, and to learn ways to communicate their needs and resolve conflict more effectively.
- **Results** in the past have shown that the youth found the program helped them control or manage their anger or to express it verbally. Participants felt it helped to improve their personal relationships and reduce situations where their anger leads them into trouble. The program has been most successful when schools promoted it as a positive experience towards personal and academic achievement, rather than as a punishment.