

Celebration of Catholic Education Religious Education Parent/Guardian Engagement Evenings Feedback

On November 1 and 2 the Trustees and Administration of Edmonton Catholic School District were pleased to host parent engagement evenings at St. Charles Parish and Corpus Christi Parish titled: *Celebration of Catholic Education Religious Education Parent/Guardian Engagement Evenings*. Each evening began with the celebration of the Eucharist followed by a presentation and an opportunity for reflection. We were delighted that Archbishop Richard Smith and Bishop Gregory Bittman were able to celebrate these evenings with us. They were joined at our Lord's table by the parish priests, deacons, and our District Chaplains. Additionally, we were pleased that, so many community members attended Mass and the program that followed.

We are happy to share some of the feedback and comments we received following each presentation. Included below are corresponding links to more information and resources as well as highlights from the presentations.

A. We asked participants: What is one thing from this evening's presentation that you enjoyed most?

1. *"The experiences and opinions of the children in the video; they are the principle role in this story. I enjoyed the video and how the young students understood their Catholic faith and expressed themselves with confidence."*

The video, *Growing in the Spirit*, was a collaborative effort between Learning Services Innovation and many students from across the school district. It focused on asking students to express their thoughts on what Catholic Education meant to them. [Growing in the Spirit Video](#)

2. *"I enjoyed learning about the new curriculum and resources available for parents, teachers and the parishes. Knowing what my children will be learning enables me to help them grow in their faith."*

Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ, the new Religious Education program approved by the Catholic Bishops of Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the Northwest Territories and developed in collaboration with Catholic educators from across Canada, exemplifies the discipline and rigor with which the program is delivered. Pearson Canada, the publisher, has developed a school, a home, and a parish website that helps to integrate the faith into everyday life. [Pearson Canada Student-Home Website](#)

Username: ecsd99 Password: Student99

3. *"I really appreciate how the Competencies formed through Catholic education are permeated from Kindergarten to Grade Twelve and that teachers are receiving professional development in this area."*

We know that Catholic education means that students are given the opportunity to encounter Christ in all aspects of their learning day, not just in Religion class. This means that our Catholic faith is permeated throughout all subjects and all activities. The *Learner Competencies Formed through Catholic Education* reflect the Alberta Programs of Study from a Catholic education standpoint and change the way that we approach permeation. [Learner Competencies Formed Through Catholic Education](#)

4. *"I was pleased to see the Archdiocese's Sacramental Education Initiative. I have children who are passed their sacraments, so this is a document with which I am unfamiliar."*

The *Standards for Preparing Children and Youth for the Sacraments* in the Archdiocese of Edmonton are the result of the Sacramental Education Initiative set forth by the Archdiocese and the Catholic school boards chairs and superintendents from our Archdiocese. The Standards have been developed after four years of wide consultation with priests of the Archdiocese, pastoral assistants, religious consultants, parents, principals and teachers in our Catholic school districts. We invite you to contact your local Catholic parish for more information about Sacramental preparation.

[The Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton – Sacramental Preparation](#)

B. We asked participants: What is one thing you wonder about or would like to learn more about?

1. *“I am anxious to know if Religious Education is mandatory from Kindergarten to Grade Twelve.”*

Religious Education is a scholastic discipline and not a complementary course; nor is it a supplement to other disciplines, but underpins the educational activity of Catholic schools. Students are required to participate in and complete Religious Education courses each year of their schooling with Edmonton Catholic Schools. In high school, students typically complete nine credits in Religious Education within a traditional classroom setting. Under some circumstances, and to accommodate special learning needs, Religious Education is also delivered in alternative modes such as PASS (Part Time Alternative Self-Paced School) or Revelation Online.

2. *“What is ECSD doing about the alternative curriculum for sexual education in our schools?”*

We have, and continue to teach the outcomes of the existing curriculum. To clarify, it should be noted that the Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta (CCSSA) did not submit a parallel curriculum proposal to the government. CCSSA is working closely with Alberta Education in supporting the curriculum development, and seeks to create a supplemental resource that ensures a Catholic lens is provided for our learners. Our District has teachers participating in the working group that is developing the new health and wellness curriculum.

3. *“I appreciate that teachers and administrators continue their faith journeys in meaningful professional development opportunities.”*

Teachers and administrators have many opportunities to develop and grow in their faith. This includes School Opening Mass, Permeation Afternoon, Faith Formation Afternoon, Father Michael Mireau Youth Day, Faith Development Day, Grace for the Heart and Soul, Student Faith Development Days, District-Wide Professional Development sessions on the RE Curriculum, as well as Social Justice Initiatives; Religious and Moral Education Conference through the ATA; SPICE and Blueprints through the Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association; Dinner and a Course through St. Joseph’s College; and the Treasures of the Faith, the Certificate in Catholic Studies, and the Master of Religious Education through Newman Theological College.

Included below are two links from the Alberta Bishops in their support of Catholic Education:

[Catholic Education Sunday Bishop’s Letter](#)

[Catholic Education Sunday Supplementary Statement](#)

We thank those who were able to attend the parent engagement evenings and for sharing their comments.