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College of the Rockies and School District #5 Project Receives ViaSport Grant

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Photo: (l-r) Steeples Elementary School Principal David Martin, College of the Rockies Vice-President Education Stan Chung, School District #5 Superintendent Lynn Hauptman, ViaSport Coaching and Leadership Development Manager Eric Sinker, College Faculty member Sandi Lavery and SD5 Director of Instruction – Student Learning Diane Casault,.

Representatives from the Kinesiology and University of Victoria/East Kootenay Teacher Education programs at College of the Rockies were on hand at Steeples Elementary School on Friday, April 10 for a funding announcement.

ViaSport Coaching and Leadership Development Manager Eric Sinker revealed that ViaSport will be awarding a grant of \$14,560 to support an ongoing applied research project by College of the Rockies and Steeples Elementary school.

“This research project will provide evidence that through purposeful physical literacy programming by qualified instructors, kids will develop greater proficiency in movement and will be more likely to participate in sport and physical activity as they get older. ViaSport is very excited to partner with the College on this innovative initiative,” Sinker says.

The applied research project, undertaken by kinesiology and teacher education faculty and students, aimed to assess the physical literacy of students at two elementary schools in Cranbrook during the fall of 2014 and to implement a lunch-hour physical literacy intervention at one of the schools.

The undertaking marks the first applied research project at the College since it opened the Inspire Centre, which was created to inspire innovation, research and excitement in teaching and learning.

“College of the Rockies wants to help our community partners to solve real problems and advance innovation. We are delighted to participate in the area of physical literacy because this work truly transforms lives,” adds Stan Chung, College of the Rockies Vice-President, Education.

Physical literacy refers to the mastering of fundamental movement skills (FMS) including running, skipping, hopping, and galloping. Physical literacy is important for children as those who have the necessary skills are generally more active, are more likely to feel prepared to participate in sports or other physical activities and will be more capable of learning more complex skills later in life.

The results of the initial assessments showed that students at both schools scored lower in their fundamental movement skills development than would be expected for their ages in almost all grade levels.

The ViaSport grant will be used to develop a lunch-hour Physical Literacy Kit that can be used to implement fun physical literacy intervention programs in local elementary schools. The kit will have the potential to be expanded to additional schools in the district, region and province.

Between October and January, Teacher Education and Kinesiology students from the College volunteered their time to implement a physical literacy lunchtime program aimed at improving FMS through fun physical activities at Steeples Elementary School. From January to April, honorariums were able to be provided to the student mentors through funding assistance from ViaSport.

Steeples Elementary principal, David Martin, has been concerned about decreasing levels of fundamental movement skills since he started teaching physical education in 1995. He is very excited College students are part of the team that is striving to improve the physical literacy of the students at Steeples.

“Since the joint project between Steeples Elementary school and College of the Rockies/UVIC Teacher Education began, we have noticed improved fundamental movement skills from our students,” he says. “Teachers have embraced the teaching of these skills and have reported being more focused in their delivery of physical education. Students appear to be more coordinated, better able to participate in physically demanding activities and are experiencing greater success when being physically active. I truly hope this pilot project is just the beginning of improved physical literacy for all students.”

The additional funding being provided by ViaSport will allow for the program to continue at Steeples over the next six months and will allow for the FMS Kits to be developed by COTR students for use in other local schools.

The project will be applying for additional grant money to help enhance the equipment at additional local schools and to distribute the kits. It is hoped the program will continue to grow and, eventually, be implemented across BC.

Find out more about [Kinesiology](#) at College of the Rockies.

Learn more about the [University of Victoria/East Kootenay Teacher Education](#) program at College of the Rockies.

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