



EDMONTON
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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News Release

Three Year Strategic Education Plan Approved for Edmonton Catholic School District

A number of exciting initiatives for 2005-2008 are planned following approval of the District's Three Year Strategic Education Plan tonight by the Board of Trustees.

The plan reflects the District's education strategy for the next three years while at the same time aligning programs with Alberta Education's priorities for the coming year.

The plan also looks at projected enrolment and an increase in enrolment is expected for the Edmonton Catholic School District from 31,608 in 2004-2005 to 32,015 in the 2005-2006 school year.

Highlights of the plan include:

- An increased focus on **language literacy intervention** that would enable the district to fulfill its commitment that every child leaving Grade 3 will be reading at his or her potential.
- Ensuring maximum levels of **Aboriginal student achievement** in all Edmonton Catholic Schools by implementing 'best practices' as demonstrated by the Rainbow Spirit Research Project, and supporting the new Alberta Learning First Nations, Metis, and Inuit (FNMI) initiatives and its accompanying funding framework.
- The development of eight new **Focus and Language Programs** throughout the District including:
 - **Spanish Bilingual** at John Paul I Elementary. This is for Kindergarten and Grade 1 students and is the second location for this program which is also offered at Grandin Elementary.
 - **Hockey and Tennis Sports Academy** at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Junior High.
 - **Hockey and Soccer Sports Academy** at St. Thomas More Junior High
 - **Soccer Academy** at Holy Trinity High School.
 - **Baseball Academy** at St. Francis Xavier High School. This is in addition to the Hockey, Soccer, Lacrosse academies already offered at St. Francis Xavier.
- Opening the first **All Girls program**. The Jean Forest Junior High Leadership Academy will begin in September at St. Basil School for Grade 7 girls with Grade 8 and 9 being added in subsequent years.

- **Two additional locations** will be added to the district's **early intervention program** that was launched last year. Our Lady of Peace Elementary and Anne Fitzgerald Elementary will offer the 'Hand in Hand' program for children between the ages of 2 ½ and 5 ½ with severe disabilities to give these pre-school children a head start. The program is also offered at St. Gabriel Elementary.
- Continued promotion of the **GENESIS project**. The Board of Trustees will continue their work to preserve Catholic education in Edmonton and Alberta. School staff will maintain their work in the classroom to promote the gift of Catholic education to all students.

'We are extremely pleased to once again offer innovative programs for our students,' said Debbie Engel, Board of Trustees Chairperson. 'The Three Year Strategic Education Plan clearly shows that the Edmonton Catholic Schools experience is more than academic achievement and that the schools in our district provide the best learning opportunities possible to our students.'

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