



## School Nutrition and Activity Project

### Principal Information Letter

Dear Principal:

This is a follow-up letter to your recent telephone conversation with Bob Gray concerning an upcoming **SNAP** (School Nutrition and Activity Project) nutrition survey beginning in the ESD the middle of April 2010.

This survey is part of a larger five year study being led by UPEI researcher Dr. Jennifer Taylor, Dr. Paul Veugelaers (University of Alberta), Dr. Debbie MacLellan (UPEI), Dr. Mary McKenna (University of New Brunswick), and Bob Gray (UPEI) in partnership with the PEI Healthy Eating Alliance (HEA) and the ESD. SNAP will assess the impact of the school nutrition policies on children's eating habits and weight and is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. We are also interested in the extent to which elementary and consolidated schools are implementing the School Nutrition Policy, including foods offered at breakfast programs.

#### **The **SNAP** study includes four components:**

1. An in-class student survey on eating habits and physical activity including height and weight measurements;
2. A parent survey sent home with student consent forms;
3. A Principal School Food Survey
4. A Breakfast Program Survey

#### **Why are we doing this study now?**

As you know, school nutrition policies have been adopted in elementary schools across the province. This study will provide us with important information about the eating habits, physical activity and weight status of children at your school, and whether new school nutrition policies can help children to be healthier.

We will also prepare a report for your school to help them understand the eating habits and weight status of students.

#### **The process for the study is outlined below:**

1. SNAP research assistants will visit Grade 5/6 classrooms to explain the study to students and provide them with a consent form and parent survey to take home. We will ask parents to return the form to the child's teacher within one week.
2. SNAP research assistants will drop off the Principal School Food Survey and consent form to your office on the same day that they introduce the study to students. This short survey will take

approximately **10 minutes** of your time. We will collect the completed Principal School Food Survey when we return to the school to survey students.

3. Students with written parental consent will
  - a. fill out a short survey of usual eating habits and physical activity
  - b. complete a more detailed record of what they consumed for lunch, including where the food was obtained from
  - c. be measured in a private area

Our experience is that the entire process takes approximately **30 – 45 minutes** to complete.

4. We will be sending out information letters to the program coordinators and volunteers of the school breakfast program. We will be contacting them to arrange a visit to the school program, where we will a) record the foods being offered b) have the coordinator and one volunteer complete a pen and paper survey on the program and c) observe the program environment and take a photograph of the room without children present. There will be no direct contact with children, and no child will be photographed. This information is important for us to determine if school breakfast programs are consistent with standards in the nutrition policy and follow recommendations from Breakfast for Learning, the national body which funds breakfast programs.

We hope to complete **SNAP** between **March 1 – May 31**.

We are very appreciative of your support and cooperation with the SNAP project. In 2007, schools were very supportive and cooperative, and it certainly made our job easier. We look forward to working together again this year.

If you have any questions or comments, you can contact **SNAP project manager: Kimberley Hernandez** at (902) 894-2819.

Sincerely,

Dr Jennifer Taylor  
Principal Investigator

Bob Gray  
Co-Investigator, School Liaison

Kimberley Hernandez  
SNAP Project Manager