

Nova Scotia Active Smarter Kids Pilot Project

Using simple physically active activities as part of academic lessons.

What is Active Smarter Kids (ASK)?

ASK is a model for curriculum delivery researched and developed in Norway^(1,2) that involves the incorporation of simple physical activities into the delivery of academic lessons. Physically Active Lessons (PALs) activities are delivered by educators in 20-30 minutes and are well suited for math, language and social studies classes. Other subjects can use PALs with simple adaptation. PAL activities are usually delivered outdoors but are adaptable to any setting.

The ASK model is low-cost and simple and has been shown to contribute to students' attachment to curriculum as well as in classroom cooperation and students' sense of belonging and enjoyment at school and in class.

PAL activities are designed to engage all students and encourage collaborative and cooperative learning. Most activities occur as a class in small groups and offer a balance between the challenge of the lesson content and the physical activity. Activities are adapted to meet different needs of students and class dynamics.

A public database of PALs is available (www.activesmarterkids.com) and educators can add their own activities for others to use.

Where is this happening?

With grade 5 classes in two pilot schools with South Shore Regional Centre for Education in Nova Scotia.

Pilot sites: Newcombville Elementary School & Bluenose Academy

Pilot Timeline: 2018-19 school year to train, implement and evaluate the pilot. On site support for implementation at pilot sites.

Activity plan: 3 set times/week for 30 minutes each.



Why Physically Active Lessons (PALs)?

Imagine a teaching and learning method that allows kids to be kids! PALs encourage students to collaborate and be physically active while engaging in a meaningful way with their academic lessons.

Schools that incorporate PALs into their teaching have reported increases in: student academic achievement, collaboration and communication amongst their students, and the overall mood and sense of belonging at their school. Over "brain breaks", PALs have a greater positive impact on academic achievement.

In fact, 85% of the schools that participated in the 2014 ASK study continue to offer PALs to all grade levels.

PALs can help NS educators meet Provincial Curriculum guidelines for Physically Active Time (PAT) during instructional time.

What happens after the pilot?

Upon review of process and outcome evaluations we will adapt and plan for next steps.

If successful we would expand to other grade levels at the pilot sites & to other schools. A long-term goal is integration across all grade levels at participating schools and to continue engaging schools that show enthusiastic interest.

Results and learnings will be shared.

CONTACT INFORMATION

INFORMATION SOURCES

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¹ Education on the Move – Ideas and Inspiration for School-Based Physical Activity from Norway

² Resaland, Geir K., et al. "Effects of physical activity on schoolchildren's academic performance: The Active Smarter Kids (ASK) cluster-randomized controlled trial." *Preventive Medicine* 91 (2016): 322-328. [www.linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0091-7435\(16\)30262-6](http://www.linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0091-7435(16)30262-6)

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