

SUPPORTING DIVERSE LEARNING NEEDS



PREFACE

The Edmonton Catholic School Division (ECSD) is dedicated to fostering an inclusive, supportive, and dynamic learning environment that meets the diverse needs of our students. This report outlines our comprehensive approach to supporting diverse learning needs within our division, highlighting key areas such as Universal Design for Learning, Collaborative Response, and Instructional Coaching. We are committed to data-informed decision-making, enhancing learning experiences, and providing resources to help families partner with us in this mission. Our focus on quality indicators and alignment with the Alberta Teacher and Leadership Quality Standard (TQS) ensures that we continually strive for excellence in education.

Edmonton Catholic Schools is focused on creating clear student pathways, ensuring that each student has access to optimal learning opportunities that cater to their individual needs and aspirations. Our programs and supports are designed to provide students with multiple avenues for success, whether through academic achievement, specialized programs, or holistic development. By offering diverse educational choices and tailored support, we strive to help every student find their path and reach their full potential.

We invite you to explore the various programs, supports, and collaborative efforts detailed in this report, as we work together to create a learning environment where every student can thrive. This report underscores our commitment to inclusivity, continuous improvement, and the holistic development of our students, ensuring that Edmonton Catholic Schools remains a place where diversity is celebrated, and every learner's needs are met with care and excellence.





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UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an educational framework that promotes inclusive teaching by providing flexible learning environments that accommodate diverse learning needs. Rooted in cognitive neuroscience, UDL emphasizes multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression, ensuring that all students—regardless of ability, background, or learning style—have equitable access to meaningful learning experiences. By offering varied ways for students to interact with content, demonstrate their understanding, and stay motivated, UDL removes barriers that might otherwise hinder learning. This approach is particularly beneficial for neurodiverse students, English language learners, and those with different cognitive needs, as it fosters a more personalized and supportive educational experience.

Ultimately, UDL not only enhances accessibility but also cultivates a more inclusive and dynamic learning environment where every student can thrive.

Within Learning Services, professional learning sessions are designed to not only tell teachers and leaders about UDL but demonstrate, through tangible means, exactly how UDL should be experienced in the classroom. Through the modeling of strategies in sessions and in classrooms, teachers can experience how UDL can transform classrooms into truly equitable environments.



COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE

Collaborative Response in Edmonton Catholic Schools emphasizes teamwork among educators to address student needs. This approach involves regular meetings where teachers and multi-disciplinary staff discuss strategies and interventions for individual students, ensuring that every child receives the support they need by identifying and addressing needs through collective strategy-based solutions. Collaborative Response promotes a shared responsibility for student success.

Collaborative Response enables each school site to customize their approach to effectively address the unique needs of their students. The implementation varies across our division. In many schools, these meetings involve administration, multidisciplinary teams (MDT), and learning teams.

The Collaborative Response significantly impacts student learning in several ways:



1.

PERSONALIZED SUPPORT:

By regularly discussing individual student needs, school teams can tailor interventions and support to each student's unique challenges and strengths ensuring that no student falls through the cracks.

2.

INCREASED STUDENT ENGAGEMENT:

When students see that their school teams are working together to support them, it can boost their motivation and engagement in learning. They feel more valued and understood.

3.

IMPROVED ACADEMIC OUTCOMES:

When school teams collaborate to address learning gaps, students benefit from a more cohesive and comprehensive educational strategy.

4.

ENHANCED TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS:

Collaboration among school teams fosters professional growth. Sharing best practices and strategies through the Instructional Coaching model helps teachers refine their methods, which directly benefits students.

Overall, schools are using Collaborative Response to create a supportive and flexible learning environment that promotes student success on multiple levels.

Kurtis Hewson's **Collaborative Response** framework is designed to help educators and schools address the diverse needs of students through collaborative efforts. This collaborative structure emphasizes working together—administrators, teachers, specialists, and other school staff—to develop

individualized responses to the challenges students may face, particularly in the context of academic achievement, behavioral support, and emotional well-being. Through this structure, ECSD administrators, teachers and staff have responded to the increasing complexity of student needs, with a focus on flexibility, proactive support, and data-driven decision-making. Key components of the collaborative team meeting are described on the next page.

Key Components of COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE:

COLLABORATION AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY:

1. The framework emphasizes the importance of collaboration among all educational staff. Teachers, support staff, administrators, and, at times, parents work together as a team to create strategies that best meet the needs of individual students. This shared responsibility ensures a more holistic approach to education.

EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS:

2. A critical aspect of the framework is identifying student needs early on. Rather than waiting until a student falls far behind or faces significant challenges, teachers and support staff are encouraged to proactively recognize issues and intervene as early as possible. This early intervention can significantly improve outcomes for students.

DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING:

3. The framework relies heavily on data to inform decisions about student support. Teachers gather and analyze a range of data such as the literacy assessments such as: diploma and provincial achievement exams—academic, behavioral, and social—to understand each student’s unique strengths and challenges. This data helps to create targeted and effective interventions.

TARGETED AND DIFFERENTIATED SUPPORTS:

4. After identifying the needs of students, the model promotes the implementation of tailored strategies. This could include academic support, behavioral interventions, or social-emotional learning. The idea is to ensure that every student receives the right level of support, whether that’s through small-group instruction, one-on-one mentoring, or specialized programs.

ONGOING COMMUNICATION:

5. Communication is central to the Collaborative Response Framework. Teachers regularly check in with one another and discuss the progress of individual students. This ongoing communication ensures that interventions are adjusted as needed and that everyone involved in a student’s education is kept in the loop.

FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS:

6. The framework is built on the idea that education is dynamic and that schools should be adaptable to change. If one approach isn’t working, the response is adjusted. The team constantly reflects on what is effective and makes changes based on the student’s evolving needs.

FOCUS ON COLLECTIVE IMPACT:

7. The goal of the framework is not just to support individual students but to ensure collective success across the whole school. By working collaboratively, schools can create an environment where all students have the opportunity to succeed, with no one left behind.

Collaborative Response approaches to learning foster a culture where teachers and support staff view themselves as part of a team that works together to solve challenges and support student learning needs.

Rather than relying on isolated interventions or individual teachers to address challenges, the framework promotes shared knowledge, teamwork, and a collective approach to student success and to reach optimal learning outcomes.

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

Supporting Diverse Learning Needs Through Instructional Coaching

In May 2024, a transformative vision for the role of Learning Coaches was introduced, marking a significant shift towards an Instructional Coaching model. This rebranding represents a strategic initiative aimed at enhancing the educational experience for both teachers and students. By integrating Collaborative Response structures, implementing an instructional coaching framework, and aligning with the Alberta Teaching Quality Standard (TQS), instructional coaches are now better positioned to advance pedagogical practices. This comprehensive approach is expected to foster more inclusive, efficient, and stimulating learning environments, benefiting from professional development, curriculum optimization, and direct support.

Several key actions have been taken to support the implementation of this new vision.

An Implementation Committee, consisting of principals, assistant principals, and instructional coaches, was formed to guide the implementation process. This committee played a crucial role in developing the instructional coaching role description, ensuring it accurately reflects the needs and goals of the initiative.

Based on Jim Knight's work, instructional coaching is designed to improve and explore teaching practices in response to the complex and diverse classrooms we face today. By adopting this model and integrating it with other strategic frameworks, we are committed to creating a supportive and effective learning environment for all students. These efforts underscore our dedication to professional development, curriculum enhancement, and direct support, ensuring that both teachers and students



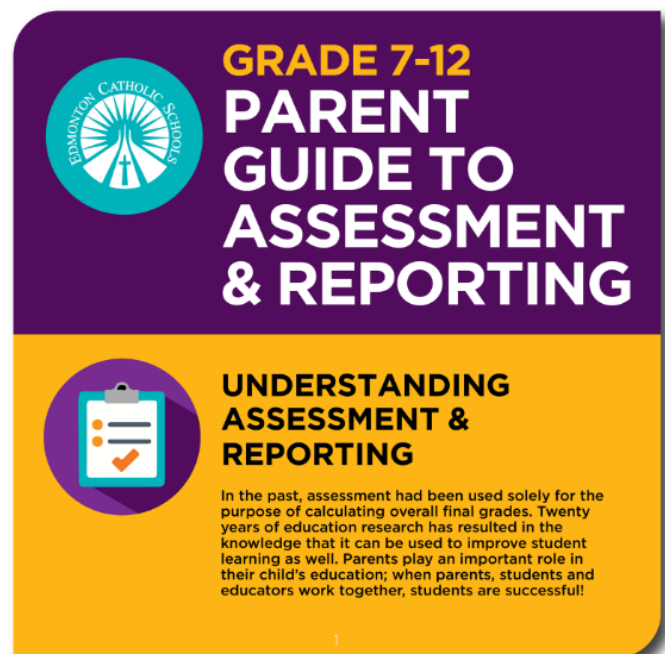
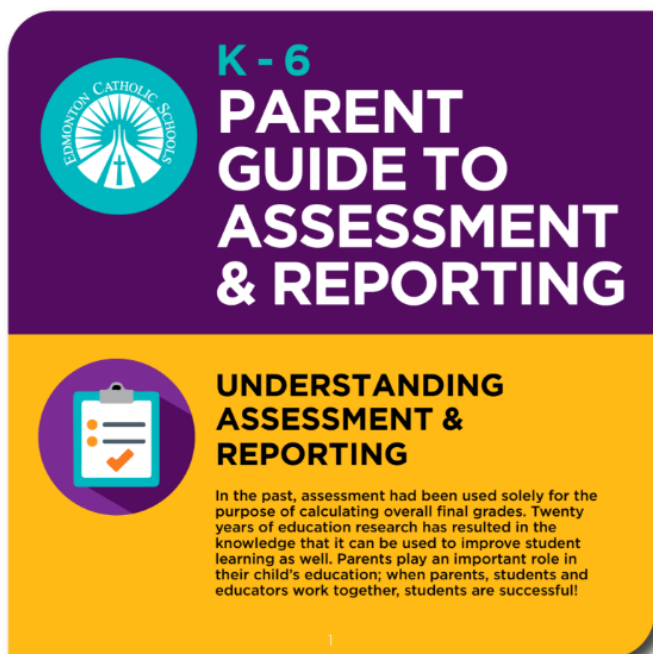
ASSESSMENT AND DATA INFORMED DECISION MAKING

In the Edmonton Catholic School Division, parents are integral partners in the assessment and reporting process, working collaboratively with teachers to support student learning and success. The division emphasizes ongoing communication between home and school, encouraging parents to engage with teachers throughout the academic year. This partnership involves not only staying informed about their child's progress but also actively participating in their learning journey in a variety of ways. This can occur through Demonstration of Learning/ Parent-Teacher Conferences, where they can discuss assessment results, observe student growth, and understand next steps for improvement. Additionally, formal reporting occurs through a snapshot of learning in January for grades K-9 and a comprehensive report card in June for K-12.

Teachers also provide ongoing updates through student work, digital portfolios, and/or classroom communication tools, such as PowerSchool. Beyond reporting, parents play a crucial role in reinforcing learning at home by engaging in meaningful discussions about their child's learning, encouraging goal setting, and fostering a growth mindset. Teachers and parents collaborate to identify strengths, address areas of growth, and ensure that every child receives the support they need to reach their full potential. This shared responsibility helps create a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

On the public website, we have handbooks for parents for both the elementary and secondary levels explaining the assessment process:

ecsd.net/assessment.



SUPPORTING DIVERSE LEARNING NEEDS

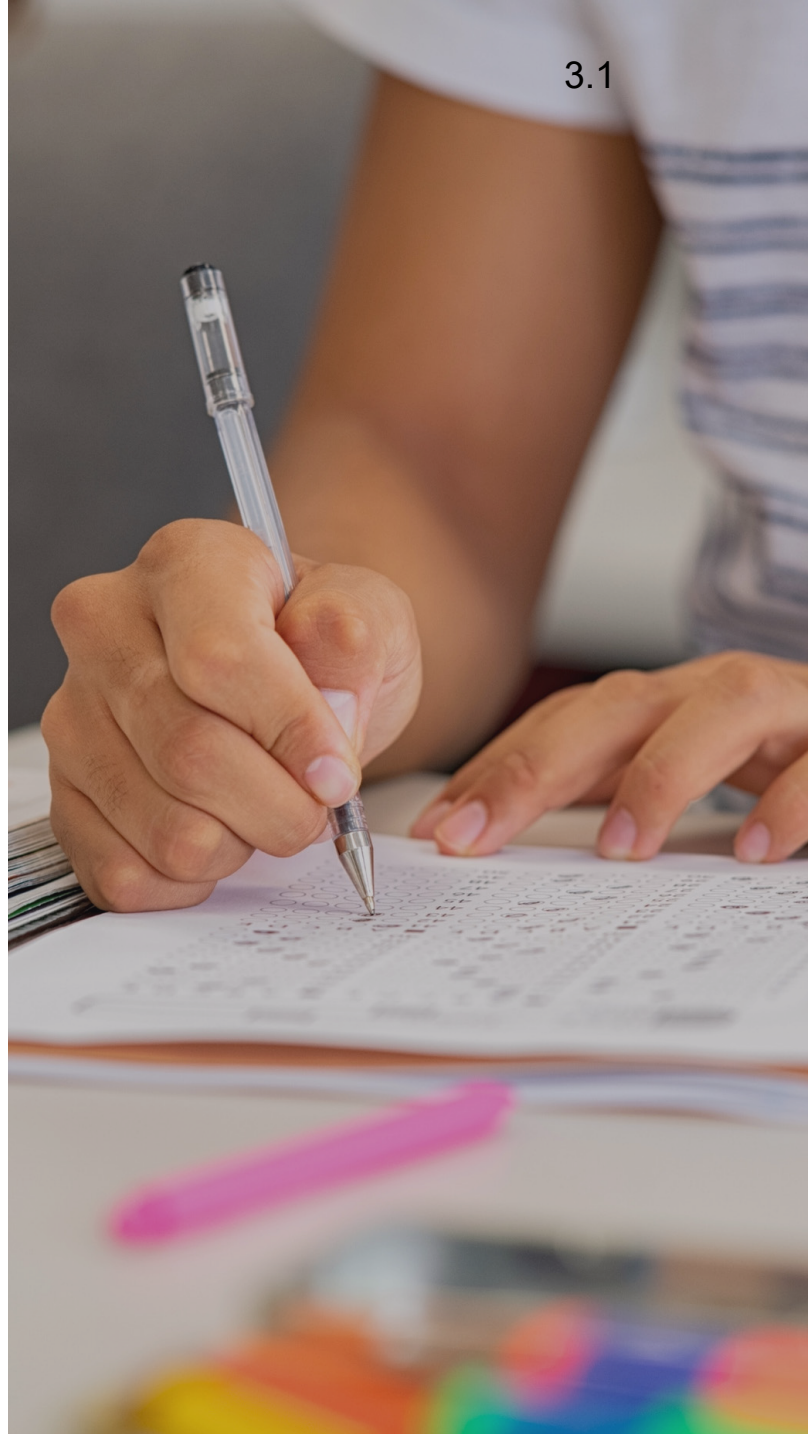
As a division, we have a variety of ways in which we collect data to make decisions regarding student instruction. Within the elementary grades, we follow the Early Years Assessment Framework as outlined by Alberta Education.

Teachers are supported in using this data by using Alberta Education's dashboard and through the help of consultants. Consultants have offered a variety of learning opportunities to support data-informed decisions, including whole school support, grade level support, Instructional coach sessions, and at-the elbow coaching/mentoring.

At the Junior High level, schools are using the Humanities Writing Assessment (HWA) and the Calculator Free Assessment in order to make educational decisions about student instruction. Data is made available through division dashboards. For the HWA, teachers are learning how to mark to a division-level standard and are supported through collaborative marking sessions. Teachers are provided with exemplars to help them formulate feedback that is relevant and meaningful to students. Mathematics teachers are learning to use the Calculator Free Assessment to analyze common misconceptions in math, particularly in foundational skills. They are then able to better group students to maximize instruction.

At the Junior High and Senior High Level, schools are using the Common Summative Assessments (CSA) and Provincial Assessments to analyze areas of growth for their staff. As these are summative assessments, they are less about individual student growth but more about how teachers can approach their overall practice and how schools can make decisions to best organize learning opportunities for both students and teachers.

At the school level, teachers are supported through data analysis sessions. Most often, principals request subject-specific consultant support to work with departments in creating department goals and professional learning plans. One extension of this



will be working with Instructional Coaches in providing ongoing support based on these plans.

At the division level, significant effort goes into analyzing data in order to make decisions around professional learning supports. These could take the form of resource creation or hands-on sessions. In Math and Science, we also have a partnership with the University of Alberta to offer teachers graduate level programming in discipline specific pedagogy. The scope and sequence of this work is determined through the analysis of the division data generated through CSAs and provincial exams.

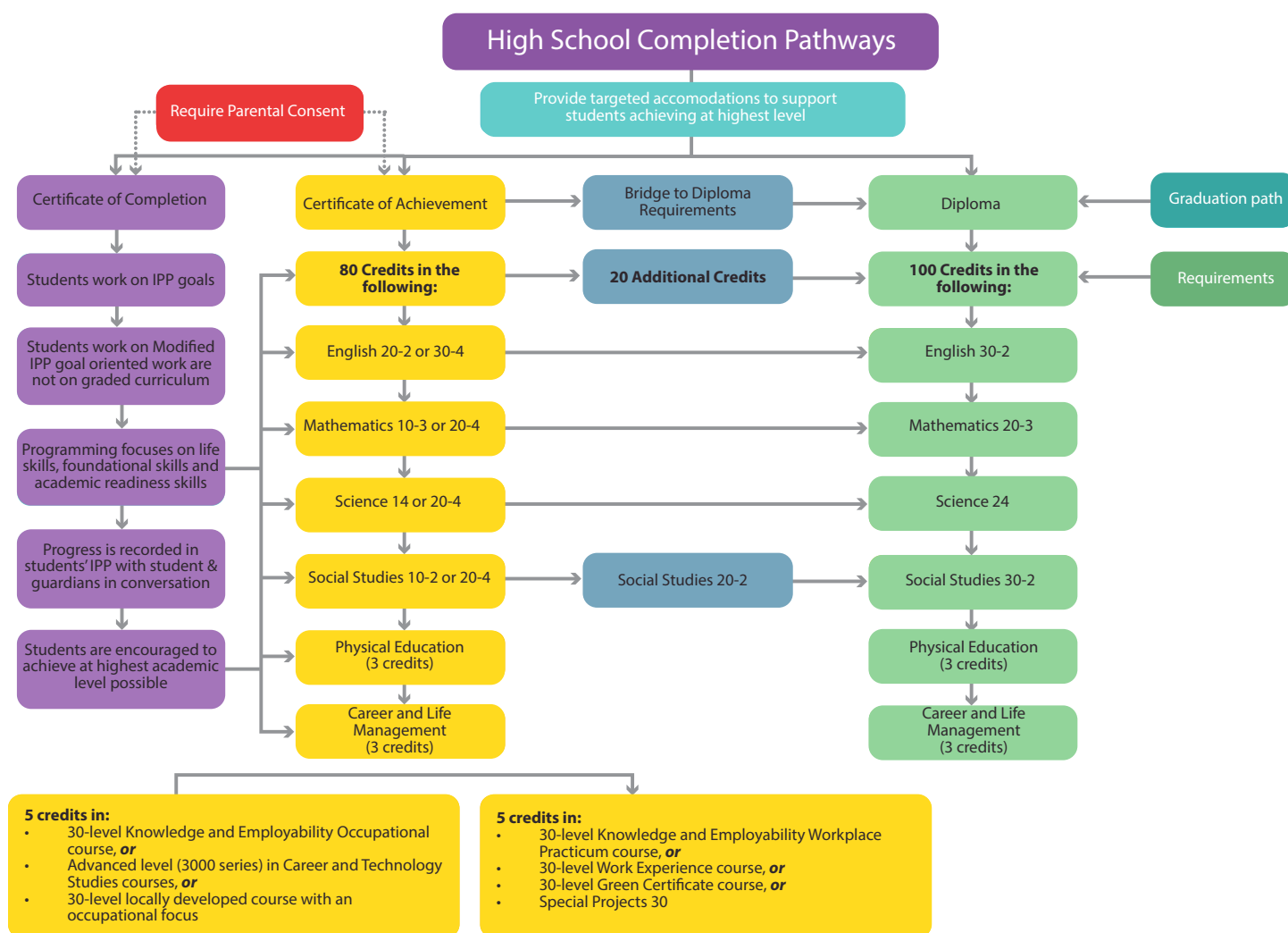
PATHS TO GRADUATION

ECSD provides [multiple pathways to support students in achieving high school completion](#), ensuring they are prepared for post-secondary education, the workforce, or independent living. Students can pursue the **Alberta High School Diploma**, which requires 100 credits, including core academic subjects and career-focused courses. The **Certificate of High School Achievement** is designed for students in Knowledge and Employability (K&E) programs, requiring 80 credits with an emphasis on practical and occupational skills. Additionally, the **Certificate of High School Completion** supports students with individualized program plans (IPPs), focusing on life skills and foundational learning.

Each pathway offers tailored supports, accommodations, and transition opportunities, ensuring all students can achieve their highest potential. These options reflect ECSD's commitment to inclusive education, providing flexible routes for diverse learning needs. By offering structured guidance, ECSD empowers students to graduate with the skills, confidence, and knowledge needed for their futures.



HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATIONS PATHS



DIVERSE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Division Programs



Edmonton Catholic Schools offers diverse program pathways that support students in their faith-based educational journey while nurturing their academic, artistic, and career aspirations. These pathways include core academic programming, bilingual and language immersion options, faith-based formation, career and technology studies, fine arts, and specialized programs for diverse learning needs. Each pathway is designed to align with Alberta's curriculum while fostering a Christ-centered approach to learning.

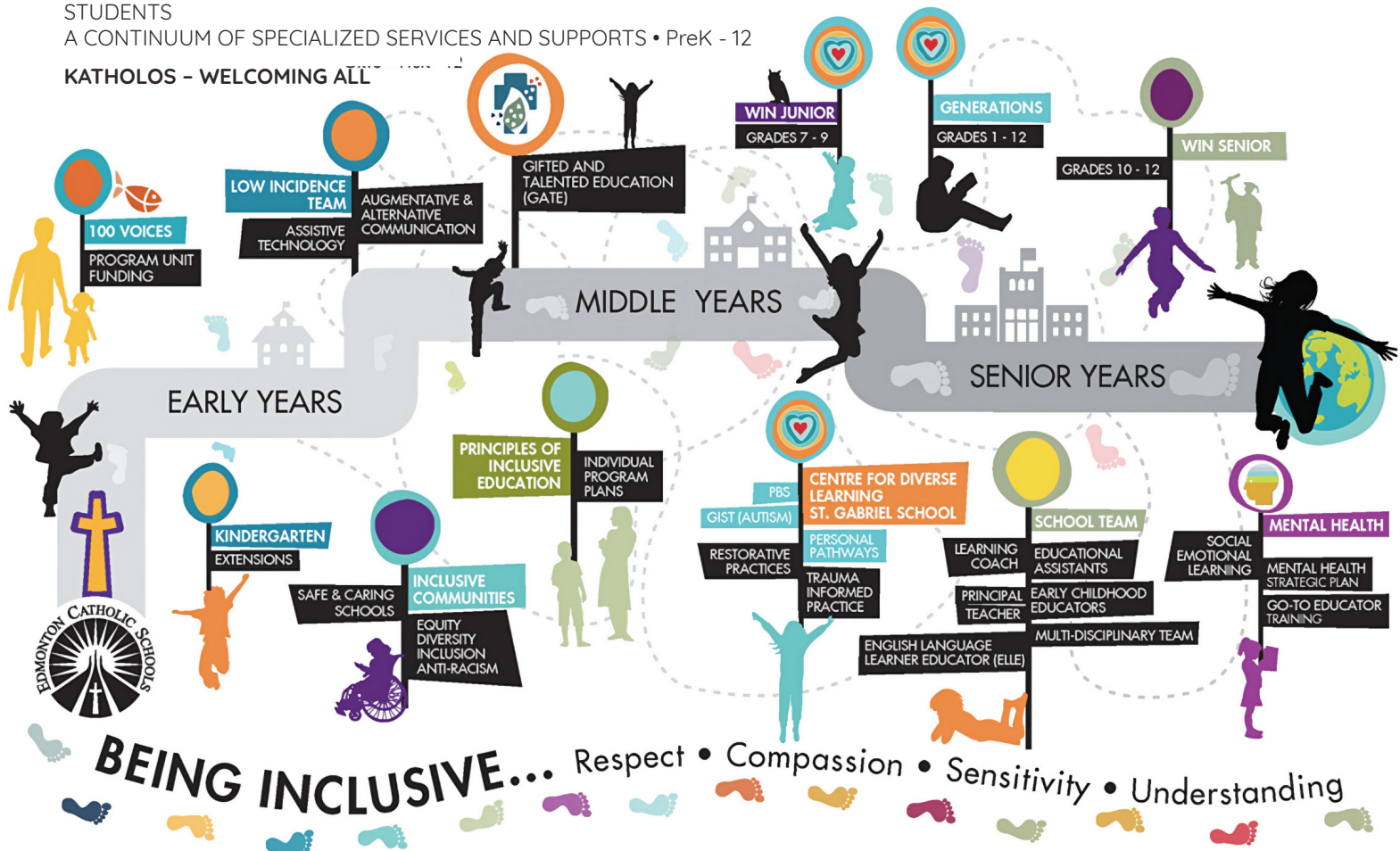
Students can choose Division programs tailored to their strengths and goals, including Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Enhanced Academic Pathway, STEM/STEAM, Sport Academies, Bilingual and Immersion Language offerings and Accelerated Math and Science. ECSD is committed to fostering holistic development, providing guidance and opportunities for every student to thrive spiritually, academically, and socially. For more details, visit [ECSD Programs](#).

INCLUSION IS A VALUES-BASED SYSTEM

FLEXIBLE AND RESPONSIVE PATHWAYS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR CHILDREN AND STUDENTS

A CONTINUUM OF SPECIALIZED SERVICES AND SUPPORTS • PreK - 12

KATHOLOS - WELCOMING ALL



100 Voices Program

The Pre-Kindergarten 100 Voices program offers early intervention for children aged 2.8 to 4.8 years old, supporting those with language, behavioral, or medical needs. Early intervention is delivered through a comprehensive multidisciplinary team, with funding provided by Program Unit Funding (PUF) from Alberta Education.

Being flexible and responsive to the needs of our youngest learners remains our top priority. 100 Voices is offered at St. Monica School (which supports the south, east and west quadrants of the city), St. Vladimir School (which supports central Edmonton and the north quadrant of the city), as well as smaller specialized programs at Ben Calf Robe St. Clare School and St. Paul/ the Edmonton Valley Zoo. In total we have 25 half day programs with 14 children in each.

Each site is equipped with a full Multidisciplinary Team (MDT), including Speech-Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, and Emotional Behavioral Specialists, and a shared Psychologist and Family School Liaison Worker. Additionally, each location has Therapeutic Assistants specializing in Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, and Behavior Therapy. This year, the introduction of the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) role has deepened the collaborative work with the teacher and multidisciplinary team by offering novel and enriched experiences for children to develop in the social/emotional, language and creative developmental domains. ECEs also consider learn-through-play experiences that support STEM and other activities that offer opportunities for problem-solving and meaning making.

Recognizing that many children explore their world through sensorimotor experiences, we have expanded both the physical spaces and the variety of materials available to encourage communication and regulation through movement and play. All sites and children can access climbing triangles, balance beams, spinning chairs, and rockers in classrooms and sensory areas. These enhancements provide children with meaningful opportunities to connect with their environment, while meeting their unique regulation needs so learning and development can occur.

In addition to rich classroom learning experiences, students are introduced to assistive technology through exploration of Augmentative Alternative Communication devices, core vocabulary boards, visual supports and signs. The devices enable users to express their needs, thoughts, and emotions, reducing frustration and enhancing social interactions. These tools also promote language development by reinforcing vocabulary, sentence structure, and literacy skills. These devices travel between home and school, and the school team provides training and ongoing support to families to ensure the highest level of success.

100 Voices is offered at two smaller alternative sites: Ben Calf Robe-St. Clare Catholic School and St. Paul/ Edmonton Valley Zoo.





Ben Calf Robe - St. Clare Catholic School

St. Clare Catholic School provides essential early learning interventions that promote support for students and their families. The school's enriching environment offers dynamic spaces designed to engage every child in meaningful learning experiences. As an integral part of the school community, the 100 Voices program provides early intervention for young learners while fostering cultural connections through language, drumming, and community connections. Parents and guardians are invited to participate in sessions focused on cultural connections, language development, fine and gross motor skills, regulation, and collaborative support with our Multidisciplinary Team, ensuring each child thrives at home and in the classroom.

Edmonton Valley Zoo - St. Paul

The Edmonton Valley Zoo serves as the backdrop to one of our 100 Voices classrooms. This unique location allows for inquiry and language rich learning to occur at the zoo, in the river valley, and in the classroom. Children can learn about animals, habitats, eco-systems and life cycles from unique experiences guided by the classroom team as well as zookeepers from the Edmonton Valley Zoo. Early intervention is embedded within the child's interests and current investigations. The 100 Voices Program at the Zoo has two classes each with 16 children, who have a variety of learning profiles. As with the other 100 Voices programs the zoo supports children with language and medical delays and disabilities, but they also support children who are gifted and talented.

For more information on Pre-Kindergarten programs visit: <https://www.ecsd.net/pre-kindergarten>

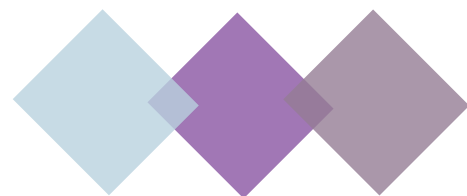
Extensions

The Extensions Program provides kindergarten children with access to full-day programming, enhancing their early educational experience. Through the program, children engage in learn-through-play and interest-based inquiries, which offer opportunities to expand their knowledge about the world. This approach encourages them to actively participate, question, and explore their surroundings. Currently, 18 schools in the division offer the Extensions Program. The Extensions programs are delivered by certified level three Early Childhood Educators (ECE) who have a minimum two-year diploma in early learning and care and are trained in Flight – The Alberta Early Learning and Curriculum Framework to guide their planning in collaboration with children.

This year, the Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) in the Extensions Studios are focusing on embedding STEM into the play and inquiry projects that children are exploring. For example, the children at Our Lady of Peace are exploring how the big idea of Pathways can be interwoven into various learning interests. They explore how paint and other artistic materials create unique paths across surfaces like paper and recycled materials. In the block center, children examine the path a marble takes as it rolls down different ramps, noticing changes in speed as they lift the ramps higher. During gym time with the ECE, they learn how their bodies can take different paths to move from one point to another. At St. Bernadette's Extensions Studio, children are intrigued by how the words Float, Flutter, and Flow create action in the world. They explore how weight affects these descriptions of movement and experiment with water and sand to observe how the sensory materials flow through funnels and tubes. The educator challenges the children to consider how these words might describe different animal movements, leading to new inquiries about habitats, shelters, and homes.

The projects explored in the Extensions Studios inspire children to create meaningful and authentic connections in their learning, fostering feelings of efficacy and competency. As children share their ideas and thoughts with peers through play, they build their own learning foundations and contribute to others' learning through reflection and dialogue. During play at St. Angela, the ECE has noticed the children are fascinated with creating innovative inventions and works of art using open-ended resources. One child arranged blocks to create a "temple". This sparked a new big idea of inquiry with the educator on creation and children will spend the next weeks exploring what it means to be creative, how creative helps innovation and how God create our world for us. This inquiry will not only incorporate STEM and play, it will also support children in building a deeper connection to God and their Catholic identity.

Supporting children in exploring diverse and unique identities is embedded in many programs Studios this year. At St. Alphonsus, children are discovering how each child has a unique role in ensuring the Studio is organized and cared for through community helper lists. At St. Anne, peer relationships are nurtured as children support one another during transitions and in getting ready for outside by working together to do up zippers and put on shoes. At St. Francis of Assisi, children started a Peace Project to share what the word means to them and how they might convey their understanding of peace to others. The overarching ideas of sharing and caring are explored as children play together in various experiences. These projects connect children to social and emotional learning to promote strategies for collaboration and respect for each other's unique voice during the learning journey.



SUPPORTING DIVERSE LEARNING NEEDS

ECEs are uniquely educated to support the developmental needs of children and focus on a strength-based approach as they play within the Studios. ECE staff incorporate Universal design for living strategies like offering children a variety of ways to show evidence of their thinking and honour each child as capable in sharing their ideas with peers. This is showcased by inviting children to use their voice to choose materials that are most meaningful for them to learn and the space where they create their learning. This year, ECEs have exemplified this approach in Studios at St. Gabriel – CFDL and at Our Lady of Prairies in a pilot for grade one.

Each program strives to view each child as capable and engaged in their learning journey. These Studios are uniquely programmed to provide a safe space for the children to explore their interest authentically and to develop meaningful strategies to express themselves and represent their learning through a variety of modes.

More information ECSD's Extensions programs can be found on our public website: <https://www.ecsd.net/kindergarten-with-full-day-programming-ecsd>



Center for Diverse Learning - St. Gabriel School

Being flexible and responsive to student learning needs is an important feature of inclusive education. CFDL–St. Gabriel School is designed to meet the unique needs of neurodiverse students with complex emotional and behavioural challenges and/or require significant additive supports to experience success. Families, in collaboration with school teams may benefit from a placement in a program at CFDL at St. Gabriel School because their child is not currently experiencing success in their community school setting and may benefit from additional specialized services and environments. <https://stgabriel.ecsd.net/>

Positive Behaviour Supports (PBS) is tailored for students who face challenges with behaviours in a regular classroom setting and need intensive, personalized programming to achieve success in their learning. The PBS program aims to understand the learner more deeply by analyzing their behaviours and adjusting strategies to meet their unique needs. The ultimate goal is to help students work towards independence across various school environments and to reintegrate into their community school. <https://www.ecsd.net/positive-behaviour-supports>

CFDL offers three unique programs tailored to provide learning experiences and educational choices that support students in their learning journeys.

The Personal Pathways program creates a unique learning environment for students facing challenges that affect their academic progress and school attendance. It offers smaller class sizes, opportunities for mental health literacy, diverse learning experiences with embedded supports, and the development of social skills and social responsibility. The program's purpose is to provide a space and programming for students to re-engage in their learning. <https://www.ecsd.net/personal-pathways>

The Guided Intervention Supported Transition (GIST) Classroom supports Autistic children who would benefit from further interventions that are supported by a robust multidisciplinary team. Students attending GIST first register in their community school and can be referred to the GIST program by school team, inclusive consultants and families in collaboration, if needed. <https://www.ecsd.net/gist-autism->

Students in each program are supported numerous ways, including:



A holistic approach including intentional plans supported by instructional coaches, teachers, occupational therapy team, speech and language team and emotional behavioural team members.



Intentional, ongoing collaboration between community school team members, CFDL team members, outside multidisciplinary team members (including supports funded through FSCD), the family and the student.



Individualized programs focused on building upon student interests and strengths as well as targeting areas of growth that are specifically connected to the students unique learning profiles.

Students accessing specialized programs work within CFDL to support the achievement of learning goals developed in association with the community school, parents and students prior to starting. CFDL has adopted a cohort model of support for the 2024/25 school year, with two transitional periods, September and February, to best enable proactive transition planning between all stakeholders.

During the 2024/25 school year CFDL has had 43 students transition into CFDL programs in alignment with parent/guardian choice to enable alternative pathways in supporting student success. The transitional nature of CFDL has also been evidenced by 13 students transitioning back to their community schools due to achievement of learning goals.



CFDL ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES:

- Harp Therapy supporting students with high anxiety as well as students who are non-speaking
- New regulation and sensory spaces have been created to allow for further intentional regulation opportunities focusing on individualized student goals as well as socialization in these areas
- More student groups have been formed to allow students at all levels to connect to staff and students outside of their classrooms focusing on art, social skills, games, etc.
- The High School buddy program has started this year allowing for our high school learners to mentor our elementary students through project planning, socialization experiences, reading opportunities, etc.
- Father Roger, our parish priest has created some wonderful relationships with students during his “Hot Chocolate & Chat” visits. This has been a nice time for students to have relaxed conversations with Father, building relationships, grounded in faith
- Archbishop Smith visited which was meaningful for all staff and students involved
- Our Early Childhood Educator works with our students on different passion projects and works to support their regulation and social interactions through student led tasks/projects
- We have our Drumming Residency which has allowed students to continue taking part in meaningful music opportunities while connecting with each other and reinforcing goals such as step by step instructions, appropriate socialization strategies, etc.
- Our art specialist has spent a great amount of time working on various individual art projects as well as group projects that reinforce creativity, open-mindedness and connection – celebrating the unique gifts of all students. She has also seamlessly worked with our teachers to support curricular connections and important lessons about social connection, self-regulation, decision making, etc.

CASA Classrooms

Edmonton Catholic Schools (ECSD) is excited to offer the CASA program at St. Gabriel - Centre for Diverse Learning (Grades 7-9) and St. Joseph High School (Grades 10-12). This program addresses the needs of the “missing middle” in mental health care, targeting children and adolescents who require level 3 to 4 intensity treatment. The CASA program provides a supportive and structured environment to help students manage their mental health and successfully transition back to their regular school settings. ECSD provides the teacher for the CASA program, while the remaining supports are provided by Alberta Health Services (AHS). Comprehensive support includes:

- Full-time mental health therapist
- Full-time classroom behavioral specialist
- Part-time psychiatrist or CanReach trained physician
- Part-time nurse
- Part-time social worker

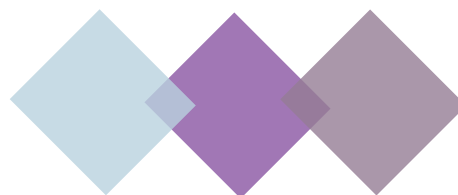
Generations

ECSD Generations Program is currently offered at 4 sites within the division (Divine Mercy, St. Gabriel – Centre for Diverse Learning, St. Mark, and Austin O’Brien). Generations is a highly individualized program serving students in Grades 1-12. The program is designed to support students with multiple complex exceptionalities who require a high level of support. The program emphasizes the development of literacy, numeracy, and daily living skills, ensuring that each student’s unique needs are met. By aligning the curriculum with the individual student’s level and their personalized goals outlined in their Individualized Program Plan (IPP). Generations provides a tailored educational experience that fosters growth and achievement for each student. It is designed to holistically support students in various aspects of their development, including self-care, self-awareness, communication, social skills, emotional development, academic and cognitive abilities, and medical care.

Treatment and support services include comprehensive assessment, mental wellness education, medication management, weekly therapy sessions, parent support groups, community referrals, and transition support. The program typically lasts 5 months, with an additional 5 months of tapered support, and can accommodate up to 12 students per classroom, integrating one day per week at the student’s home school.

Both classes were full for Semester 1, reflecting the high demand and need for such a program. Students returning to their community schools are excited to join their peers again and implement the strategies they have acquired throughout the program. They are eager to apply their new skills in managing their mental health, which will help them thrive both academically and personally. This transition marks a significant step in their journey towards sustained mental wellness and academic success.

The Generations Program integrates Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles essential for Generations students. It fosters a sense of belonging and community through neuro-affirming classrooms and practices inclusive language and acceptance of all forms of communication and participation. The program provides multiple ways to perceive and manage information including utilizing visuals, communication systems, and assistive technology. It also varies and honors methods for response, navigation, and movement by incorporating sensory spaces, movement breaks, and tools to support self-regulation. This approach ensures that all students can access and engage with the curriculum, and have their needs met effectively.



SUPPORTING DIVERSE LEARNING NEEDS

Generations offers a learning environment that utilizes a team approach between the school team and families to ensure all learners are successful. The classroom team consists of a Teacher, Therapeutic Assistant in Speech and Language, Therapeutic Assistant in Occupational Therapy, a Licensed Practical Nurse and Educational Assistants. Additional specialized support may be available for students as needed, including Emotional Behaviour Specialist, Speech Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, and Family School Liaison Worker.

The team works in partnerships with organizations such as Family Support for

Children with Disabilities, the Centre for Autism, ELVES, Persons with Developmental Disabilities, and Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped to provide a community of support for each student. More information about Generations can be found on our public website. <https://www.ecsd.net/generations>



3.1

Public Links

LITERACY

<https://sites.google.com/view/renfreweducationalservicescwc/home>

<https://literacyforallinstruction.ca/>

<https://comprehensiveliteracy.com/>

NUMERACY

<https://www.learningtrajectories.org/>

PHYSICAL LITERACY

<https://justadaptit.com/>

<https://www.toolkit4pe.com/>

WIN JUNIOR AND SENIOR

WIN stands for “Whatever is Necessary, Whenever it’s Needed”, emphasizing that some students benefit from alternative ways to access learning based on their unique and diverse needs. WIN programming focuses on building essential skills and opportunities to prepare students for the real world, with a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Transitioning into the community is an integral component of the program, with work-study supporting career programming and community participation through transitional supports.

As we prepared for the 2024/2025 school year, we planned to implement a series of comprehensive initiatives aimed at enhancing teaching practices, programming, and student experiences in WIN JR/SR. These initiatives support the professional growth of our educators and provide enriching experiences for our students and cover key themes such as numeracy, literacy, autism awareness, neurodiversity, and inclusive education pathways. <https://www.ecsd.net/win-junior> ; <https://www.ecsd.net/win-senior>

SESSION SUMMARIES



(LUMEN CHRISTI)

NUMERACY INTERVIEW KITS:

Caroline Lepps introduced Early Years and Middle Years Numeracy Interviews, highlighting how AI can support writing Individual Program Plans (IPP) goals with WIN JR and SR.

STRUCTURED LITERACY:

Stephanie Denman presented on implementing structured literacy through CC3 and the LENS.



(LUMEN CHRISTI)

NUMERACY INTERVIEWS CONTINUATION:

Caroline Lepps continued the discussion on numeracy interviews with WIN JR and SR and introduced the “Do the Math” resource, focusing on strategies for addition and subtraction with WIN JR.

AUTISM AWARENESS AND NEURODIVERSITY:

Justin Du Val explored lived experiences, research-based concepts, and the Classroom Reflection Tool.

NUMERACY (WIN SR) AND LIFE SKILLS:

Lori Arksey and Caroline Jurkschat investigated the use of numeracy assessments like the MAST, Provincial Numeracy Screening Assessment, and Early Numeracy Interview kits to enhance teacher instructional strategies and student programming. Teachers also explored various WIN Project ideas that integrate life skills with literacy and numeracy, encouraging students to actively participate in their community.



(ST. OSCAR ROMERO)

INCLUSIVE FUTURES:

Lori Arksey and Caroline Jurkschat hosted an impactful event focused on navigating pathways to empower teachers, students, and families. The event covered a variety of important topics, including connecting with local community agencies, fostering meaningful relationships, and empowering teachers with inclusive post-secondary and career opportunities information.

The event featured a diverse array of agencies and organizations, such as AISH, Employabilities, Careers NextGen, OnCampus U of A, Norquest, Autism Edmonton, Prospect Now, Goodwill Industries of Alberta, Diffabilities YEG, Edmonton Track and Field Council, Unified Games, Special Olympics, and the Steadward Centre. These collaborations aimed to provide comprehensive support and resources to the WIN community, ensuring everyone has access to the opportunities they deserve.



(LUMEN CHRISTI)

CAREER AND BRIDGING FAIR:

On November 27, 2024, Edmonton Catholic Schools hosted our 2nd annual Career & Bridging Fair at the Lumen Christi Catholic Education Center. Many of our Senior High WIN programs brought their students for a portion of the day. Students were given the chance to interact with and learn from a variety of special programs and advocacy groups who were present for the day. In the evening, parents came with their children and were able to talk with supports such as AISH and the Office of the Advocate.



(LUMEN CHRISTI)

LITERACY:

A bonus literacy session, led by Stephanie Denman, was held to support teachers in developing a comprehensive structured literacy program. During this session, teachers delved into various strategies to address the diverse needs within their classrooms. They explored the use of diagnostic tools, strategies, and activities for the five pillars of reading and curriculum. Additionally, they examined literacy activities, centers, and resources. The session also covered interventions for emergent readers, phonics instruction and resources, and decoding strategies and resources. This hands-on approach aimed to equip educators with the tools and knowledge necessary to create an inclusive and effective learning environment for all students.



(LUMEN CHRISTI)

BRIDGING SUCCESS AND EMPOWERING TRANSITIONS:

To ensure a smooth transition from junior high to high school, teachers were provided with comprehensive Student Profiles. These profiles detailed which students would be moving to their designated high schools, allowing for better preparation and support tailored to each student's needs. Instructional Coaches participated in these discussions, offering valuable support by identifying student strengths, addressing areas of concern, and providing tailored suggestions for additional support. This collaborative approach aimed to ensure a smooth and successful transition for all students.

NUMERACY INTERVIEWS CONTINUATION:

Caroline Lepps continued the discussion on numeracy interviews and the "Do the Math" resource, focusing on strategies for addition and subtraction. A focus of this PD was on numeracy games teachers can use in numeracy centers in their classrooms.

**WRAPPING UP THE SCHOOL YEAR IN NUMERACY AND LITERACY:**

Caroline Lepps will delve deeper into "Do the Math" strategies for addition and subtraction. Additionally, participants will discuss how to plan for the next school year based on their understanding of students' numeracy skills. Stephanie Denman will focus on reviewing student achievements, reflecting on literacy instructional practices, and planning for continued growth in the upcoming year.

PROGRAM NEEDS FOR THE YEAR:

This session will also focus on reviewing and strategizing Individual Program Plan (IPP) goals for the upcoming year.

These sessions collectively aimed to enhance teaching practices, programming, and student experiences, ensuring a comprehensive and supportive educational environment for all. The focus on numeracy, literacy, autism awareness, neurodiversity, and inclusive education pathways provided valuable insights and strategies for our WIN JR and SR teachers.

In addition to these sessions, we provided voluntary professional development opportunities with the introduction to the new elementary curriculum. Learning Services offers School Teams, a conference-style day five times a year, with a variety of sessions for teachers. Registration was made available by September on the School Teams SharePoint Page and sessions that would be most fitting to the WIN JR environment were suggested to the WIN JR teachers.

There were also a variety of field trips for WIN Senior students. St. Joseph High School hosted events for WIN SR, including a Movie Day on October 4, 2024, and a Badminton Tournament on March 14, 2025. Metro Athletics and Unified Games hosted Boccee Bonzana at Foote Field on December 17, 2024 and the Unified Jamboree is May 27, 2025 with many of our WIN SR sites participating.

By engaging in these initiatives, educators were empowered with new strategies and insights to better support their students. The focus on key themes such as numeracy, literacy, autism awareness, neurodiversity, and inclusive education pathways ensured that teachers were well-prepared to create a positive and inclusive learning environment for all students in the 2024/2025 school year.



MENTAL HEALTH

“Go To” Educator Professional Learning

Edmonton Catholic School Division offers all staff the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills in supporting student wellbeing through “Go-To” Educator Professional Learning sessions. This training is designed to empower educators to naturally form strong, supportive relationships with students. These “Go-To” educators are trained to identify, support, triage, and refer students exhibiting significant mental health issues or disorders. By leveraging the trust and rapport these educators have with students, the program aims to provide early intervention and support, ensuring that students receive the help they need promptly.

While “Go-To” educators are not trained to be counselors, they play a crucial role in the school’s mental health support network. They collaborate with a school’s support team, such as the Instructional Coach, teachers, and education staff to create a comprehensive support system within the school. Research indicates that this approach not only improves access to mental health care for students with severe or complex needs but also reduces the overall number of referrals to specialized mental health services. This holistic strategy enhances the school’s ability to meet the diverse needs of its students, fostering a healthier and more supportive educational environment.

Wellness Champions and Student Leadership Teams

Wellness Champions are designated teachers who play a crucial role in supporting the mental health and well-being of both staff and students. These champions attend a virtual meeting to get introduced to our Alberta Health Services Partners

and health promotion facilitators. During this session, the role of the Wellness Champion was discussed, and resources were provided to help the Wellness Champions launch into action with their student leadership teams.

Student Leadership Symposiums:

Wellness Champions and their student leadership teams come together for a day of learning at Lumen Christi Center. This year, the theme of the day was *belonging and inclusion*. Engaging activities helped students explore different ways to facilitate belonging in their schools. The day included six different sessions for students to choose from including a session from Religious Education Consultants, Indigenous Learning Services, and sessions from our partners at APPLE Schools. These sessions were powerful in helping our student leaders learn various skills in creating a community of belonging while valuing diversity.

While students attended two sessions each, the Wellness Champions participated in professional learning sessions where they reviewed and analyzed their site-specific mental health survey data. Each Wellness Champion identified areas of strength and areas for growth in their schools, a process also undertaken by their school principals. Support was provided through learning services consultants, Human Resources, and Alberta Health Services health promotion facilitators. Additionally, a resource Wayfinder tool was provided to pair resources with the school’s areas requiring growth.



Teacher Counsellors

Teacher Counselors offer emotional and social support to help students manage stress, anxiety, and other challenges that might affect their academic performance and emotional wellbeing. For some students, having this person in their corner is paramount to their success. Teacher Counselors provide mental health and wellness support, including personal, social, and emotional counseling, evidence-based interventions, and ongoing crisis intervention. They also refer students to specialized support services in collaboration with the student and their family. Counselors also collaborate with various stakeholders, including administrators, instructional coaches, grad coaches, school resource officers, and multidisciplinary teams, to provide comprehensive support to students.

A Teacher Counselor may be the person holding the student accountable for assignment completion or regular attendance, in conjunction with the classroom teacher and family. Often, the Teacher Counselor works with at-risk students who do not have a large support network to help them with the skills and work necessary to be successful alone. This is another area where the Teacher Counselor is important to a student's success - they also provide transitioning support, knowledge of division programs, access points, and referral processes, and facilitate collaborative groups such as peer support. Advocacy for students is a key component of their role.

In conjunction with the High School Graduation Coach, Teacher Counselors understand students' personal interests, strengths, and aspirations, which allows them to help guide high school pathways during course selection. They may liaise with post-secondary institutions to establish relationships between students and their future schools, further smoothing the transition and enhancing the students' chances of success.

This comprehensive understanding of students' emotional and mental well-being, as well as their academic profiles, enables Teacher Counselors to guide students effectively while supporting their overall well-being at school. They partake in school activities, offer classroom presentations, and support classroom activities with flexibility and expertise. Additionally, they assist with program planning, course selection, career exploration, and navigating the post-secondary admissions process. Teacher Counselors are often trained in ASIST Suicide Training, VTRA, Mental Health First Aid, and may hold a master's in counseling or a related field. This extensive training equips them to provide high-quality support and guidance to students throughout their school journey.

Information for families on Mental Health can be accessed on our public website at <https://www.ecsd.net/mental-health>



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, is smiling and leaning over a table. A young girl with blonde hair, wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt, is focused on a craft project. They are both working on a green rectangular piece of paper. On the table, there are various craft supplies, including a container of colored pencils, a small globe, and some colorful paper. The background is slightly blurred, showing a classroom or workshop setting.

WRAPAROUND SUPPORTS

Multidisciplinary Teams Supporting Diversity and Inclusion

Multidisciplinary team members (MDT), embrace diversity in schools, recognizing that inclusion is a fundamental necessity for fostering a society that empowers every individual. MDT members work collaboratively with teachers and school staff to ensure that each student's unique strengths and contributions are recognized, regardless of their background, abilities, or differences. Multidisciplinary team supports are different in each school depending on the needs of that school and may include Family School Liaison Workers (FSLW), Emotional Behavioural Specialists (EBS), Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP), Occupational Therapists (OT), Psychologists, and Mental Health Therapists.

Through a collaborative response approach, MDT members collectively leverage the unique perspective and experiences of team members to develop comprehensive approaches to support all learners. For example, speech-language pathologists and teachers collaborate to effectively combine their expertise and address the barriers to learning that are the result of communication delays and disorders.

Occupational Therapists consult with schools on addressing environmental barriers and how to create spaces that allow all students to engage in learning when their sensory needs are met.

MDT members create and deliver professional development opportunities that are intentionally developed to support educator and staff practices that benefit all students. With considerations for Universal Design for Learning (UDL) at the forefront, MDT staff work with educators to ensure that multiple means of engagement, representation and expression are considered and applied in the learning activities that occur in and out of the classroom. A second example of MDT supporting diverse learning needs found in schools is the *FOCUS on Self-Regulation* resource created by the Occupational Therapy Team that supports a learner's intrinsic ability to regulate their emotions and motivation in preparation for learning. The strategy takes 5 minutes to implement and can be done anywhere at any time with any age.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication



To build capability in adults who support students with complex communication needs for whom spoken language is not a viable form of communication, *AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) Goes to School* was created four years ago. This online program offers students access to language, literacy and age appropriate, multilevel, blended curriculum activities while building educator capacity to support students who use an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) system. This project involves collaboration and planning between various members of the Low Incidence Team including Assistive Technology, Occupational Therapy and Speech-Language Pathology, with the ultimate outcome of ensuring that school staff feel confident in supporting AAC users to meaningfully participate in their educational journey. Learning Service's Autism Working Group has created multiple resources and professional development to support autistic students' unique considerations for learning. These resources included input from autistic students and adults with lived experience.

Diversity in Materials

MDT members ensure that diverse populations are accurately and respectfully represented in therapy and teaching materials. Representation matters profoundly as it directly impacts the effectiveness of therapeutic interventions and educational outcomes. Therapy and teaching materials must reflect a deep understanding of cultural nuances, values, and beliefs. This sensitivity fosters trust and rapport between students and professionals, creating a safe and inclusive environment. Materials also use inclusive language that respects diverse identities, including race, ethnicity, ability, religion, and socioeconomic status and avoid stereotypes or generalizations that can perpetuate biases and misconceptions.

An example of diversity in materials are the recently created language therapy cards developed collaboratively by the Speech-Language Pathology and Communications teams. These cards have been carefully designed to reflect the rich tapestry of students within our schools, encompassing a wide range of backgrounds, cultures, abilities, and experiences. When students see characters or examples that resonate with their own experiences, they are more likely to connect emotionally and intellectually with the material. Representation validates students' identities and experiences, fostering a sense of belonging and self-worth. This validation can lead to increased confidence, motivation, and a positive attitude towards learning.



Family School Liaison Workers

Family School Liaison Workers (FSLW) recognize the diversity of families that are part of the Edmonton Catholic Schools community. Each family has unique strengths and needs depending on many factors such as family dynamics, cultural background, socio-economic status, and the physical and mental health of family members. The FSLW team advocates for school and community supports based on the unique profile of each student and their family. The FSLW is focused on removing barriers and providing supports so that students arrive at school ready to learn and can achieve their greatest potential. One example is facilitation of *Success in School* meetings for students who are in the care of Children's Services. The FSLW coordinates the meeting, bringing together the school team, Children's Services team, the student's guardian and where appropriate the student. Through a collaborative strength-based discussion, a plan is developed to provide wrap around support for the student during a time of challenging transitions. One critical component of the *Success in School* meeting is that the student has a seat at the table, contributing their voice to what they need for success. Ultimately, this supports the student and helps them to learn important self-advocacy skills.



Emotional Behavioural Specialists

Emotional Behavioural Specialists will engage families and community members in creating and implementing behaviour support plans, valuing their perspectives and contributions. Recognizing the uniqueness of each student, an EBS will design behaviour support plans that take into account students' cultural backgrounds, experiences, and identities. This approach ensures that

interventions and strategies are culturally responsive and respectful of diversity. By involving families and community members, EBSs foster a collaborative environment that respects and incorporates diverse viewpoints.



Nonviolent Crisis Intervention, OT and PT

Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NVCI) training equips educators with the skills to effectively de-escalate conflicts and manage challenging behaviours in diverse school environments. By fostering an environment where conflicts are resolved peacefully and respectfully, NVCI training supports the embrace of diversity in schools by promoting cultural sensitivity, enhancing communication skills, providing effective conflict resolution strategies, fostering positive relationships, and encouraging a proactive approach to diversity and inclusion. By equipping educators with the tools to manage conflicts peacefully and respectfully, NVCI training contributes to the creation of an inclusive learning environment where all students feel valued and supported.

Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy team members collaborate with school administrators

and the Facilities Department to ensure that school buildings are accessible and easy to navigate. Accommodations can be as simple as signage in school hallways or as complex as designing ramps or accessible bathrooms.

Overall, multidisciplinary teams support educators and school staff to anticipate and program for diversity recognizing that each student is a unique child of God. This requires collective effort and collaboration across all levels of the Division. By fostering a culture of inclusivity and collaboration, multi-disciplinary team members help to pave the way for innovation, creativity, and overall success. More information on our Multidisciplinary approach is available on our public website. <https://www.ecsd.net/school-learning-team>

Low Incidence Team

Some students have what is referred to as “low incidence” needs meaning their learner profile is less common than others. These students are part of the beautiful diversity of the Edmonton Catholic Schools community and are supported by the Low Incidence Team. The Low Incidence Team is an 8-person, division-wide team composed of an Assistive Technology Specialist (Team Lead), 1 Occupational Therapist (OT), 1 Speech Language Pathologists (SLP), 1 Therapeutic Assistant for Occupational Therapy (TAOT), 1 Therapeutic Assistant Speech-Language (TASL), 1 Physical Therapist (PT), .4 Teacher for the Visually Impaired (TVI) and .4 Teacher for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DODHH). The team provides services and support for students with diverse and complex learning needs. Assistive technology (AT), augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), and access tools and mobility equipment, provides access to the curriculum, inclusive learning and leisure opportunities supporting students and children with significant disabilities to:

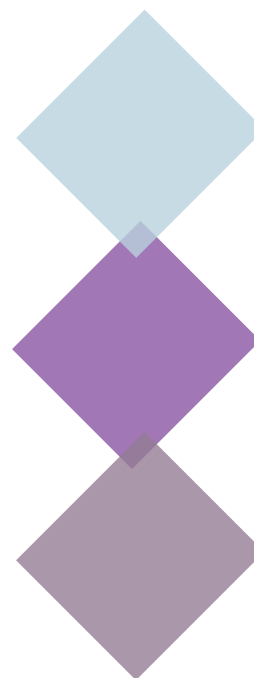
- participate in ALL daily routines with as much independence as possible
- play
- learn and demonstrate understanding
- communicate
- access curriculum

When collaborating with school staff during visits, the team often addresses students’ regulation and engagement needs, enhancing participation and learning. They also offer literacy resources and coaching, focusing on observational assessments for emergent readers and writers. In addition the team provides various professional development sessions to build capacity among staff and families. The “AAC Goes to School” program offers resources and strategies for implementing AAC best practices in classrooms, while the “AAC Goes Home” program provides monthly webinars for families to support language development at home. These two

programs offer learning opportunities to various stakeholders in the child’s learning process. Furthermore, the team supports students by providing adapted equipment, assistive technology tools, strategies, and recommendations through consultations, authorizations, and community referrals, ensuring access to learning and learning environments. Finally, the team works closely with clinicians supporting Programs of Choice, particularly around physical access to communication systems, literacy development, and regulation.

The goal of our Low Incidence Team is to empower and build capacity within the ECSD community to create accessible and meaningful learning environments to ensure students with low incidence disabilities are successful alongside their peers. We provide services and supports for students with diverse and complex learning needs, most of whom have multiple disabilities requiring intensive and ongoing support with input from multiple team members.

<https://www.ecsd.net/low-incidence-team>



ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

With approximately 20% of Edmonton Catholic Schools' (ECSD) student population identified as English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners, this group represents a dynamic and diverse population within our schools. EAL students come from a variety of countries, bringing with them a range of English proficiency levels and schooling experiences. Their diversity and complex needs call for an approach that not only leverages their rich linguistic and cultural knowledge but also provides targeted supports to help them develop English language proficiency and achieve their academic full potential. As a division, ECSD is committed to ensuring that EAL learners simultaneously build their English proficiency and access academic content. To this end, we employ a variety of tools, resources, and instructional strategies to meet their unique needs. The following examples illustrate how our comprehensive approach ensures that EAL learners are supported in both their language development and academic success.



Implementation of Benchmarks 2.0

To effectively support students learning English as an additional language, it is essential to assess and monitor their progress continuously. In 2024–2025, Edmonton Catholic Schools (ECSD) transitioned from Benchmarks 1.0 to Benchmarks 2.0, adopting it as the primary tool for assessing and monitoring the progress of EAL students.

Following the initial intake assessment, teachers can use Benchmarks 2.0 as a valuable resource to guide their planning, instruction, and assessments. This tool provides specific linguistic features for teachers to focus their instruction, enhancing the precision of language objectives and instructional strategies.

One of the key advantages of Benchmarks 2.0 is its emphasis on academic language, which is crucial for ensuring that EAL students can access and succeed in all content areas of the Alberta curriculum.

In parallel with the implementation of Benchmarks 2.0, Learning Services and Tech Services collaborated on the creation of a new data collection site for storing annual EAL assessments and benchmarks. This site streamlines the data collection process for teachers while offering schools the ability to filter data by proficiency level, language strand, and grade. This functionality enables schools to be more targeted in their planning, use of instructional strategies and allocation of resources.



EAL Designates

Given the diversity of EAL students within schools and across grades, each school appoints an EAL designate to support teachers in programming for students, modeling effective practices in classrooms, and assisting with lesson planning. Designates also play a critical role in managing the EAL documentation required by Alberta Education.

To continue building the capacity of EAL designates, they participate in regular callback sessions throughout the school year. These professional learning opportunities are designed to enhance their knowledge, skills, and repertoire of instructional

strategies, which they share with their school staff. The sessions focus on deepening expertise in key areas such as Benchmarks 2.0, effective assessment practices, and culturally responsive teaching. Through collaboration with intercultural liaisons, these sessions also aim to strengthen capacity around culturally responsive practices and accurate documentation.

EAL designates serve as leaders within schools, ensuring that teachers are equipped to meet the diverse needs of EAL learners and fostering a culture of inclusivity and academic success.

English Language Learner Educators

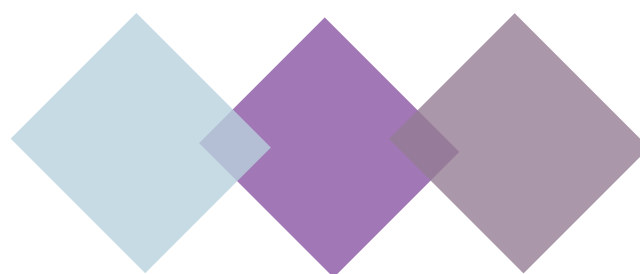
ECSD currently employs 28 English Language Learner Educators (ELLEs) across various grades and school settings, including elementary, junior high, and high schools. ELLEs are integral to providing targeted language acquisition and instructional support for English language learners (EALs), particularly those at Emergent A/B, Level 1 and 2.

Many ELLEs bring significant training in pedagogy and language instruction, with several having taught in international settings prior to joining ECSD. This diverse expertise enhances their ability to design and implement targeted, scaffolded instruction that aligns with Benchmarks 2.0 criteria. Their role is innovative in that it offers individualized and small group instruction both within inclusive classroom settings and in dedicated, low-risk environments. These intentional practices allow students to build confidence and succeed academically while advancing their language skills.

To ensure consistent and effective support for EAL learners, ELLEs participate in four professional callback sessions annually, held at various schools. These sessions, led by EAL Consultants, provide

training in evidence-based strategies, tools, and resources for language instruction. This professional learning equips ELLEs to address the complex needs of language learners effectively and intentionally. Additionally, ELLEs have access to a SharePoint repository containing resources, language planning support, and templates that further enhance their practice within school settings.

The inclusion of ELLEs within schools is a crucial element of ECSD's commitment to supporting the growing population of EAL learners. Their targeted and intentional instruction helps bridge language gaps, enabling students to meet grade-level curricular outcomes and thrive academically. By working collaboratively with classroom teachers, ELLEs ensure that language learners receive the foundational support they need to build both linguistic and academic proficiency.



Professional Development and Resource Development for EAL

To address the evolving societal context and the increasing diversity in our schools, Edmonton Catholic Schools continues to offer comprehensive professional development to administrators and teachers. These multi-faceted learning opportunities ensure that all staff have the tools necessary to support English language learners (EALs), regardless of their role within the Division. Below are two examples of the professional learning initiatives currently in place.

With schools experiencing significant growth in EAL populations, it is vital for principals to develop foundational knowledge in culturally responsive practices and effective instructional strategies that meet the needs of EAL students. This year, we established an EAL Community of Practice (COP) for schools with EAL populations exceeding 30%. Meeting four times, this COP focuses on equipping administrators with the capacity to lead schools with diverse EAL profiles.

Key topics include understanding EAL student profiles, foundational knowledge of language learning, supporting teachers in planning, and implementing instructional and assessment strategies tailored to EAL students.

These targeted professional development efforts ensure that educational leaders are well-prepared to foster inclusive and supportive environments for all learners.

The EAL team provides a wide range of professional learning for teachers. This year, extensive and ongoing professional learning has been offered to address planning teaching and assessment of EAL learners. Additionally, to support teachers, we continue to develop resources that allow teachers to offer rigorous learners for EALs in their pathway to academic success.

