



EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Public Board Meeting Agenda 2025-2026

#9

Date: May 26, 2026
Time: 3:00 PM
Location: Public Board Room, Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre
Phone: 780-441-6004
Web: ecsd.net

1 Call to Order

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1.1 Opening Prayer | Father Glenn |
| 1.2 Land Acknowledgement | L. Thibert |
| 1.3 Roll Call | |
| 1.4 Approval of the Agenda | |
| 1.4.1 Consent Items | |
| 1.4.1.1 Management Letter | |
| 1.5 Minutes | |
| 1.5.1 Minutes of Regular Board Meeting 8-2025-2026, April 29, 2026 | |
| 1.5.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes | |
| 1.6 Bereavement – Matthew Blair Davidson | L. Anderson, C. Kennerd |
| 1.7 Award Recognition | |
| 1.7.1 ATA Council for School Leadership Distinguished Leadership Award Recipients:
Azza Ghali and Maria-Julieta Zelada | L. Anderson |

2 Business of the Meeting

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 2.1 Student Voice 2025-2026 | L. Anderson, S. Makale |
| 2.2 Bus Pass Fee Schedule | L. Anderson, J. Fiacco |

3 Presentation and Review of Accountability Report (s)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 3.1 Creating Communities of Belonging Report | L. Anderson, T. Peterson |
| 3.2 Leadership Formation and System Leadership Development in ECSD | L. Anderson, R. Feehan |
| 3.3 Supporting Schools and Addressing Complexity Report | L. Anderson, T. Peterson |
| 3.4 Moving to Bishop's Assurance Model in our Schools Report | L. Anderson, R. Feehan |

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Leah Fiorillo, Ward 71
Sandra Palazzo, Ward 72
Kara Pelech, Ward 73

Debbie Engel, Ward 74
Alene Mutala, Ward 75

Lisa Turchansky, Ward 76
Laura Thibert, Ward 77

CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT
Lynnette Anderson

4 Celebration of #ECSDfaithinspires

4.1 Board Chair Report

S. Palazzo

4.2 Chief Superintendent Report

L. Anderson

5 Adjournment

5.1 Closing Prayer

L. Fiorillo

5.2 Motion to Adjourn

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Leah Fiorillo, Ward 71

Sandra Palazzo, Ward 72

Kara Pelech, Ward 73

Debbie Engel, Ward 74

Alene Mutala, Ward 75

Lisa Turchansky, Ward 76

Laura Thibert, Ward 77

CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT

Lynnette Anderson



EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

9405 50 Street NW | Edmonton, AB T6B 2T4 | T: 780-441-6000

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMO

May 26, 2026 Public Board Meeting **1.4.1.1**

Date: May 26, 2026
To: Board of Trustees
From: Lynnette Anderson, Chief Superintendent
Re: **Confirmation of Completion of the 2025-2026 Assurance Cycle**

Background:

School jurisdictions in Alberta are required to engage in a planning and reporting cycle that includes establishing an Education Plan annually, which we call our Division Plan for Continuous Growth, and then reporting the results of the plan through our Annual Education Results Report (AERR). Through the AERR, school authorities demonstrate that they have collected, analyzed and evaluated key performance data arising from the implementation of their previous education plan and the actions taken to meet their responsibilities in each domain.

Both the Education Plan and the AERR are submitted to Alberta Education, and then Administration meets with a representative(s) of the Ministry to discuss the Division's success, challenges, and priorities.

Attached, please find the letter confirming completion of the Planning and Reporting cycle as mandated by the government.

Recommendation:

That based on the evidence provided in the ***Edmonton Catholic Separate School Division Assurance Completion Letter- April 2026***, the Board of Trustees determines that the following Quality Indicators have been met, as per ***Board Policy 12 - Appendix B***, relative to the current evaluation period:

- QI 8.5 Ensures the budget and three-year plan are developed according to a timeline which ensures the Board's ability to provide direction and revise priorities and are approved within Alberta Education deadlines.*
- QI 9.1 Ensures Division compliance with all Alberta Education and Board mandates.*

Attachment:

- Edmonton Catholic Separate School Division Assurance Completion Letter- April 2026

May 20, 2026

Lynnette Anderson, Superintendent
Edmonton Catholic Separate School Division
9405 50 Street NW
Edmonton, AB T6B 2T4

By email: lynnette.anderson@ecsd.net

Dear Lynnette Anderson:

Thank you for meeting to discuss both your Edmonton Catholic Separate School Division Education Plan submitted last May for the 2025-26 school year and the annual education results report (AERR) for the 2024-25 school year. I appreciated learning about your authority's accomplishments, challenges, and priorities for planning and reporting. I value opportunities to discuss your education plan and AERR documents and processes, learn how they support continuous improvement and provide assurance to your stakeholders.

The Assurance Cycle Completion Letter represents the completion of all requirements outlined in the Funding Manual for the Education Plan and the AERR both submitted in 2025.

Edmonton Catholic Separate School Division has completed the full cycle of planning and reporting as outlined in the Assurance Framework.

As a reminder, the Assurance Framework planning and reporting requirements are outlined in sections B, L and N of the new [2026-2027 Funding Manual](#). As well as offering feedback on any draft documents you prepare, Alberta Education can provide you and your staff with resources that support planning and reporting. These tools can be found in the System Assurance [Stakeholder File Exchange](#) on Education's extranet site and were prepared in response to common questions and comments from system leaders.

If I can be of further assistance in your planning or reporting process, particularly as you continue to develop your education plan for 2026-2027, please contact me at Shannon.campbell-requa@gov.ab.ca or 780-427-4309 (toll-free by first dialing 310-0000).

Sincerely,

Shannon Campbell
Field Services Consultant
Central Services

cc: Sandra Palazzo, Board Chair Edmonton Catholic Separate School Division
Connie Ohi, Director, Central Services
Corporate Records



Date: April 29, 2026
Time: 3:00 PM
Location: Public Board Room, Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre
9405 50 Street NW | Edmonton AB | T6B 2T4
Phone: 780-441-6004
Web: ecsd.net

1. Call to Order

1.1 **Board Chair Palazzo** called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.
Father Julian began the meeting with the Opening Prayer.

1.2 LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Trustee Fiorillo acknowledged that we are on the traditional land of Treaty 6 and homeland of the Métis. We also acknowledge the Inuit and other diverse Indigenous peoples whose ancestors have marked this territory for centuries, a place that has welcomed many peoples from around the world to make their home here.

We, at Edmonton Catholic Schools, commit to restoring and honouring the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action; we strongly believe that truth must be acknowledged to move forward to reconciliation. Together we call upon all our collective communities to build a stronger understanding of all peoples who dwell on this land we call home.

1.3 ROLL CALL

Sandra Palazzo, Board Chair
Lisa Turchansky, Vice-Chair
Leah Fiorillo
Kara Pelech
Debbie Engel
Alene Mutala
Laura Thibert

1.4 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Trustee Mutala moved that the agenda of the April 29, 2026 Public Meeting of the Board be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

1.4.1 Consent Items

The consent items and the recommendations therein were approved by the Board with the approval of the agenda

1.4.1.1

2026-2027 Division School Year and Year-Round School Year Calendar Update

The Board of Trustees received the revised 2026-2027 Division School Year Calendar and 2026-2027 Year-Round School Calendar for information purposes.

1.5 MINUTES

1.5.1 Minutes of the March 25, 2026 Regular Board Meeting

Trustee Thibert moved that the minutes of the March 25, 2026 Regular Public Meeting of the Board be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

1.5.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

1.6 APPOINTMENTS/DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATION

Excellence in Catholic Education Winners

1.6.1 Maria Diebolt

1.6.2 Liliana Kucy

1.6.3 Diane Lefebvre

The Board of Trustees recognized and celebrated the three Edmonton Catholic Schools' recipients of the 2026 Excellence in Catholic Education Award.

1.7 Stollery Recognition

The Board of Trustees acknowledged and celebrated Edmonton Catholic Schools' continued commitment to supporting the Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation through ongoing fundraising and community engagement initiatives.

2. Business of the Meeting

2.1 Three-Year Education Plan & Implementation Plan

Trustee Mutala moved that the Board of Trustees approves the **Edmonton Catholic Schools' Three-Year Education Plan 2026-2029**.

CARRIED

Trustee Mutala moved that based on the evidence provided in the **Edmonton Catholic Schools' Three-Year Education Plan 2026-2029 and Implementation Plan**, the Board determines that the following Quality Indicators have been met as per **Board Policy 12-Appendix B**, relative to the current evaluation period:

- QI 1.1 Ensures that all school leaders actively promote education in a Catholic context.
- QI 2.2 Identifies trends and issues related to student achievement to inform the Three-year Planning process, including recommendations for innovative means to improve measurable student achievement.
- QI 2.3 Ensures there is measurable improved student achievement over time.
- QI 8.1 Ensures the three-year planning process involves appropriate input and results in high satisfaction.
- QI 8.3 Develops short- and long-range plans to meet the needs of the Division and provide for continuous improvement.
- QI 8.4 Ensures key results identified by the Board are achieved.
- QI 8.5 Ensures the budget and three-year plan are developed according to a timeline which ensures the Board's ability to provide direction and revise priorities and is approved within Alberta Education deadlines.
- QI 9.1 Ensures Division compliance with all Alberta Education and Board mandates.
- QI 10.3 Ensures information is disseminated to inform appropriate publics.

CARRIED

3. Presentation and Review of Accountability Report(s)

3.1 Human Resources Report

Trustee Turchansky moved that based on the evidence provided in the **Human Resource Services Report**, the Board of Trustees determines that the following Quality Indicators (QI) have been met, as per **Board Policy 12 – Appendix B**, relative to the current evaluation period:

- QI 4.4 Ensures all collective agreements and contracts are being administered and interpreted so staff and contracted personnel are being paid appropriately and appropriate deductions are being made.
- QI 5.1 Develops and effectively implements quality recruitment, orientation, staff development, disciplinary, evaluation and supervisory processes.
- QI 5.2 Ensures that hiring and promotion practices support the Catholic aspect of our Division's mission.
- QI 5.4 Provides for training of administrators and the development of leadership capacity within the Division.
- QI 5.5 Ensures all staff have access to appropriate professional learning and/or training.
- QI 5.6 Implements requirements of Occupational Health and Safety legislation, including required staff professional development

CARRIED

3.2 Integrated Health and Well-being Framework Update – the Companion Guide

Trustee Turchansky moved that the Board of Trustees determines the following Quality Indicators have been met, as per **Board Policy 12 – Appendix B**, relative to the current evaluation period:

- QI 1.1 Ensures that all school leaders actively promote education in a Catholic context.
- QI 1.2 Provides staff with a program of activities which reinforces and forms personal faith development and professional growth in effectively teaching religious education programs.
- QI 3.1 Develops measurements and monitors progress relative to providing a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment.
- QI 3.2 Ensures that a continuum of supports and services are available to address the needs of students in their growth and achievement.
- QI 5.5 Ensures all staff have access to appropriate professional learning and/or training.
- QI 5.6 Implements requirements of Occupational Health and Safety legislation, including required staff professional development.

CARRIED

3.3 Facilities and Construction Projects Update

Trustee Engel moved that based on the evidence provided in the **Facility Services Construction Projects Update Report 2026**, the Board of Trustees determines that the following Quality Indicators have been met, as per **Board Policy 12 -Appendix B**, relative to the current evaluation period:

- QI 8.2 Ensures facility project budgets and construction schedules are followed or timely variance reports are provided to the Board.

CARRIED

3.4 **ECSD Annual Survey 2025-2026**

Trustee Turchansky moved that based on the evidence provided in the **ECSD Annual Survey Results Report 2025/2026**, the Board of Trustees determines that the following Quality Indicators have been met, as per **Board Policy 12 - Appendix B**, relative to the current evaluation period:

- QI 1.1 Ensures that all school leaders actively promote education in a Catholic context.
- QI 1.3 Ensures religious celebrations and social justice are organized by schools and departments.
- QI 2.1 Conducts an analysis of student success and ensures school principals develop action plans to address concerns.
- QI 2.4 Ensures the Division's academic and other provincially mandated Assurance results are published.
- QI 3.1 Develops measurements and monitors progress relative to providing a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment.
- QI 3.2 Ensures that a continuum of supports and services are available to address the needs of students in their growth and achievement.
- QI 8.1 Ensures the three-year planning process involves appropriate input and results in high satisfaction.
- QI 10.3 Ensures information is disseminated to inform appropriate publics.
- QI 10.5 Promotes positive public engagement in the Division.

CARRIED

4. New Business

4.1 **Notice of Motion: Change of Date of the May Public Board Meeting**

Trustee Turchansky placed the following Notice of Motion on the table:

That the Board of Trustees approve changing the date of our public board meeting, currently scheduled for Wednesday, May 27, to Tuesday, May 26.

CARRIED

5. Celebration of #ECSDfaithinspires:

5.1 **Board Chair Report**

The Board of Trustees acknowledged receipt of the **April 2026 Board Chair Report on #ECSDfaithinspires** for information purposes.

5.2 **Chief Superintendent Report**

The Board of Trustees acknowledged receipt of the **Chief Superintendent's Report on #ECSDfaithinspires - April 2026** for information purposes.

6. Adjournment

6.1 **Trustee Thibert** said the closing prayer.

6.2 **Trustee Turchansky** moved the meeting be adjourned at 6:39 PM.

CARRIED



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BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMO

May 26, 2026 Public Board Meeting **1.6**

Date: May 26, 2026

To: The Board of Trustees

From: Lynnette Anderson, Chief Superintendent

Originator: Christine Kennerd, Superintendent of Human Resource Services

Re: **Death of Matthew Blair Davidson**

We regret to inform the Board of the death of Matthew Blair Davidson, who passed away at home on April 27, 2026, at the age of 48.

Matthew faithfully lived his vocation in education after earning his degree, choosing to serve the students at St. Benedict Elementary School with Edmonton Catholic Schools beginning in 2014. He was much loved for the compassion, patience, and joy he brought to his classroom, and for the generosity of spirit he shared beyond it. Through his passion for leading and growing the Hockey Academy, Matthew nurtured confidence, teamwork, and belonging in countless young people.

Our St. Benedict Catholic Elementary School community is deeply saddened by the passing of Mr. Matt Davidson, a beloved Grade 6 teacher, Hockey Academy Director, mentor, colleague, and friend.

Matthew was also a devoted husband to his wife and best friend, Jane, and a deeply loving father to their son, Hyde. Father and son shared a close bond and were true companions, happiest in one another's company. Matthew took immense pride in Hyde's successful junior career and travelled whenever he could to watch and support him. His love for his family was unwavering, and he will be remembered as a devoted husband, proud father, and loyal friend.

Matthew will be greatly missed by multitudes of people from his school, the hockey world, and family, all of whom hold Matthew in their hearts with profound fondness and appreciation for his kindness, selflessness, and genuine decency.

Edmonton Catholic Schools extends sincere condolences to Matthew's family and friends. May his soul, and the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God rest in peace.

An expression of sympathy has been sent by the Administration to his family on behalf of the Board.



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BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMO

May 26, 2026 Public Board Meeting **1.7.1**

Date: May 26, 2026

To: Board of Trustees

From: Lynnette Anderson, Chief Superintendent

Re: **ATA Council for School Leadership Distinguished Leadership Awards**

Background:

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) Council for School Leadership (CSL) Distinguished Leadership Award program annually recognizes outstanding principals, assistant principals, and school jurisdiction leaders who have succeeded in providing high-quality learning opportunities for students. The awards:

- Recognize outstanding Alberta school leaders
- Honour creative, innovative and effective leadership
- Focus public attention on excellence in school leadership and celebrate leadership excellence.

These principals, assistant principals, and central office leaders are acknowledged by their peers for the exemplary contributions they have made to the profession. The selection criteria reflect the Leadership Quality Standard Competencies as outlined in the Alberta Leadership Quality Standard.

I am pleased to share that the following Principals have received the ATA CSL Distinguished Leadership Award for the 2025-2026 school year:

Azza Ghali: Azza Ghali, who serves as Principal of St. John XXIII Catholic Elementary/Junior High School, is an exceptional educational leader whose work is defined by integrity, compassion, and unwavering commitment to student success. She leads with a clear moral purpose, consistently placing relationships at the heart of her practice. Her ability to listen deeply, respond thoughtfully, and bring people together around a shared vision has earned her deep respect from students, staff, and families alike.

A hallmark of Azza's leadership is her dedication to developing others. She is a skilled mentor and coach who intentionally builds leadership capacity in her staff by empowering them to take initiative, make informed decisions, and grow in confidence. Teachers under her guidance feel trusted, supported, and inspired to pursue excellence, resulting in strong instructional practices and a collaborative professional culture that directly benefits student learning.

Through her visionary leadership, strong relationships, and dedication to empowering others, Azza Ghali exemplifies the very best of educational leadership and continues to make a lasting, positive impact on her entire school community.

Maria-Julieta Zelada: Maria-Julieta Zelada is the Principal at Holy Family Catholic Elementary/ Junior High School in Edmonton, Alberta. She held various teaching and administrative roles in Edmonton Catholic Schools and worked in language programming as she is multilingual, speaking French, English, and Spanish. Julieta is a dedicated administrator who supports staff and encourages students to be the best version of themselves. Julieta prioritizes staff wellness and creates opportunities for staff to connect, learn, and grow together. She creates an atmosphere where staff feel supported and empowered to make their own choices. Julieta fosters a community of kind and respectful learners who are celebrated for their unique individual contributions to the school and greater community. In an effort to nurture this, Julieta implemented the “Caught You Being Kind” campaign. Staff and students can be recognized for random acts of kindness, and these acts of kindness are read on the announcements for all to hear. This has been a big point of pride for her students and highlights the school's values of kindness and respect.

Recommendation:

That the Board of Trustees recognizes and celebrates Azza Ghali and Maria-Julieta Zelada for receiving the Alberta Teachers’ Association Council for School Leadership Distinguished Leadership Award.





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BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMO

May 26, 2026 Public Board Meeting **2.1**

Date: May 26, 2026

To: Board of Trustees

From: Lynnette Anderson, Chief Superintendent

Originator: Susan Makale, Executive Director

Re: **Student Voice 2025-2026**

Background:

Edmonton Catholic Schools has a long history of providing opportunities for student engagement to inform the work of the Division. Our Student Voice Team is comprised of two students from each high school and assists the Board and Administration by providing a student perspective to improving the quality of education in the Division within the framework of the Division Plan for Continuous Growth.

Our Student Voice Team met four times this year, and the matters that were discussed were of significance to our Division. The topics included:

- Helping us to understand the impacts of the labour disruption on their learning and well-being
- Providing student perspective on what the priorities for the ECSD Three-Year Education Plan 2026-2029 might be
- Sharing their experiences of class size and complexity
- Advising our Human Resource Recruitment Team on their project to keep our graduates who are going into post-secondary studies in Education connected with the Division
- Supporting our Creating Communities of Belonging Team in making connections between Catholic Social Teaching and the social justice projects in schools
- Reviewing the draft Three-year Education Plan Goals and Priorities and providing examples of what they might look like in schools
- Assessing the efficacy and relevance of our Team norms
- Defining joy in faith, learning, and school life, and
- Giving advice to their junior high selves.

The Student Voice team requires great commitment, maturity, and collaboration from each member to function properly. Our members are to be commended for demonstrating these attributes on an ongoing basis and for representing the voice of their peers effectively, responsibly, and thoughtfully.

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of Saivien Cartagena, Lynshane Castro, Jacob Dewling, Nevaeh Bartman, Lydia Ball, Alvin Onyedika, Dwayne Peralta, Stefanie Catajan, Nikita Antony, Asia Luna, Anna Bourque, Lilly Callihoo, Lilian Scherf, Maddy Magleo, Abbey DeRose, Nathan Belous, Callie Geislinger, Oceana Vinayagosothy, Jerome Alday, Swayne Caringal, Olivia Abhilash, Katie Rix, Victoria Lytvynka, and Osarieme Omorodion.

A letter of commendation will be sent to each member of Student Voice. We would like to thank the graduating members of this group for their service to Edmonton Catholic Schools, and we look forward to meeting with this group again in the 2026-2027 school year.

Recommendation:

That the Board of Trustees acknowledges receipt of the report **Student Voice 2025-2026** for information purposes.





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BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMO

May 26, 2026 Public Board Meeting **2.2**

Date: May 26, 2026

To: Board of Trustees

From: Lynnette Anderson, Chief Superintendent

Originator: John Fiacco, Superintendent of Educational Planning

Resource Staff: Kris Salerno, Manager, Transportation Services

Re: **2026-2027 Student Transportation Fee Schedule**

Background:

According to Board Policy 16, Student Transportation Services: Student Transportation Services shall be provided with due regard for safety, fiscal responsibility, ride times, and client satisfaction.

Student Transportation is funded by provincial transportation grants and student transportation fees. These funds support school divisions in providing transportation for eligible students. However, they do not cover all transportation costs. In the 2025-2026 school year, provincial funding accounts for approximately 74% of total revenue, while transportation fees make up 26%.

Edmonton Catholic Schools charges transportation fees to all students who use Edmonton Transit Services (ETS) or regular yellow bus services.

Consistent with many Alberta school jurisdictions, Edmonton Catholic Schools is experiencing enrollment growth. The demand for yellow bus services has increased by 18% over the last five school years. To meet demand and minimize student ride times, the Division has increased the number of yellow bus routes by 20% over the last five school years. Average one-way ride time remains at approximately 21 minutes.

While demand for yellow busing has increased, so have transportation costs through our contracted carriers. Transportation costs have increased by 52% over the last five school years, driven by higher carrier daily rates for yellow busing and the addition of yellow bus routes to meet growing demand.

To meet the needs of our families, Transportation Services staff continually implement changes to improve transportation efficiency, reduce ride times, and mitigate the need for cross-subsidization. Additionally, the Division continues to share routes with EPSB where possible. Despite ongoing efforts to ensure the Division provides safe and equitable transportation while remaining fiscally responsible, the Division has historically experienced a deficit in Transportation Services, requiring cross-subsidization of funding intended for the classroom.

The combination of enrollment growth, ridership demand, funding changes, and carrier costs has created an operational deficit within Transportation Services for the 2025-2026 school year, leading to cross-subsidization of classroom funding. Despite increased transportation funding for the 2026-2027 school year, the Division must raise Student Transportation Fees to minimize cross-subsidization of classroom funding.

2026-2027 Student Transportation Fees:

Transportation Service	Monthly Fee	
	2025-2026	2026-2027
Kindergarten to Grade 12 students taking Edmonton Transit Services	\$60	\$60
Kindergarten to Grade 12 students taking the yellow bus	\$50	\$70
Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 students who access inclusive curb services	\$0	\$0

Recommendation:

That the Board of Trustees acknowledges receipt of the **2026-2027 Student Transportation Fee Schedule** for information purposes.

Attachment:

- 2026-2027 Student Transportation Fee Schedule





EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

**Student Transportation Fee Schedule
 2026-2027 School Year**

Transportation Service	Monthly Fee
Kindergarten to Grade 12 students taking Edmonton Transit Service	\$60
Kindergarten to Grade 12 students taking the yellow bus	\$70
Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 students who access inclusive curb services	\$0

Replacement Cost (lost or stolen)	Fee
ETS Arc Card	\$6

Do you need help with fees?: Talk to your child's school to see if your family is eligible for a fee reduction or other payment options.

Who is eligible for Yellow Bus Service?: Eligibility for yellow bus service is determined by where a student lives. Find your designated school by entering your home address into the [Locate a School](#) tool. Students attending their designated school may be eligible for yellow bus service if they are:

- Kindergarten to Grade 6 students who live at least **1.6 km** from their designated school.
- Grades 7 to 12 students who live at least **2 km** from their designated school.

Contact **Transportation Services** at **780-441-6078** or speak with your school for more information.



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9405 50 Street NW | Edmonton, AB T6B 2T4 | T: 780-441-6000

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMO

May 26, 2026 Public Board Meeting **3.1**

Date: May 26, 2026

To: The Board of Trustees

From: Lynnette Anderson, Chief Superintendent

Originator: Terri Peterson, Superintendent of Learning Services

Resource Staff: Claudia Pederson, Manager, Creating Communities of Belonging
Sandra Talarico, Manager, Religious Education Services
Santo Saporito, Director, Student Services

Re: **Creating Communities of Belonging Report**

Background:

Rooted in Catholic Social Teaching and the Gospel call to uphold the dignity of every child of God, the Creating Communities of Belonging Strategic Plan affirms belonging as a faith imperative rather than a social aspiration. Implementation follows a site-based stewardship model that honours the unique context of schools and departments while advancing shared system priorities.

The Creating Communities of Belonging Report summarizes Division-level actions undertaken during the first year of the strategic plan implementation and reflects how belonging is being intentionally cultivated through relationship, representation, and participation.

Year One implementation centered on three strategic priorities:

1. Belonging and Inclusion – Strengthening relational practices that foster student voice, emotional safety, and authentic participation
2. Building Competence in Diversity – Developing staff capacity to respond to cultural, linguistic, neurodiverse, and Indigenous ways of knowing and being
3. Education and Awareness – Integrating equitable and inclusive practices within Catholic teaching, learning, and formation

Recommendation:

That based on the evidence provided in the **Creating Communities of Belonging Report**, the Board of Trustees determines that the following Quality Indicators have been met, as per **Board Policy 12 -Appendix B**, relative to the current evaluation period.

- QI 1.1 Ensures that all school leaders actively promote education in a Catholic context.*
- QI 3.1 Develops measurements and monitors progress relative to providing a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment*
- QI 10.1 Ensures supports and services are in place to facilitate effective home-school communications.*
- QI 10.2 Ensures supports and services are in place to manage conflict effectively Promotes positive public engagement in the Division.*

Attachments:

- Creating Communities of Belonging Report 2026





CREATING COMMUNITIES OF BELONGING



Edmonton Catholic Schools | Embracing Diversity Report 2026

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Creating Communities of Belonging	6
Cross-Priority Support: Relational Stewardship and Accompaniment	6
Priority-Level Support	9
Year One Implementation Highlights	11
Priority 1: Belonging and Inclusion	11
Priority 2: Building Competence in Diversity	21
Priority 3: Education and Awareness	26
Looking Forward	34



Introduction

Edmonton Catholic Schools is committed to ensuring that its mission to provide a Catholic education in a faith filled, Christ centered learning environment is inclusive of every child of God. Rooted in Catholic Social Teaching, the *Creating Communities of Belonging: Advancing Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti Racism Strategic Plan (2025–2028)* reflects our call to uphold the inherent dignity of every human person and to build communities grounded in justice, compassion, and right relationship.

Shaped by engagement with students, families, and staff across the Division, the *Creating Communities of Belonging: Advancing Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti Racism Strategic Plan (2025–2028)* recognizes that belonging is formed through intentional practice over time. Implementation follows a site based stewardship model, honouring the unique contexts of schools and departments while advancing shared priorities across the system.

This Embracing Diversity Report highlights Division-level actions undertaken during the implementation year of the *Creating Communities of Belonging Strategic Plan*. The three priorities on the following pages outline the shared focus and key strategies guiding this work.

Priority 1: Belonging and Inclusion

Belonging and Inclusion is grounded in the Gospel call to love one another as Christ loves us, recognizing belonging as a faith imperative rather than a social aspiration. By fostering cultures of respect, acceptance, and care rooted in Catholic values, Edmonton Catholic Schools seeks to create optimal learning environments that enhance student engagement and well being. This includes intentionally centering the voices and experiences of students with specialized learning, communication, and accessibility needs, ensuring that belonging is experienced through authentic participation, representation, and relationship—not merely accommodation.

This priority focuses on helping students and staff understand and celebrate their uniqueness as children of God, building interpersonal and intercultural skills guided by charity, respect, and mercy, and ensuring that learning resources reflect the diversity of our students, families, and staff through consistent use of established provincial and Division tools.

Priority 2: Building Competence in Diversity

Building competence in diversity reflects the Catholic understanding that the Body of Christ is made up of many unique and valued members, each called to contribute to a just and compassionate community. This priority focuses on developing the awareness, knowledge, and self reflection needed for students and staff to recognize how their actions shape learning environments that are free from discrimination and bias. Developing this competence includes learning to recognize and honour diverse ways students express voice, identity, and belonging, particularly for students with disabilities or specialized learning needs, immigrant students, and racialized students, whose voices, identities, and contributions may be expressed or communicated in diverse ways.

Educating students and staff about the diverse cultural and spiritual dimensions of our community builds awareness and appreciation for the richness of our shared experiences. Through curated resources, meaningful learning opportunities, and intentional dialogue, this work supports deeper understanding while aligning inclusion, equity and anti racism efforts with the Catholic commitment to human dignity, justice, and mercy.



Priority 3: Education and Awareness

Education and Awareness focuses on intentionally integrating Catholic Social Teaching and principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti racism into teaching, learning, and formation across the Division.

Catholic education is called to nurture the mind, heart, and soul by weaving faith principles such as solidarity, justice, and care for the vulnerable into all areas of learning.

Learning experiences, curriculum resources, and faith formation are intentionally shaped to reflect diverse abilities, identities, and ways of being to support representation, dignity, and belonging.

This work is advanced through:

- explicit connections within Religious Education
- authentic permeation of faith across subject areas
- collaborative learning through Communities of Practice
- ongoing professional learning that deepens understanding of Catholic Social Teaching, human rights, and responsive approaches to racism and discrimination



Creating Communities of Belonging

Cross-Priority Support: Relational Stewardship and Accompaniment

Across all three priorities, the Creating Communities of Belonging department supports schools and departments through ongoing relational stewardship and accompaniment. This work includes supporting conversations and collaborative problem solving with students, parents, staff, and administrators to strengthen relationships and build trust within school communities. Creating Communities of Belonging supports schools in their strategic work by working alongside school leaders and staff to support their school growth plan goals related to the division Embracing Diversity goal. Rather than prescriptive solutions, the team emphasizes listening, dialogue, and restorative approaches that honour the dignity of all involved. Through this cross priority support, Creating Communities of Belonging reinforces that sustainable change is built through relationship, reflection, and shared responsibility grounded in Catholic Social Teaching and the call to walk together as a faith community.

The table below illustrates the key areas of support through which Creating Communities of Belonging works alongside schools, including associated staff professional learning and student learning experiences.

Areas of Support	Staff Professional Learning Offered	Student Classroom Presentations / Learning Experiences Offered (classroom, grade level, and large group)
Culturally Responsive Teaching & Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT)- School and Classroom Practices • Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) and Social Identity • Integration of CRT into instructional planning • CRT and proactive circles combined learning sessions 	
Belonging & Community-Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restorative Practices-Proactive Circles (introductory and advanced) • Proactive circle structures for curricular classroom instruction • Proactive Circles for building relational classroom culture • Wellness-focused circle strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive circles focused on belonging and community • Classroom-based community-building activities
Addressing Harmful Language & Bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to harmful and derogatory language • Restorative and faith-aligned responses to bias and harm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Words That Hurt” presentations • Proactive circles addressing harmful language and exclusion • Supporting small-group restorative circles following incidents
Restorative & Relational Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for Restorative Practices for Educators • Modelling of restorative and proactive circles for teachers • Follow-up coaching and observation to support implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restorative circles to repair harm • Relationship-focused follow up sessions with students • Circles supporting reintegration and reconciliation
Student Voice, Leadership & Social Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for facilitating equity-focused student groups • Ongoing coaching and Communities of Practice for staff leads • Guidance on purpose, structure, and Catholic context for groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be an Upstander (BAU) program presentations • Project-based learning connected to social justice • Student gallery walks and sharing of learning • Black Student Alliance (BSA) sessions and gatherings

To support this relational, cross priority work at a system level, Creating Communities of Belonging is guided by two complementary structures: the Strategic Plan Implementation Committee and the Advisory Group. Together, these committees ensure that the Strategic Plan is informed by lived experience while also translated into coordinated Division level action. While the Advisory Group creates space to listen deeply to the voices of staff across the Division, the Implementation Committee uses these insights to guide planning, decision making, and communication. This intentional structure reflects a commitment to accompaniment—honouring voice, fostering shared responsibility, and supporting meaningful, sustainable change grounded in Catholic Social Teaching.

Creating Communities of Belonging		
	Implementation Committee	Advisory Group
Primary Role	Guides Division-level implementation of the Strategic Plan	Provides staff voice and lived experience
Focus	Action, implementation, alignment with Catholic worldview	Listening, learning, informing decisions
Membership	Managers, Directors, Principals, Assistant Principals	Staff from across the Division
Meetings	4 meetings per school year	4 meetings per school year
Primary Output	Division-level actions, supports, and communication	Insights and perspectives to inform planning



The Creating Communities of Belonging department supports education and awareness across the Division through ongoing, intentional communication and resourcing. One key mechanism for this work is the Division’s Staff Week at a Glance (SWAG), which is used to regularly share timely information, learning opportunities, resources, and reminders connected to equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, and belonging. This includes highlighting and supporting ECSD-recognized dates of recognition and dates of awareness throughout the school year to help staff plan, learn, and engage in meaningful, age-appropriate learning and community-building activities.

Through SWAG postings, staff are informed about professional learning opportunities, community-of-practice gatherings, and tools that support safe, welcoming, and faith-filled learning environments aligned with Division priorities and the Creating Communities of Belonging Strategic Plan.

In addition to system-wide awareness, the department provides targeted support to schools in the implementation and sustainability of student voice and belonging initiatives. This includes guidance, resources, and professional learning to support GSA/LIFE Groups, Black Student Alliances, equity-focused student groups, and the Be an Upstander program. Through direct communication, community-of-practice sessions, and ongoing consultation, staff are supported in understanding purpose, Church teachings, best practices, and practical considerations for facilitating these groups in ways that honour dignity, foster relationship, and promote inclusion within a Catholic context.

The department also supports schools by promoting and resourcing school-level learning and activities connected to multicultural and culture days, as well as key heritage and awareness months such as Black History Month, Asian Heritage Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, and International Women's Day. Through shared resources, curated learning ideas, and awareness raised through divisional communication channels, schools are encouraged to engage students in age-appropriate, curriculum-connected learning that honours diverse identities, histories, and contributions while aligning with Catholic Social Teaching. This coordinated approach supports schools in creating opportunities that move beyond celebration alone toward learning that deepens understanding, empathy, and a sense of belonging for all members of the school community



Priority-Level Support

Priority 1: Belonging and Inclusion

Under Priority 1, Creating Communities of Belonging provided division-wide leadership and direct support focused on strengthening relationships and ensuring belonging is experienced through dignity, voice, and connection. The team delivered professional development and student learning sessions in restorative practices, proactive circles, and community-building strategies division wide. These sessions supported students and staff in developing shared norms, strengthening peer relationships, and creating emotionally safe learning environments rooted in respect and care. In addition, the team regularly supported facilitated conversations to restore relationships and address concerns impacting belonging, working alongside students, parents, staff, and administrators to navigate moments of harm, tension, or exclusion in ways that preserve dignity and promote reconciliation.

Priority 2: Building Competence in Diversity

Creating Communities of Belonging advanced Priority 2 by delivering targeted professional learning to build staff competence in culturally responsive teaching, addressing harmful language, and engaging thoughtfully with diversity and identity. These learning sessions supported educators and staff in recognizing bias, responding to harmful or exclusionary language, and fostering classrooms and workplaces where difference is respected and valued. As an example, the Creating Communities of Belonging team collaborated with Indigenous Learning Services to provide identity mapping and multicultural learning sessions for One World One Centre staff, deepening understanding of lived experience, culture, and community context. Through these and other collaborative professional learning opportunities, staff were supported to develop greater confidence and consistency in using inclusive, restorative, and faith aligned approaches when engaging with diversity across school communities.

Priority 2 was further advanced through collaboration with Learning Services to deliver curriculum based professional learning focused on culturally responsive teaching, including the use of proactive circles and inclusive, diverse classroom texts. These sessions supported staff in connecting equity and inclusion to daily instructional practice, emphasizing the role of relationship, representation, and dialogue in supporting student engagement and learning.

In addition, the *Culturally Responsive Classrooms and Identity* professional learning delivered to Educational Assistants strengthened staff understanding of how culture, identity, and lived experience influence student learning, engagement, and behaviour. Through explicit connections to neuroscience, participants examined how safety, relevance, and belonging are prerequisites for learning and reflected on how assumptions and cultural reference points shape interactions with students. Interactive activities supported staff in mapping their own identities and recognizing how culturally responsive practices—such as predictable routines, inclusive visuals, and representative learning materials—support student belonging, engagement, and well being. As a result, staff increased their capacity to create environments where diverse identities are recognized, neurodiverse learners are supported, and students feel safe, valued, and able to engage meaningfully in learning.

Priority 3: Education and Awareness

Under Priority 3, Creating Communities of Belonging played a key role in strengthening education and awareness by supporting staff to understand equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism as integral to Catholic education. The team worked collaboratively with Religious Education Services to create resources that explicitly connect Catholic Social Teaching to equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism, reinforcing the alignment between Gospel values and inclusive practice. These resources and learning experiences supported educators in recognizing that commitments to dignity, justice, solidarity, and care for the vulnerable are central to Catholic identity and authentically expressed through teaching, learning, and relationship.

As part of advancing education and awareness at the system level, Creating Communities of Belonging also led initiatives to strengthen shared understanding and identity across the Division. This included the development of a new video to launch the department's name, Creating Communities of Belonging, supporting staff and communities in understanding the purpose, faith grounding, and vision of the work. Through collaboration with Communications and other departments, the team supported consistent and accessible messaging that reinforced belonging as a shared responsibility across curriculum, culture, leadership, and relationships.

Year One Implementation Highlights

Priority 1: Belonging and Inclusion

During the first year of implementation, Division-level actions focused on strengthening relational practices and creating inclusive conditions where belonging could be experienced in tangible and meaningful ways. Across departments, this work emphasized student voice, restorative approaches, peer connection, and culturally responsive supports that reflect the dignity of each person as a child of God. The following examples highlight how Priority 1 was advanced through intentional actions undertaken across the Division during the past year.



Learning Services

One World...One Centre

One World...One Centre plays a key role in supporting belonging and inclusion by welcoming and supporting families as they begin their journey in Edmonton Catholic Schools. Serving as more than a registration site, One World...One Centre acts as a bridge between home, school, and community, ensuring that families' first experiences with the Division are welcoming, respectful, and supportive. Through this work, inclusive environments are fostered, intercultural understanding and relationships are strengthened, and family voice and engagement are centred as essential to student success.



This commitment is evident through responsive entry and settlement supports, including year round registration and orientation sessions, on site English Language Proficiency Assessments for students, and guidance to help families navigate school systems and community services. Intercultural Liaison staff provide support in families' first languages, helping to reduce barriers, build understanding, and establish early connections. As a result, families feel confident, supported, and connected from their first point of contact with the Division.

Relational practices further support trust based partnerships between families and schools. Restorative conversations and ongoing accompaniment help families navigate cultural differences, transitions, and moments of uncertainty, contributing to stronger relationships and shared responsibility for student well being. Opportunities to celebrate identity and culture, including participation in multicultural events, student and family storytelling around faith and lived experience, and classroom connections to global perspectives, support students in seeing themselves reflected and valued in their learning environments.

Family engagement was further strengthened through initiatives such as the September Parent Information Evening, which brought together over 250 families. The evening provided opportunities for families to learn about school expectations and supports, explore topics such as parenting in two cultures, access resources that promote student success and well being, and build connections with staff, other families, and community organizations that support settlement into Canada. Through these efforts, families are empowered as active partners in their children's education.

In addition to direct family support, One World...One Centre contributes to system capacity by delivering cultural learning for staff and students, collaborating with schools to embed inclusive and culturally responsive practices, deepening intercultural understanding across school communities, and supporting system wide initiatives such as the ECSD Networking Event. Together, this work strengthens the Division's ability to respond effectively to the diverse needs of students and families and reinforces belonging as a lived experience from the very first step into Edmonton Catholic Schools.

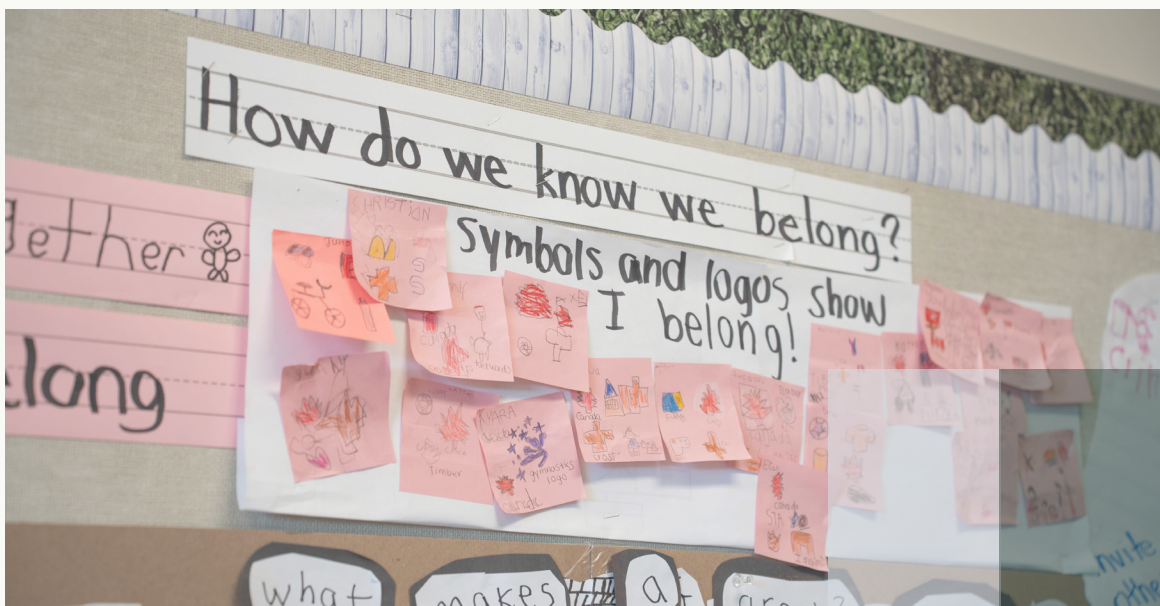


Behavioural Therapy Team

The Behavioural Therapy Team supports diversity and inclusion by intentionally creating spaces where all students feel seen, valued, and safe to be themselves. Through classroom lessons, circles, and visual displays, the team helps students understand that belonging does not require changing who they are. Activities such as community-building lessons on identity and belonging, restorative conversations around difficult topics, and strengths-based reflections reinforce that every student's voice and lived experience matters. These approaches support neurodiversity-affirming practice, emotional safety, and positive identity development for students with diverse learning needs, cultural backgrounds, and personal experiences.

The team also actively supports equity and anti-racism through relational and preventative work. Examples include facilitating restorative circles around racial justice and lived experiences, supporting classroom conversations during Black History Month, and collaborating with staff and students to address harm, discomfort, or exclusion when it arises. By centering student voice, listening deeply, and guiding respectful dialogue, the team helps build understanding, empathy, and accountability. This work strengthens relationships between students and trusted adults, models restorative practice, and supports long-term changes in attitudes and behaviour.

In addition, the Behavioural Therapy Team contributes to inclusive school cultures through universal supports that are accessible to all students. Visual supports, problem-solving boards, and mental-health-affirming displays help normalize emotions, teach respectful communication, and provide consistent strategies for managing conflict and stress. School-wide activities connected to Truth and Reconciliation, kindness, faith, and community values encourage reflection and shared responsibility, while honoring diverse cultural, spiritual, and personal identities. Together, this work helps create welcoming, caring, and inclusive learning environments where every student can belong and thrive.



Speech-Language Pathology

This year, the Speech-Language Pathology team partnered with school administrators and classroom teachers at five sites to implement a Peer Support Network Project. The project creates structured peer groups where students learn about neurodiversity and are supported to communicate, play, and learn with their autistic classmates, creating a sense of belonging that is built through relationships rather than programs. By equipping peers to be responsive communication partners and valuing diverse ways of communicating, including Augmentative and Alternative Communication systems, the project reinforces ECSD's commitment to inclusive communities where every student is recognized as a capable, contributing member. Grounded in inclusive and neuro-affirming practice, the project shifts support from adult led assistance to peer to peer relationships, fostering authentic friendships and shared participation for autistic students and their classmates. This project advances the priority of *Belonging and Inclusion* by intentionally creating school environments where students experience meaningful connection, mutual respect, and full participation in community life. In doing so, the Peer Support Network Project strengthens school cultures that reflect dignity, inclusion, and belonging for all learners



Early Learning

Within early learning classrooms, the Studio is the classroom learning environment where meaningful, play based experiences are shaped by children’s curiosity, co created projects and interest based centres, community building through social emotional learning, and authentic problem solving and risk taking. Learning is constructed collaboratively with peers and adults through hands on experiences that honour each individual as a capable contributor to an inclusive and shared community.

Studio practices follow the philosophies of *Flight: The Alberta Early Learning and Care Framework*, which positions early childhood communities as “places of vitality” where children are seen as agentic learners offering diverse perspectives shaped by their families, neighbourhoods, and provincial communities (Makovichuk et al.). By nurturing self efficacy and honouring each child’s voice, educators create play rich opportunities that help children construct meaningful understandings of the world around them.

Social and emotional learning is infused throughout Studio routines and transitions. Guided by the CASEL framework, educators support the development of self awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible citizenship. These competencies inform programming that encourages children to navigate their learning spaces, collaborate with peers, make connections through hands on exploration, and develop a strong sense of belonging within the Studio community.

In the Studio, nurturing a sense of belonging reflects our call to honour the dignity and gifts of every child. When children feel valued, respected, and included, they experience the kind of shared community that allows them to learn with confidence and compassion. In this way, our work fosters a learning environment rooted in love, respect, and the belief that each child contributes something essential.



Natural Connections Community of Practice

In Year 1 of our Natural Connections Community of Practice (COP), the Elementary Curriculum team partnered closely with Indigenous Learning Services to bring Indigenous Education and land-based learning to life across English Language Arts and Literature (ELAL), Science, and Physical Education and Wellness (PEW). Beginning with a Division I (K–3) cohort, this work was intentionally designed to build teacher confidence and capacity in authentically integrating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives through cross-curricular, land-based experiences. Grounded in relationship, curiosity, and holistic learning, the COP model created space for educators to learn alongside one another, both outdoors and in collaborative dialogue, shifting from “teaching in nature” to “learning with the land.”

Impact was evident in both teacher practice and mindset. Many educators initially expressed hesitation in approaching Indigenous content, unsure of how to engage respectfully and meaningfully. Through ongoing support, co-learning, and guidance from Indigenous Learning Services, teachers began to reframe this work, not as needing to have all the answers, but as a journey rooted in humility, curiosity, and relationship. This shift has been transformative, deepening understanding of Indigenous worldviews and strengthening a sense of shared responsibility to embed these perspectives in classrooms. The success of this first year has led to strong demand for continuation, with expansion planned for Grades 4–6 in the coming year, further growing a community of educators committed to creating spaces of belonging through land-based, Indigenous-informed learning.

ECSD Reads

The ECSD Reads event provided students with opportunities to engage with diverse authors, characters and perspectives. Book selection was informed through consultation with Indigenous Learning Services.

Keynote speaker Ariel Kleber spoke to students about the development of the Edmonton Public Library’s *African and Caribbean Canadian Books in Colour* resource, further supporting representation and dialogue.



Student Services

Indigenous Learning Services

Indigenous Learning Services (ILS) continues to take proactive approaches to support the integration of equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism within our Catholic school division through an Indigenous lens.

- Informal training for leaders and staff on how to facilitate meaningful conversations with Indigenous parents and students about lived experience, sense of belonging, and connection to the school community remains essential to advancing equity and inclusion across the Division.
- Departments also collaborate in sharing resources. For example, ILS's new Four Directions Wellness Specialist professional development session, "Dismantling Antiracism," addresses systemic racism experienced by Indigenous peoples and includes a Power Mapping self reflection activity. Upon request to share, this same activity was used with the Creating Communities of Belonging Advisory Committee to help staff reflect on how their actions contribute to building a school community free from discrimination and bias, and to support dialogue that strengthens anti racism and equity efforts.

Indigenous Education Consultants

Indigenous Education Consultants advanced Priority 1 by ensuring accurate, strengths-based, and representative Indigenous resources and by strengthening relationships that support belonging.

Collaboration with Learning Services expanded into co-selected texts, co-created lessons, and shared curriculum work, with relationship identified as the most significant outcome of this partnership. Joint work with the Grade 3 Social Studies Elementary Consultant resulted in Curriculum Crates, including Treaty Flags and Medallion Posters and a Treaty Medallion 3D file.

Consultants also partnered with the Junior High Social Studies team to support the Grades 7-9 curriculum using Inquiry Quest planning, embedding Indigenous perspectives in accurate and meaningful ways. In schools, Indigenous Education Consultants facilitated Gathering Circles and supported the indigenization of physical spaces by assisting with Treaty flags, land acknowledgements, and other Indigenous symbols, ensuring visible affirmation of Indigenous presence, identity, and belonging.

"While the curriculum impact is visible, the most meaningful outcome has been the relationship itself: one built on trust, respect, and a shared commitment to honouring Indigenous ways of knowing."

- Elementary Curriculum Consultant

Braided Journeys Student Support Centres

Braided Journeys Student Support Centres are committed to assisting student success by cultivating a caring, welcoming, and positive place where Indigenous students see themselves, their contributions, and their culture represented, respected, and celebrated.

The Braided Journeys staff provide individual and group programs to increase school engagement, cultivate a sense of belonging, build mastery, share generosity, and encourage independence. Students can gather to study, pray, learn, create, and support one another in a culturally safe space. The success of the Braided Journeys program in promoting and establishing student groups, programming, and spaces that celebrate identity, and advance equity has led ILS to expand its support into non-Braided Journeys schools.



Evidence of Impact

Across the Division, Year One implementation actions of Priority 1 resulted in:

- Increased peer-based and relationship-centred supports that strengthened student belonging, voice, and participation
- Expanded use of restorative and strengths-based practices, contributing to improved emotional safety and relational trust
- Increased attention to emotional safety and inclusion for students with diverse learning, social-emotional, cultural, and communication needs
- Stronger peer relationships and reduced reliance on adult-mediated support
- Increased visibility and normalization of diverse identities across learning environments
- Greater engagement and retention of students facing barriers to traditional schooling
- Strengthened Indigenous student belonging and cultural affirmation
- Improved coordination of student and family supports through multidisciplinary collaboration
- Early entry and settlement supports that strengthened family confidence and connection
- Increased family engagement and stronger family-school partnerships
- Enhanced staff capacity to support diverse learners and families through cultural learning and collaboration
- Collaborated with schools to embed inclusive practices and perspectives
- Strengthened culturally responsive practices across school communities
- Deepened intercultural understanding across schools

Priority 2: Building Competence in Diversity

During the first year of implementation, division-level actions supporting Priority 2 focused on building knowledge, reflection, and professional capacity to engage thoughtfully with diversity, equity, and anti-racism. Across departments, this work emphasized deepening understanding of cultural and spiritual diversity, strengthening self-awareness, and creating space for dialogue that supports learning environments free from discrimination and bias. The following examples highlight how departments advanced Priority 2 through targeted professional learning, collaborative partnerships, and intentional resource development across the Division during the past year.



Learning Services

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

The English as an Additional language consultants have focused on ensuring that curriculum is accessible to EAL learners at a variety of proficiency levels while maintaining the rigour and integrity of grade level expectations. Our work with teachers is intentionally asset based, leveraging students' funds of knowledge and backgrounds to anchor instruction in what learners already know and can do. When modeling lessons, we select culturally responsive texts and embed essential UDL supports so that every student has a meaningful access point to the curriculum. Through this approach equity is at the core, ensuring learning experiences are responsive, inclusive, and aligned with the strengths students bring to the classroom. Additionally, we have strengthened our own competence in Social Emotional Learning, integrating SEL practices into lessons to cultivate belonging, connection, and community across classrooms.



French Immersion

The Intercultural Community of Practice was developed to support immigrant and internationally trained teachers, specifically in French Immersion, as they navigate the professional, cultural, and pedagogical realities of the Canadian school system. The Community of Practice provides a structured space for reflection, dialogue, and shared learning, with a strong focus on relationship building with students, families, colleagues, and school administration. Through collaborative discussion guided by a consultant and with teachers with lived experience, participants explore culturally responsive practices, differences in educational systems, and the relational competencies required for success in Alberta classrooms. This work contributes to teacher wellbeing, professional integration, and ultimately to more inclusive and supportive learning environments for students. The work further contributes to the retention of teachers within the FI setting.

Student Services

Culturally Responsive Indigenous Supports

When Indigenous-focused requests are brought forward through Creating Communities of Belonging, Indigenous Learning Services carefully reviews the scope, purpose, and desired outcomes of each request. The team assesses needs based on their collective expertise and determine how best to respond.

Support may include:

- guiding staff in navigating complex conversations with Indigenous students and families
- facilitating restorative circles or culturally grounded interventions
- designing professional learning at the school or Division-level

Because each school is at a different stage of awareness and dialogue regarding discrimination and bias connected to anti racism and equity for Indigenous students, so responses are adapted accordingly.

Indigenous Education Consultants

To advance Priority 2 at a system level, Division-wide professional learning focuses on developing shared understanding, strengthening educator capacity, and addressing systemic barriers that impact Indigenous student success. These collective learning opportunities support consistent, informed practice across roles and departments. Recent examples include:

Supporting Division Professional Learning

- Wayi Wah! Indigenous Pedagogies Book Study: Led a cohort of teachers, consultants, school leaders, and managers in a book study focused on anti-Indigenous racism and dismantling systems of oppression.
- Natural Connections K-3 Community of Practice with Science, English Language Arts and Literature, and Physical Education and Wellness.



School-Based Professional Learning Sessions

- Traditional games session with a focus on land-based learning, impacts of Residential Schools on life skills and knowledge transfer to Indigenous peoples.
- Treaty education with a focus on Treaty symbolism and meaning.
- Land acknowledgements and the importance of not just reading a script but to provide an action we could do all year.
- Medicine Wheel pedagogy and foundational Indigenous knowledge.
- Treaty education, geography, and foundational knowledge.
- Sacred medicines and cultural protocols with a focus on smudging and understanding the 4 sacred medicines.



A weekly Career and Technology Foundations (CTF) course grounded in Circle of Courage principles exemplifies the impact of responsive, school-based professional learning. Through sustained, relationship-centered instruction, the course engages both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, fostering cultural pride, allyship, and a strong sense of belonging. The program has demonstrated consistent multi-year retention and strong student demand, while families have reported positive changes extending into the home. Together, these outcomes highlight the power of culturally grounded, student-centered learning to create lasting effects beyond the classroom and support the broader goals of Priority 2.

Evidence of Impact

Across the Division, Year One implementation actions of Priority 2 resulted in:

- Increased staff confidence in creating inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments
- Greater staff confidence in engaging with complex conversations about identity and lived experience
- Increased consistency in culturally responsive and restorative practice
- Strengthened staff capacity to recognize and respond to racism, discrimination, and systemic barriers
- Improved instructional accessibility and equity for multilingual and immigrant learners
- Increased professional belonging and retention among immigrant and internationally trained teachers
- Strengthened staff understanding of Indigenous histories, Treaty responsibilities, and worldviews
- Observable shifts in educator mindset and classroom practice
- Increased shared accountability for equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism across departments
- Strengthened cross department collaboration

Priority 3: Education and Awareness

During the first year of implementation, division level actions supporting Priority 3 focused on strengthening the integration of Catholic Social Teaching and principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti racism within curriculum, learning, and formation. Across departments, this work emphasized curriculum coherence, faith permeation, and shared responsibility for ensuring learning experiences reflect justice, dignity, and care for the vulnerable. The following examples highlight how Priority 3 advanced through collaborative efforts in curriculum development, student support, professional learning, and system communication across the Division during the past year.



Religious Education Services

During the first year of implementation, Religious Education Services advanced Priority 3 by intentionally strengthening the integration of Catholic Social Teaching and principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti racism across curriculum, professional learning, and faith formation. This work emphasized doctrinal fidelity alongside responsiveness to the diverse cultural, spiritual, and lived experiences of students, staff, and families.



- In collaboration with Creating Communities of Belonging, Religious Education Services designed and facilitated professional learning that explicitly connected the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching with inclusive and anti racist practices. These sessions supported staff in recognizing the deep alignment between Catholic faith and commitments to equity, dignity, and justice, reinforcing that inclusive practices are not external to Catholic education but integral to it.
- Curriculum development efforts are underway and focused on intentionally highlighting areas within Kindergarten to Grade Twelve Religious Education programs where Catholic values and Catholic Social Teaching incorporate diverse cultural perspectives and equitable practice. This collaboration will support educator understanding that Religious Education instruction can be both doctrinally faithful and responsive to the diverse needs of school communities.
- Community engagement was further strengthened through the design and implementation of inclusive liturgies, cultural celebrations, and service projects that invited participation from students, staff, families, and community members from varied backgrounds and traditions. Religious Education Services also partnered with Creating Communities of Belonging to develop a calendar connecting secular days of recognition with Catholic Feast Days, illustrating how the lives of the Saints offer powerful witness to inclusion, solidarity, and respect for human dignity.
- Professional learning was ongoing and responsive, with continued emphasis on Catholic Social Teaching, human rights, and identifying and addressing racism and discrimination. Communities of Practice provided structured spaces for educators to collaboratively reflect on experience, deepen understanding, and share inclusive practices grounded in faith.

Learning Services

Secondary English Language Arts: Proactive Circles

The Secondary English Language Arts team has been worked on integrating diversity into the resources we recommend through our Text Suggestion Databases. This is an ongoing project to provide teachers with text choices that connect students to diverse texts and authors that will help them explore diversity in their classrooms while at the same time provide platforms for discussion about our Catholic worldview.

The Creating Communities of Belonging consultants have supported Secondary English department by helping model Proactive Circles. Together, the consultants visited a Grade 9 classroom to use the Proactive Circle technique to help introduce issues around identity and prejudice that students would be examining in an upcoming text they were reading. In another collaboration, the consultants worked together by using Proactive Circles with English teachers to discuss how they chose texts that dealt with moral issues which are important for us as Catholics to examine while at the same time providing a safe space for dialogue with students. In this session the use of Proactive Circles was done in a deliberate way that modelled how teachers could use this tool in their classroom to support student discussion.



Student Services

Information shared through Staff Week at a Glance (SWAG) highlighted a range of supports, learning opportunities, and community initiatives led by Indigenous Learning Services. Guidance was provided to support schools during Orange Shirt Day, emphasizing trauma informed, compassionate responses for both Indigenous and non Indigenous students and staff who may experience strong emotional reactions. Staff were encouraged to prioritize relationship, flexibility, self care, and to seek support when navigating complex conversations or disclosures.



Communications

Communications supports the Creating Communities of Belonging Strategic Plan by building understanding of the plan and supporting its implementation across the Division. The team works with schools and departments to tell the story of Edmonton Catholic Schools and ensure Catholic identity, belonging, and dignity are consistently reflected across Division communications.

Supporting Implementation

Communications developed a Creating Communities of Belonging Communications Plan that supports awareness, understanding, and visibility of the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan. The plan outlines a phased, Division-wide approach to communicating the purpose of Creating Communities of Belonging, grounding the work in Catholic Social Teaching, and supporting schools, staff, and families in understanding their shared role in building communities of belonging.

Actions include:

- Building understanding of Creating Communities of Belonging as a faith-driven priority rooted in Catholic identity
- Promoting the Strategic Plan in clear, accessible form for families, staff, and school communities
- Amplifying school-based examples of belonging in action across Division platforms
- Supporting respectful, pastoral communication related to belonging, inclusion, and dignity



Supporting Education in a Catholic Context

Communications supports schools, departments, and the Division in communicating education in a Catholic context through messaging that reflects Gospel values, Catholic social teaching, and a pastoral approach.

Actions include:

- Telling the story of Edmonton Catholic Schools in ways that clearly reflect Catholic identity and mission
- Reviewing sensitive communications to ensure a pastoral, respectful, and faith-rooted approach
- Ensuring Catholic identity is visible and consistent across Division platforms, including web, social media, and system messaging



Supporting Clear and Accessible Home-School Communication

Communications supports welcoming and inclusive school communities by improving how information is shared with families.

Actions include:

- Providing Division wide communication templates and standards to support clarity, consistency, and respectful tone
- Editing and advising on plain language communications for families, including families new to Canada
- Working with One World...One Centre to support newcomer families with translation and interpretation to improve access to information
- Maintaining Division digital platforms to ensure information about programs, supports, and processes is accurate and easy to understand

Making Supports and Services Clear and Accessible

Communications helps ensure families and staff know what supports are available and how to access them.

Actions include:

- Supporting departments and schools in clearly explaining available student supports and services
- Aligning terminology and descriptions across platforms to reduce confusion
- Supporting schools in sharing information about supports in respectful, non-stigmatizing ways

Amplifying Student Voice and School-Based Initiative

Communications amplifies and showcases school-based work that supports belonging and inclusion, and the priority of Embracing Diversity.

Actions include:

- Highlighting opportunities for students and student groups to share their perspectives on belonging and inclusion within their school communities
- Showcasing school activities such as cultural days, cultural months, Belonging Week, and religious celebrations and liturgies that celebrate diversity and reflect communion with people of all nations
- Supporting and promoting Division participation in initiatives such as the Be an Upstander program



Supporting Respectful Communication During Concerns or Conflict

Communications contributes to effective conflict management by supporting clear processes and respectful dialogue.

Actions include:

- Advising schools on communications during issues, concerns, or conflicts
- Reinforcing clear processes for raising and addressing concerns through public-facing materials
- Supporting issues management and media responses when matters extend beyond the school community

Evidence of Impact

Across the Division, Year One implementation actions of Priority 3 resulted in:

- Increased understanding of equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism as integral to Catholic identity
- Greater curricular coherence and representation aligned with a Catholic worldview
- Strengthened student capacity for respectful dialogue around identity, justice, and difference
- Improved clarity and accessibility of communication for families and staff
- Increased participation in faith-infused and culturally responsive learning experiences
- Increased staff readiness to respond to racism and discrimination in faith-aligned ways
- Greater system coherence and shared language around belonging
- Intentional practices—such as inviting students and staff to make the Sign of the Cross according to their own faith tradition—created meaningful spaces for identity affirmation and learning
- Improved accessibility and clarity in Division and departmental communication

Looking Forward

Year One of the *Creating Communities of Belonging Strategic Plan* focused intentionally on building the relational, professional, and cultural foundations necessary for sustained growth. Through capacity building, collaboration, and reflective practice, Edmonton Catholic Schools has established a strong base from which to deepen implementation in Years Two and Three.

This work continues to be guided by Gospel values, Catholic Social Teaching, and a shared commitment to stewardship—recognizing that creating communities of belonging is an ongoing journey that unfolds through faithful, collective action.





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BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMO

May 26, 2026 Public Board Meeting **3.2**

Date: May 26, 2026

To: The Board of Trustees

From: Lynnette Anderson, Chief Superintendent

Originator: Ryan Feehan, Superintendent of Leadership Services

Resource Staff: Chris Cicchini, Division Principal - Leadership Services
Heidi Maas, Division Principal - Leadership Services
Leana Perri, Division Principal - Leadership Services

Re: **Leadership Formation and System Leadership Development in ECSD – Update**

Background:

Edmonton Catholic Schools places a strong and intentional emphasis on the formation and development of its school and system leaders. Leadership Services supports this priority through a comprehensive, faith-centred leadership development model that is designed to strengthen system leadership capacity, deepen social connection, and advance organizational priorities.

Leadership development within the Division is grounded in Catholic identity, aligned with Alberta Education's Leadership Quality Standard, and informed by the lived realities of leaders serving in increasingly complex educational contexts. Across the Division, leadership formation is understood not simply as skill development, but as vocational formation rooted in mission, faith, and service. Professional learning opportunities intentionally combine faith-based formation, reflective practice, mentorship, and practical leadership development to support leaders at every stage of their leadership journey. This approach reflects the Division's commitment to nurturing leaders who are reflective, relational, and mission-driven.

This report provides an update on the structures, programs, and system-level supports that guide leadership formation and system leadership development within Edmonton Catholic Schools. It outlines how Leadership Services, in collaboration with senior administration and departmental leaders, supports coherent, faith-filled leadership development that strengthens individual leaders, builds collective capacity, and supports the ongoing vitality of Catholic learning communities across the Division.

Recommendation:

That based on the evidence provided in the **Leadership Formation and System Leadership Development in ECSD – Update**, the Board of Trustees determines that the following Quality Indicators have been met, as per **Board Policy 12 - Appendix B**, relative to the current evaluation period:

- QI 1.1 Ensures that all school leaders actively promote education in a Catholic context.*
- QI 1.2 Provides staff with a program of activities which reinforces and forms personal faith development and professional growth in effectively teaching religious education programs.*
- QI 5.1 Develops and effectively implements quality recruitment, orientation, staff development, disciplinary, evaluation and supervisory processes.*
- QI 5.2 Ensures that hiring and promotion practices support the Catholic aspect of our Division's mission.*
- QI 5.3 Fosters high standards of instruction and professional improvement (Teaching Quality Standard).*
- QI 5.4 Provides for training of administrators and the development of leadership capacity within the Division.*

Attachments:

- Leadership Formation and System Leadership Development in ECSD – Update



| Edmonton Catholic Schools |

LEADERSHIP FORMATION AND SYSTEM LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN ECSD – UPDATE

| May 2026 |



LEADERSHIP FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT

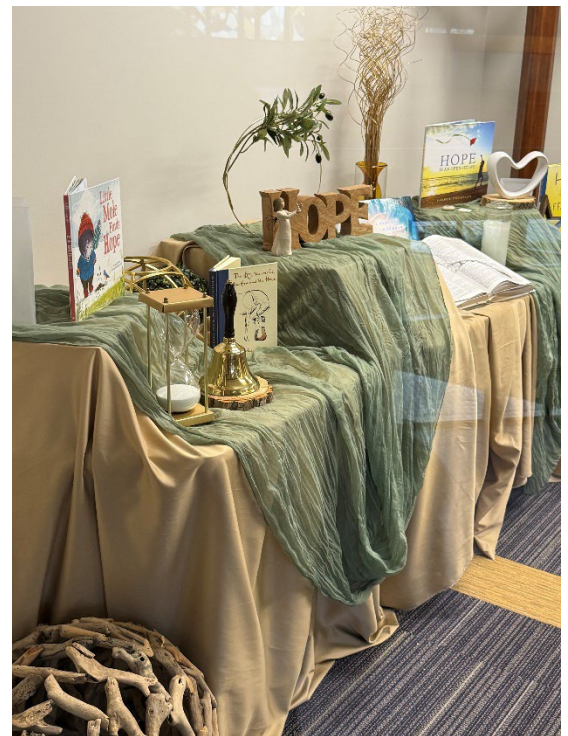
Edmonton Catholic Schools places a strong and intentional emphasis on the formation and development of its school and system leaders. Leadership Services supports this priority through a comprehensive, faith-centred leadership development model that is designed to strengthen system leadership capacity, deepen social connection, and advance organizational priorities. Leadership development within the Division is grounded in Catholic identity, aligned with Alberta Education’s Leadership Quality Standard, and informed by the lived realities of leaders serving in increasingly complex educational contexts.

Across the Division, leadership formation is approached not simply as skill development, but as vocational formation rooted in mission, faith, and service. Professional learning experiences intentionally combine faith-based formation, reflective practice, mentorship, and practical leadership development. This report outlines the structures, programs, and system supports that guide leadership formation within Edmonton Catholic Schools. It reflects a sustained commitment to nurturing leaders who are reflective, relational, and mission-driven, and who are equipped to lead Catholic learning communities with clarity, integrity, and hope.

FOUNDATIONS OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP

Leadership development within Edmonton Catholic Schools is anchored in Catholic identity and shaped by the Five Marks of Catholic School Identity. Faith formation is woven intentionally into leadership training rather than being treated as a separate or supplemental component. Across leadership programs, faith shapes how leadership is understood, practiced, and embodied, inviting leaders to reflect deeply on who they are called to be and how their beliefs inform the way they serve others and lead their communities.

Leadership formation emphasizes leadership as a vocation rather than simply a professional role. Through reflective practices such as prayer, guided reflection, and moments of quiet contemplation, leaders are provided space to consider the alignment between their personal values, faith commitments, and leadership actions. This reflective dimension fosters authenticity, humility, and integrity and encourages leaders to approach their work with discernment and intentionality.



Faith formation also provides a foundation for ethical and moral leadership. Leadership training draws on Catholic teaching, tradition, and moral principles to explore themes such as justice, dignity, service, responsibility, and care for others. These discussions help leaders navigate complex situations with compassion and moral clarity, ensuring that leadership decisions are informed not only by strategic thinking but also by deeply held values. Faith becomes a lens through which leaders understand accountability and the broader impact of their choices on individuals, school communities, and the system.

Engaging in faith-based dialogue and reflection together fosters a powerful sense of community and shared responsibility among leaders. This shared formation builds trust and reinforces the understanding that Catholic leadership is carried collectively. Through this approach, leaders are better equipped to create environments that reflect the values of Catholic education and consistently model those values in their leadership practices and relationships.

ARCHBISHOP JOSEPH MACNEIL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The Archbishop Joseph MacNeil Leadership Academy is the Division's annual cornerstone professional learning experience for senior leaders. With approximately 130 principals and members of senior leadership participating each year, the Academy represents a significant investment in leadership capacity and organizational effectiveness. Named in honour of Archbishop Joseph MacNeil, whose influence on Catholic education within the Division was profound, the Academy is intentionally designed to be both professionally formative and faith-filled.

Delivered as a two-day, in-person learning experience, the Academy brings together principals, senior leaders from across the organization, Division chaplains, Bishop David Motiuk, and the Board of Trustees. The program integrates thought leadership, practical leadership skill development, and collaborative learning to support leaders in navigating an evolving educational landscape.

Central components of the Academy include faith-based experiences such as liturgies, opportunities for prayer and reflection, collegial connection, and the celebration of community through a full Eucharistic Mass. Together, these experiences provide spiritual nourishment while reinforcing the communal and vocational nature of Catholic leadership.

Dr. Santiago Rincón-Gallardo served as the keynote speaker for the 2026 Archbishop Joseph MacNeil Leadership Academy, anchoring the two-day experience in the Division's priority of advancing optimal teaching and learning. His keynote sessions focused on leadership practices that strengthen instructional quality, coherence, and collective efficacy, with particular attention to the leadership actions required to create the conditions for deep learning across schools and the system.

Academy learning emphasized the practical application of these ideas through a combination of expert instruction, structured dialogue, and reflection. Leaders examined what optimal teaching and learning looks like in practice, reviewed the Division's theory of action, and explored how leadership decisions shape culture, learning conditions, and improvement efforts. Stories of practice from Edmonton

Catholic Schools highlighted how joy and rigour are enacted within Catholic learning communities and reinforced connections between system priorities and local leadership practice.

Reflection and discussion were intentionally embedded throughout the Academy to support leaders in identifying key insights and clarifying next steps for their own contexts. Sessions led by Division leadership further supported implementation by connecting Academy learning to available resources and system supports. This year's Leadership Academy strengthened shared understanding, reinforced alignment with Division priorities, and supported coherence in advancing optimal learning across Edmonton Catholic Schools. While the overarching goal is to support leaders in responding to complexity and uncertainty, the faith-based experience also enriched the personal and spiritual lives of leaders through shared fellowship, collegiality, and joy.

LEADERSHIP FORMATION THROUGH FAITH AND REFLECTION

Faith formation is intentionally integrated into leadership development, ensuring that growth in practice is rooted in mission, vocation, and Catholic identity. Rather than functioning as a separate component, faith formation shapes how leadership is understood and exercised, inviting leaders to reflect on who they are called to be and how their beliefs inform their decisions, relationships, and service to school communities. Leadership learning is anchored in the Five Marks of Catholic School Identity and aligned with Alberta Education's Leadership Quality Standard, with particular emphasis on the Catholic Leadership Dimension.

Across leadership training, reflective practices such as prayer, guided reflection, and moments of contemplation provide space for leaders to engage their work as a vocation rather than simply a role. This reflective posture supports greater alignment between personal values, faith commitments, and leadership actions, fostering authenticity, humility, and integrity. Engaging in shared faith-based reflection builds trust, deepens relationships, and reinforces a collective responsibility for mission among leaders. This shared formation supports collaborative leadership and affirms that Catholic leadership is sustained within community rather than carried individually. Through this integrated approach, faith formation supports leaders who are grounded and reflective, and who lead Catholic learning communities with compassion, clarity, and hope.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND PATHWAYS

Edmonton Catholic Schools offers a comprehensive range of leadership development programs designed to support leaders at various stages of their leadership journey.

Principal Training Program

The Principal Training Program is designed for educators who are considering applying for a school-based principal position within Edmonton Catholic Schools. The program supports participants in developing the essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for effective and faith-filled

leadership as a Catholic principal. Through a purposeful and reflective learning design, candidates are prepared to step into leadership with confidence, clarity, and a strong sense of mission.

The program consists of ten two-hour sessions, aligned with Alberta Education’s Leadership Quality Standard (LQS), with a distinct focus on the role and responsibilities of Catholic school leadership. In addition, four technology-focused sessions are provided to familiarize participants with key divisional systems and software essential to the principalship. With the guidance of a mentor, participants develop a comprehensive School Entry Plan to support a thoughtful and intentional transition into the principal role. Professional reading, personal reflection, and rich professional dialogue are integral components of the learning experience, supporting both personal and professional growth.

The Catholic Leadership Quality Standards anchor the program, grounding practice in faith, integrity, service, and a shared commitment to the common good. These principles are intentionally woven throughout each session, inviting participants to examine how Catholic leadership values inform decision-making, relationships, and leadership actions within school communities. Through discussion, reflection, and application, participants explore what it means to lead in ways rooted in Gospel values, responsive to community needs, and respectful of human dignity. As the course progresses, these standards evolve from theoretical concepts to lived practice, shaping mission-driven, authentically Catholic leadership.

Participants also design, implement, and reflect on a school-based leadership project rooted in one or more domains of the Leadership Quality Standard. Appropriately titled “Roots and Wings,” the project reflects the balance between providing stability and fostering growth. Roots symbolize a strong foundation grounded in values, belonging, and purpose, while wings represent encouragement to innovate, take risks, and grow in confidence as leaders. This experiential component allows participants to apply their learning in meaningful, context-specific ways.

Mentorship is a central element of the program. Participants intentionally identify and engage mentors within their professional practice, recognizing the powerful role mentors play in shaping leadership growth. Mentors provide guidance, feedback, and insight drawn from experience, supporting reflective practice and professional discernment. Through these relationships, participants are better equipped to identify strengths, address areas for growth, navigate challenges, and set purposeful leadership goals. Over the course of the program, participants shift from leading through position or title to embracing leadership rooted in shared values, relational trust, and a deep commitment to the Catholic educational mission.

First Year Principal Mentorship

This program is designed to support new principals in developing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for effective leadership within Edmonton Catholic Schools. First-year principals participate in nine three-hour sessions, aligned with Alberta Education’s Leadership Quality Standard, with explicit attention to the unique responsibilities and vocation of Catholic school leadership. The

program balances foundational leadership learning with responsiveness to real-world challenges, ensuring relevance to the lived experiences of new principals.

Grounded in the Catholic Leadership Quality Standards, the program anchors practice in faith, integrity, service, and a shared commitment to the common good. These principles are intentionally woven throughout each session, inviting participants to reflect on how Gospel values inform leadership decisions, relationships, and actions within Catholic educational communities. Through professional reading, guided reflection, and meaningful dialogue, participants explore what it means to lead in ways that honour human dignity, foster community, and remain faithful to mission. As the program progresses, leadership standards shift from abstract concepts to lived practice, fostering leaders who are both mission-driven and authentically Catholic.

Mentorship is a key component of the program, providing new principals with individualized guidance and support. With the direction of experienced mentors, sessions remain flexible and responsive, addressing emergent needs as identified by both senior administrators and participants. The program also emphasizes collaboration with various departments within Edmonton Catholic Schools to ensure comprehensive and coordinated support. In addition, first-year principals attend the annual Blueprints Retreat, which brings together Catholic school administrators, central office leadership, trustees, and religious leaders to collaborate and explore current issues in Catholic education. Together, these elements create a coherent, reflective, and supportive learning experience that nurtures confident, values-based Catholic leadership.

Newly Appointed Principal Orientation and Transition

The two-day New Principal Orientation serves as a purposeful, affirming entry point for newly appointed principals as they step into school leadership. Designed to engage leaders at the very beginning of their transition, the orientation recognizes both the significance of the appointment and the responsibility it carries. It intentionally celebrates the success of each newly placed principal, affirming the experiences, gifts, and leadership strengths they bring to their new role, while acknowledging the trust placed in them by their school system and community.

Grounded in research identifying the leadership practices and conditions most closely linked to principal success, the orientation focuses on what matters most during times of transition. Participants engage in key activities that support early confidence, role clarity, and effective decision-making. Central to the experience is a strong emphasis on mentorship and relationship-building, reinforcing the understanding that impactful leadership develops through connection, support, and guided learning rather than in isolation. Through structured dialogue and shared reflection, newly appointed principals begin forming a cohort that will grow together, offering encouragement, insight, and professional support throughout their leadership journey.

The orientation places particular importance on leading with respect for context and community. Principals are encouraged to honour the story of their school and staff by listening deeply, valuing

existing strengths, and understanding the history, culture, and relationships that shape each learning community. This attention to transition, trust, and continuity creates the conditions for sustainable leadership and fosters a sense of belonging and purpose from the outset.

The experience culminates in a meaningful and symbolic transition moment, as the outgoing principal formally introduces the incoming principal to the school through a guided walkthrough of the building. This shared experience models collegial leadership, honours continuity, and provides an opportunity for the new principal to be welcomed into the life of the school with intention and respect.

Following the orientation, principals engage in a structured eight-week transition plan to support a successful, confident entry into the role. This plan outlines purposeful time spent at the new site and identifies the key “big rocks” for discussion and reflection during the early weeks of leadership. By balancing presence, learning, and relationship-building, the transition plan reinforces the orientation’s core messages and ensures ongoing support as principals establish themselves within their school communities.



Transition Protocol for All Principals

Each year, Leadership Services updates and provides principals who are moving between sites with a live, up-to-date guide to ensure continuity, stability, and clarity during a critical leadership change. A well-defined transition period helps safeguard student learning, staff morale, and school operations by reducing uncertainty and ensuring that essential information, relationships, and responsibilities are transferred in an intentional and organized manner.

This transition protocol guide establishes clear expectations about roles, timelines, and responsibilities for both the outgoing and incoming principal. It provides a shared framework for what must be communicated, documented, and completed before and during the transition, helping ensure that key operational, instructional, and community considerations are not overlooked. This clarity supports professionalism and accountability while minimizing disruption to the school community. The guide also supports the preservation of institutional knowledge. Schools are complex organizations, and much of their success depends on contextual understanding, established routines, ongoing initiatives, and community relationships. A transition protocol helps ensure that this knowledge is passed on

effectively, enabling the incoming principal to build on existing strengths rather than starting from scratch. This continuity supports sustained progress toward school goals and improvement plans.

Leadership transitions can create anxiety or uncertainty, particularly when they occur between school years. By outlining communication expectations and transition milestones, the guide helps ensure that the school community receives clear, consistent messaging and experiences a smooth handover of leadership. This transparency reassures stakeholders that the school remains stable, focused, and well-led.

Ultimately, the purpose of a transition protocol guide is to honour the work of the outgoing principal, support the success of the incoming principal, and protect the well-being and effectiveness of the school. By formalizing the leadership transition process, the guide reinforces continuity, reduces risk, and ensures that leadership change enhances, rather than disrupts, the educational environment.

Principal Catholic Educational Leadership Meetings

CEL brings together school principals, senior leaders, and departmental leaders to engage in shared learning, faith formation, and dialogue that supports system coherence and strengthens Catholic identity across all schools. Through this collective forum, leaders deepen their shared understanding of the Division's mission and direction while strengthening connections across schools and departments. CEL is intentionally designed to support leadership practice that is consistent, faith-filled, and responsive to the diverse contexts of school communities.

Within this shared space, CEL plays a key role in supporting principals and senior leaders to lead effectively in Catholic education. Each meeting integrates prayer and faith-centred reflection, professional learning aligned to the Alberta Leadership Quality Standard, and thoughtful discussion of Division-level priorities that impact schools. CEL also functions as a system-wide communication and sense-making forum, where Division work and emerging issues are introduced, clarified, and discussed. This allows leaders to ask questions, provide feedback, and understand how Division-level decisions connect to school-based practice, strengthening coherence while respecting local context.

CEL further supports effective system leadership through advocacy, shared problem-solving, and ongoing formation. It provides a structured venue for principals and senior leaders to raise matters of common concern, identify patterns across schools, and contribute leadership perspectives that inform the Executive Leadership Team. From a formation perspective, CEL reinforces leadership as a vocation rooted in faith, service, and community, while professional learning strengthens leadership capacity and supports principals and senior leaders as they guide staff, students, and families.

CEL agendas typically include a combination of the following elements:

- Prayer, reflection, and faith formation rooted in Catholic identity and leadership as vocation
- Professional learning aligned to the Alberta Leadership Quality Standard and Division priorities
- Communication and discussion related to Division initiatives, strategic directions, and emerging system matters
- Sense-making conversations to support consistent understanding and messaging across schools

- Leadership dialogue and shared problem-solving on issues impacting the system as a whole
- Stewardship time for the principals to connect directly with senior administration

LEADERSHIP ENGAGEMENT



Leadership Services, in collaboration with Human Resources, launched a new event, Step Forward: The Call to Lead, designed to inspire, engage, and recruit future leaders across the division. Grounded in the Division’s newly enhanced and collaborative leadership development model for 2025–2026, the event reflected a strong commitment to mentorship, relationship-building, and faith-centred leadership. Recognizing that many educators felt a quiet call to lead but hesitated due to uncertainty or self-doubt, the session created

a welcoming space to explore leadership pathways and deepen understanding of what leadership looks like in Catholic education.

The evening began with an opening address from the Chief Superintendent. Participants then engaged in a panel discussion featuring Division leaders who shared candid reflections on their own leadership journeys, including the challenges they encountered and the growth they experienced along the way. Questions for the panel were gathered in advance, ensuring the discussion was relevant and responsive to attendees' interests and concerns. This structure modelled the Division’s collaborative approach, drawing on the insights of multiple leaders to provide a richer and more supportive learning experience.

Attendees also participated in two breakout sessions, choosing from topics including navigating the leadership journey, understanding the application and selection process, supporting beginning leaders, and exploring leadership experiences such as the transition to principalship and the role of women in leadership. These sessions reflected the Division’s expanded mentorship model, where leadership development was supported by a network of principals, managers, consultants, and superintendents. Throughout the event, Catholicity was intentionally woven into the experience, reinforcing that leadership in Edmonton Catholic Schools is both a professional and faith-filled calling rooted in service, community, and ongoing growth.

SUPPORTING ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP

Leadership development for assistant principals is supported through intentional mentorship and collaborative learning structures.

First Year Assistant Principal Support

A new program has focused on intentionally supporting the professional relationship between principals and newly appointed first-year assistant principals. This mentorship experience recognizes that a strong leadership partnership is essential to effective school operations, instructional leadership, and positive school culture.

The support is designed to lay the early foundations for trust, clear communication, and a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities. Structured conversations support alignment on leadership expectations and clarify the assistant principal evaluation process, including feedback, supervision, and growth planning.

The mentorship emphasizes practical leadership development grounded in faith, service, and sound educational and instructional practices. Principals and assistant principals are supported in developing effective working routines, consistent decision-making approaches, and collaborative leadership practices that honour the context, staff, and students of their school community.

By intentionally supporting first-year leadership team formation, our Division aims to identify and establish best practices that strengthen leadership capacity, promote coherence, and support successful transitions for both leaders and schools.

New and Second Year Assistant Principal Mentorship

The New Assistant Principal Mentorship program is designed to support new Assistant Principals in developing the relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for the role of a Catholic administrator within Edmonton Catholic Schools. Our 28 new Assistant Principals attended nine two-and-a-half-hour sessions aligned with Alberta Education's Leadership Quality Standard and the Catholic leadership competency, Embodying Catholic Leadership. With the support of a mentor, the sessions also address emergent needs as identified by senior administrators and principals. Professional reading, reflection and professional dialogue are integral parts of the program. Each month focuses on a specific leadership competency, with guest presenters from various departments within the Division invited to enhance the topics being explored.



The Second-Year Assistant Principal Mentorship Program is designed to provide continued support for new Assistant Principals as they progress in their leadership journey and prepare for their final evaluation in their third year. A key focus is on developing the skills needed to manage conflict effectively through critical conversations. All 31 second-year Assistant Principals participated in this program, which follows a community-of-practice model. The program is responsive to the group's needs, identifying areas for growth and drawing on both participants' collective expertise and Division specialists' knowledge to support these emerging leaders. This year, at participants' request, a school principal's expertise was utilized, and engaging presentations on instructional walkthroughs and inclusive education were very well received.

These mentorship and support programs play an essential role in building leadership capacity within Edmonton Catholic Schools, helping ensure that school-based administrators are well-equipped to lead and support their communities.

Assistant Principal Catholic Educational Leadership Meetings

Assistant Principal Catholic Educational Leadership meetings are held five times annually to support the professional and spiritual development of all assistant principals. These gatherings are collaboratively planned, organized, and facilitated by a committee of 16 assistant principals under the guidance of a Division principal, ensuring that the content reflects both system priorities and the lived experiences of school-based leaders.

Each meeting incorporates a strong faith-based foundation, including prayer, music ministry, and faith formation led by a Division chaplain. A key feature of the meetings is a testimonial delivered by an assistant principal, highlighting one of the Five Marks of Catholic Education and providing practical insight into how these principles are lived out within school communities.

The structure and content of the meetings are intentionally responsive to participant needs. Assistant principals play an active role in selecting topics and shaping agendas, resulting in relevant keynote presentations and breakout sessions that address current challenges and opportunities in leadership. This collaborative and reflective approach fosters professional growth, shared learning, and alignment with the Division's Catholic educational mission.

MENTORSHIP, TRANSITION, AND CONTINUITY OF LEADERSHIP

During the 2025–2026 school year, there was an increased focus on the role of mentorship within training programs, framed through the theme “Mentorship and the Power of Story.” An introductory mentorship meeting established a shared understanding of the mentor's role in fostering growth, connection, and professional renewal. Key messages emphasized the importance of individual professional journeys, recognizing that each path in education is unique, and that learning occurs through engagement with others. Mentors were encouraged to cultivate joy, laughter, and purpose in their daily practice, while also embracing continuous improvement and the belief that educators are

“enough” in their roles. The session highlighted the importance of reconnecting with the work's deeper purpose and sustaining passion for the profession over time.

The mentorship framework further defined expectations for mentors as facilitators of learning and dialogue, experienced guides, and reflective practitioners. Mentors were asked to actively engage in sessions, listen with intention, lead structured discussions, and create psychologically safe environments that support diverse perspectives and meaningful reflection. They were also encouraged to share personal classroom and leadership experiences, model vulnerability and adaptability, and provide constructive, empathetic feedback while maintaining professionalism and confidentiality. The use of storytelling was reinforced as a central leadership practice, with division principals sharing their own leadership journeys and inviting mentors to do the same. This approach strengthened relational trust and supported deeper reflection on leadership identity, practice, and purpose across the system.

SYSTEM COHERENCE AND LEADERSHIP SERVICES DELIVERY MODEL

Leadership Services has introduced a new delivery model for the 2025–2026 school year that emphasizes a more robust and collaborative approach to leadership development. Previously, the mentorship of prospective leaders, new principals, and assistant principals was managed by a single individual. Under the new model, this responsibility is shared among three Division principals, with additional support provided by other Division principals, managers, consultants, and superintendents. This expanded team approach strengthens the overall capacity and consistency of mentorship and training.

A key feature of the new model is the intentional relationship-building component, including visits by a Division principal to each principal and first-year assistant principal to foster trust, understanding, and ongoing support. The model also reflects a strong commitment to Catholic identity, with Catholicity intentionally integrated into every aspect of leadership development and mentorship. Together, these changes create a more comprehensive and values-driven framework for supporting school leaders.

LEADERSHIP COHORTS

Below is the cohort participation data for principals and assistant principals from 2015–2016 through 2026–2027, which reflects sustained engagement in leadership preparation, mentorship, and development and demonstrates the Division’s long-term commitment to leadership capacity building.

Principal Cohorts

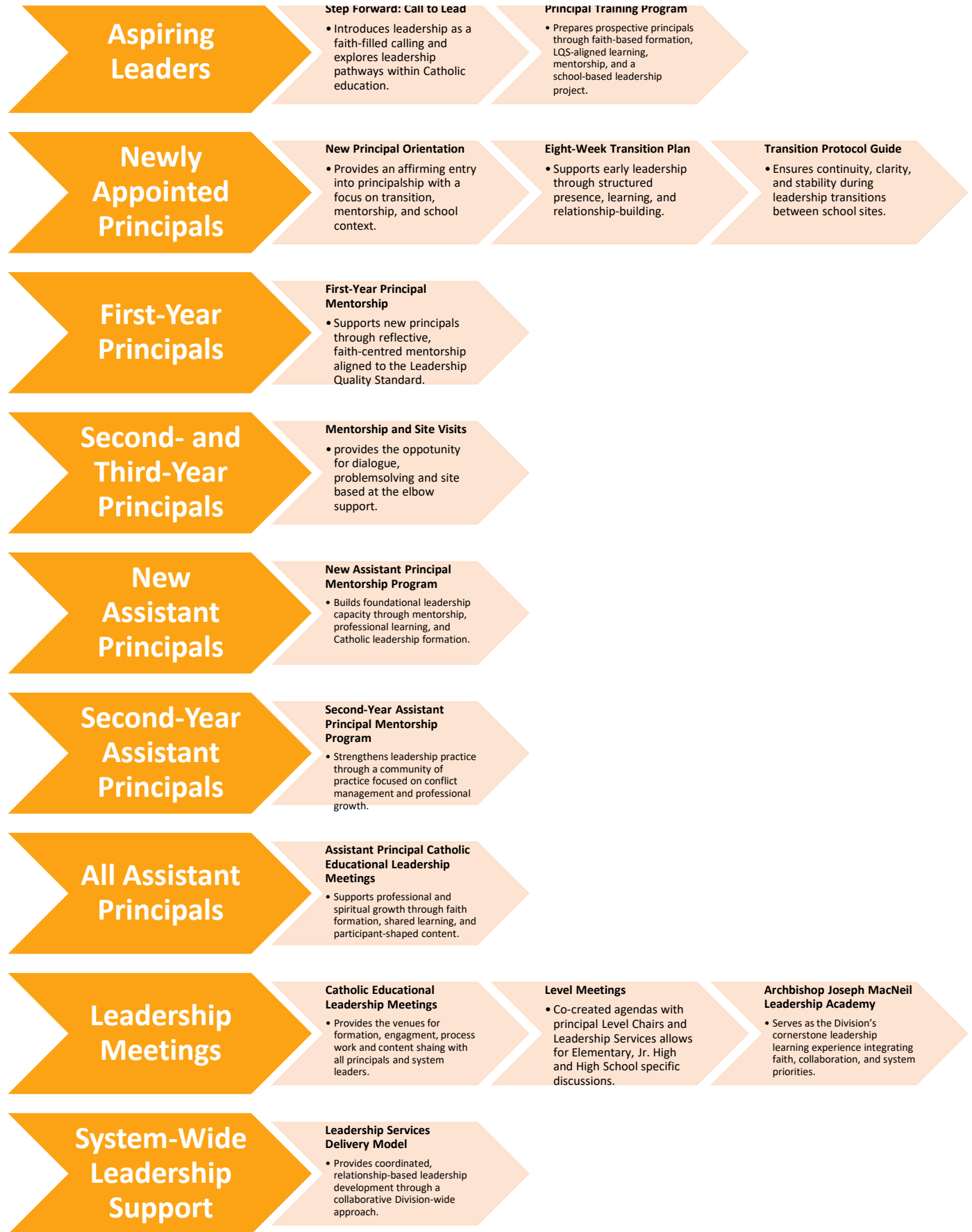
School Year	New Principals
2021–2022	17
2022–2023	8
2023–2024	13
2024–2025	14
2025 – 2026	10
2026 – 2027	7

Assistant Principal Cohorts

School Year	New Principals
2021–2022	22
2022–2023	17
2023–2024	18
2024–2025	31
2025 – 2026	28
2026 – 2027	12



LEADERSHIP SUPPORTS SUMMARY CHART



CONCLUSION

Leadership recruitment, development, orientation, and promotion within Edmonton Catholic Schools reflects a sustained commitment to forming leaders who are faithful to our mission, grounded in Catholic identity, and equipped to lead with clarity, compassion, and confidence. Through comprehensive professional learning, mentorship, transition supports, and faith-centred formation, leaders are supported in navigating complexity while remaining deeply rooted in values and vocation.

The programs and structures outlined in this report reflect an integrated, coherent approach to leadership development that strengthens individual leaders, builds collective capacity, and supports organizational effectiveness. Through continued investment in faith-filled leadership formation, Edmonton Catholic Schools nurtures leaders who contribute meaningfully to both educational excellence and the spiritual vitality of the communities they serve.





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BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMO

May 26, 2026 Public Board Meeting **3.3**

Date: May 26, 2026

To: The Board of Trustees

From: Lynnette Anderson, Chief Superintendent

Originator: Terri Peterson, Superintendent of Learning Services

Resource Staff: Antonella Molella, Director, Inclusive Education

Re: Supporting Schools and Addressing Classroom Complexity Report

Background:

Across the Division, classrooms reflect increasing diversity in learning needs, well-being, behaviour, language, and lived experience. These realities require consistent, proactive, and coordinated responses that do not rely on individual classrooms or schools to manage complexity in isolation.

Edmonton Catholic Schools remains committed to creating learning environments where all students belong, are supported, and can engage meaningfully in learning, while also ensuring psychological and physical safety for students and staff.

Division Response:

1. Focus on Learning Conditions
The Division prioritizes foundational learning conditions, belonging, safety, predictability, and engagement, recognizing that strong conditions reduce barriers to learning and prevent escalation. This work emphasizes inclusive design, preventative practices, and shared responsibility.
2. A Coherent Continuum of Supports
Supports are organized along a clear continuum, ranging from universal practices that benefit all students to targeted and individualized supports for students with more complex needs. This approach allows schools to respond early and effectively while maintaining inclusion.
3. Coordinated Professional Expertise
Multidisciplinary teams, including behavioural, therapeutic, mental health, and allied health professionals, work alongside school teams to strengthen classroom environments, build staff capacity, and support students with complex learning and regulation needs.

4. Early Intervention

There is a strong emphasis on early intervention, particularly in early learning years and during transitions. Proactive support reduces the need for more intensive intervention and support long-term student success.

5. Capacity Building for Staff

Ongoing professional learning equips staff with practical strategies related to regulation, de-escalation, inclusive classroom design, and student well-being. This strengthens consistency, confidence, and shared practice across schools.

6. Partnerships with Families and Community

The Division works closely with families and community partners to support students whose needs extend beyond the classroom, ensuring coordinated access to services that support learning, stability, and well-being.

Through this work, Edmonton Catholic Schools continues to:

- Maintain alignment with inclusive education expectations
- Reduce reliance on reactive or exclusionary approaches
- Support staff safety and well-being through planning, training, and access to expertise
- Ensure equity of access to learning across schools

Recommendation:

That based on the evidence provided in the **Supporting Schools and Addressing Classroom Complexity Report**, the Board of Trustees determines that the following Quality Indicators have been met, as per **Board Policy 12 -Appendix B**, relative to the current evaluation period.

- QI 2.1 Conducts an analysis of student success and ensures school principals develop action plans to address concerns.*
- QI 2.2 Identifies trends and issues related to student achievement to inform the Three-Year Planning process, including recommendations for innovative means to improve measurable student achievement.*
- QI 2.3 Ensures there is measurable improved student achievement over time.*
- QI 3.1 Develops measurements and monitors progress relative to providing a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment.*
- QI 3.2 Ensures that a continuum of supports and services are available to address the needs of students in their growth and achievement.*
- QI 5.3 Fosters high standards of instruction and professional improvement (Teaching Quality Standard).*
- QI 5.5 Ensures all staff have access to appropriate professional learning and/or training.*
- QI 5.6 Implements requirements of Occupational Health and Safety legislation, including required staff professional development.*

Attachment:

- Supporting Schools and Addressing Complexity Report



SUPPORTING SCHOOLS & ADDRESSING COMPLEXITY



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Catholic Permeation through Holistic Well-being	3
Conditions for Inclusive Learning	4
A Continuum of Supports and Services	5
Division Supports in Action	6
Cross-Ministry Collaboration and Community Partnerships	23
Early Intervention and Early Years	26
REACH: Intensive Multidisciplinary Support for Complex Needs	27
Conclusion	28

INTRODUCTION

Creating and sustaining optimal learning conditions is foundational to student success, staff well-being, and system coherence. As classroom complexity continues to increase by diverse learning needs, mental health considerations, and evolving social contexts, schools require coordinated, responsive, and proactive supports to ensure environments where every student can belong, learn, and thrive.

This report outlines the conditions, structures, and collaborative practices that support optimal learning conditions across schools and that have been put in place to address complexities. It highlights how inclusive design, multidisciplinary collaboration, and timely access to expertise strengthen classroom environments and reduce barriers to learning. Through intentional alignment of people, processes, and resources, the system is working to ensure that learning conditions are not left to individual classrooms alone but are supported through shared responsibility and collective capacity.

Together, these conditions reflect a commitment to equity, belonging, and excellence, recognizing that when learning environments are predictable, safe, and responsive, both students and staff are better positioned to succeed.

CATHOLIC PERMEATION THROUGH HOLISTIC WELL-BEING

Optimal Learning within ECSD is grounded in the belief that we educate the whole person; body, mind, and spirit. When students feel emotionally safe, spiritually nourished, and physically cared for, they are better able to learn, grow, and thrive. Well-being and Catholic spiritual formation are not add-ons but are woven into the fabric of daily school life through a holistic, coordinated approach that supports emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual wellness. Students experience environments that are intentionally designed to be welcoming, inclusive, and calm, where relationships are rooted in trust, dignity, and care. Through intentional faith experiences, reflection, restorative practices, and the explicit teaching and modelling of Catholic virtue such as Faith, students deepen their moral awareness, develop resilience, and grow as discerning believers and seekers. As staff model Gospel values and foster strong partnerships with families, students learn to regulate emotions, resolve conflict, care for one another, and act with empathy and integrity. In this way, well-being becomes the soil in which deep learning takes root, supporting focus, engagement, ethical decision-making, and a sense of purpose, while affirming each learner as a sacred gift who is seen, valued, and loved.

CONDITIONS FOR INCLUSIVE LEARNING

Increasing classroom complexity requires intentional system conditions that ensure all students and staff experience learning environments that are safe, inclusive, respectful, and responsive to diverse academic, social, emotional, and behavioural needs.

Classrooms reflect increasing learner variability including differences in academic readiness, well-being, and behaviour, requiring thoughtful and coordinated responses.

To respond to this complexity, Edmonton Catholic Schools has established strong conditions that support inclusive learning environments. A focus on inclusive design and preventative supports reflects the Division's commitment to sustaining student engagement and learning success.

Schools are supported in designing learning environments that anticipate learner variability. Educators and support staff are equipped to plan inclusive classroom structures and instruction using approaches such as:

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Reframing Autism
- The Collaborative Response Model
- Culturally Responsive Teaching

Together, these approaches reduce barriers to participation and support student well-being and academic engagement.

Complementing the focus on inclusive design, Creating Communities of Belonging (CCoB) supports schools in implementing school wide restorative practices, including proactive circles and restorative conferencing. Alongside Positive Behaviour Supports and trauma informed practice, these approaches promote predictable, supportive learning environments that strengthen regulation, relationships, and a sense of belonging.

By centering the voices of students and staff, restorative processes support early identification of emerging concerns and enable proactive, constructive responses. This allows school teams to adjust instruction, classroom supports and learning environments to better respond to student needs while sustaining engagement in learning.



A CONTINUUM OF SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

Across the Division, multidisciplinary teams including inclusive consultants, behaviour specialists, speech-language pathologists and mental health professionals work collaboratively to provide wraparound supports for students experiencing increased challenges.

These coordinated supports strengthen educators' capacity to respond to complexity while maintaining classrooms where students feel safe, supported, and included.

The Integrated Health and Well-Being Framework guides this work, emphasizing shared responsibility, evidence-informed practice, and a tiered continuum of supports (universal, targeted, and individualized) to promote student well-being and learning success.

TIER	PURPOSE	EXAMPLE STRATEGIES
Tier 1 Universal Health Promotion	Promotes well-being, belonging, and readiness for learning for all students and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe, welcoming school environments (Safe & Caring Schools, Communities of Belonging) Mental health promotion and literacy (curriculum resources, PD, shared language) Spiritual well-being practices (daily prayer, faith celebrations, service, reflection) Wellness Champions and leadership messaging Regular movement, physical activity, and predictable routines Comprehensive School Health Framework aligned to school needs Access to Indigenous Learning Services to support Indigenous student leadership
Tier 2 Targeted Prevention & Skill-Building	Support whole classes with emerging or situational needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom-based mental health and SEL learning Targeted staff PD (trauma-informed, neurodiversity-affirming, regulation strategies) Small-group supports (EBS, OT, SLP, FSLW) Use of Student Mental Health Survey data to guide school level priorities
Tier 3 Targeted Skill-Building	Provide small-group support within the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) collaboration (MH, OT, FSLW, EBS) Small-group counselling (regulation, grief/loss, anxiety, self-esteem) Self-paced programming (Cardinal Collins Centre) Flexible programming and social work supports for young or expecting parents (Our Lady of Grace)
Tier 4 Individualized & Coordinated Supports	Provide intensive, individualized support for students with complex needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1:1 mental health counselling (individual sessions, risk assessments) MDT coordination across learning, mental health, behaviour, and family supports Clear referral pathways to Division services and community agencies Support referrals to external specialists (e.g. Recovery Alberta)

Collectively, these approaches guide responses to behaviour in ways that emphasize accountability, relationship building, and learning rather than punitive responses particularly for students experiencing increased complexity.

Alongside these relational approaches, collaborative school teams engage in proactive planning and access specialized expertise to support diverse learner needs.

At the same time, the Division holds a responsibility to maintain both psychological and physical safety for students and staff, ensuring learning environments remain calm, predictable, and inclusive. As we continue to strengthen partnerships and multidisciplinary collaboration, the Division is better able to design proactive, inclusive responses within classrooms and schools.

This emphasis on inclusive design, anticipating and responding to diverse needs through universal, targeted, and specialized supports, enhances the Division's ability to sustain engagement in learning while fostering environments where all students and staff experience belonging, safety, and the conditions necessary for success. The following sections highlight how this work is enacted across the Division.

DIVISION SUPPORTS IN ACTION

One World...One Centre

One World...One Centre (OWOC) plays a critical role in responding to increasing cultural, linguistic, and socio-emotional complexity within classrooms by serving as the primary entry point for newcomer students and families in Edmonton Catholic Schools.

The Centre establishes the first connection between home and school, ensuring that families are welcomed, understood, and supported from the outset of their educational journey. Through comprehensive intake processes, including language assessments aligned with Alberta Education benchmarks and individualized family meetings, OWOC ensures that schools receive the necessary information to respond effectively to each student's learning and settlement needs. This early, intentional intervention reduces barriers to entry, supports appropriate programming, and sets the foundation for student success and belonging.

A key strength of OWOC in addressing classroom complexity is the work of its Intercultural Liaison staff, who provide culturally responsive, relationship-based support both at the Centre and within schools. These staff bridge communication between families and schools by offering interpretation, translation, and cultural brokering, ensuring that parents can actively engage in their child's education regardless of language or background. Their role extends beyond communication to advocacy and system navigation, connecting families to community resources, settlement services, and mental health supports. In doing so, they help address broader social determinants that impact student learning.

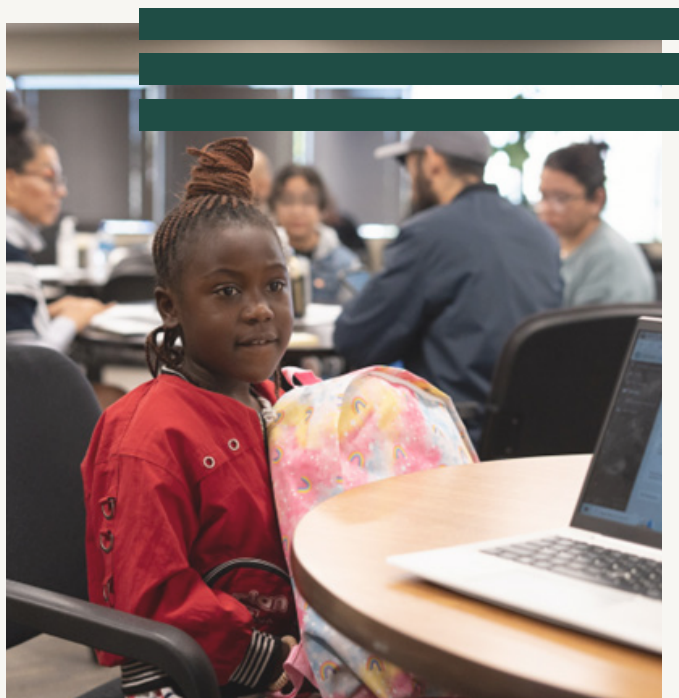


By building trust and understanding, Intercultural Liaisons help reduce stress for families, prevent misunderstandings, and support educators in responding to diverse cultural contexts within their classrooms.

In September, OWOC further supported newcomer families by hosting a Parent Information Evening, attended by more than 250 parents. The event provided families with opportunities to learn about Edmonton Catholic Schools, including available programming and strategies to support their children's success. To ensure equitable access, sessions were offered in multiple languages, and childcare was provided on-site. The evening also brought together 14 community organizations, creating a welcoming space for families to connect directly with local supports and services. This collaborative approach strengthened understanding of the education system while reinforcing a sense of belonging and community.

OWOC strengthens a system-wide response to complexity by fostering partnerships with community agencies and supporting schools through ongoing resources and outreach. Through connections with settlement agencies, cultural organizations, and school-based supports such as Settlement Workers in School (SWIS), OWOC ensures that newcomer families receive coordinated, wraparound services that extend beyond the classroom. This integrated approach enhances family stability, promotes student well-being, and increases engagement, all key priorities in responding to classroom complexity.

Together, this work ensures that newcomer students and their families are not only welcomed, but fully supported to thrive within Edmonton Catholic Schools. This, in turn, helps mitigate classroom complexity.



English as an Additional Language (EAL)

In Edmonton Catholic Schools, English language learners (ELLs) represent a significant and growing portion of the student population. The increasing number of ELLs reflects a key dimension of classroom complexity. Currently, ECSD serves approximately 12,000 English language learners out of the total student population, accounting for just under 25% of all students. These learners are distributed across all grade levels, from Kindergarten to Grade 12. English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners are not a homogenous group; students arrive at different ages, with varied prior schooling experiences, diverse first languages, and a wide range of English proficiency levels. Regardless of when they enter ECSD or their level of English, all English language learners are expected to engage with and meet the outcomes of the Alberta curriculum.

As the EAL population has increased in both size and complexity, ECSD has evolved its supports to respond to these changing needs. Student success requires a comprehensive and multi-layered approach that includes tracking students' language development over time, establishing specialized roles to support instruction, and providing teachers with practical strategies for planning, teaching, and assessing English language learners within inclusive classroom environments. Central to this work is a strong belief in the importance of early and sustained support for multilingual learners. Research consistently shows that without targeted support, English language learners are at greater risk of

academic challenges, disengagement from school, early dropout, and limited post-secondary or career opportunities. Conversely, when appropriate supports are in place, multilingual learners thrive, demonstrating strong problem-solving abilities, critical thinking skills, and a capacity to contribute meaningfully to increasingly diverse and global communities.

Within classrooms, teachers are responsible for addressing the needs of all learners, including students who are developing proficiency in English. In practice, this often means incorporating instructional strategies such as the use of visuals, gestures, simplified or scaffolded instructions, and the intentional pre-teaching of key vocabulary. Assessment practices are also adapted to reflect students' language development; for example, beginner language learners may demonstrate understanding by pointing to images, responding orally, or using supported alternatives rather than completing traditional paper-and-pencil assessments. Importantly, these approaches are not exclusive to EALs. The strategies used to support language development align with effective teaching practices and benefit all students by increasing clarity, engagement, and access to learning for all students.



Behavioural Therapy

The Behavioural Therapy works closely with students, teachers, and administrative teams to respond to increasing behavioral and social-emotional complexity. Students across the Division present a wide range of learning, behavioural, social-emotional, and mental health needs. The Behavioural Therapy team addresses this complexity by focusing on the conditions that help students and staff feel safe, included, and supported. Through collaborative, proactive, and preventative approaches, the team works alongside school staff from more than 90 schools to design inclusive learning environments where all students can participate and succeed.

Through the use of environmental checklists and classroom reflection tools, the team supports schools in assessing and enhancing learning environments to better meet diverse student needs. This work is grounded in a Division-wide continuum of supports and a Pyramid of Intervention framework, ensuring that students receive the appropriate level of support while remaining included in their school communities whenever possible. Additionally, the Behavioural Therapy team develops documents to help teachers create safe and inclusive classrooms and provide the team with strategies that support the student.

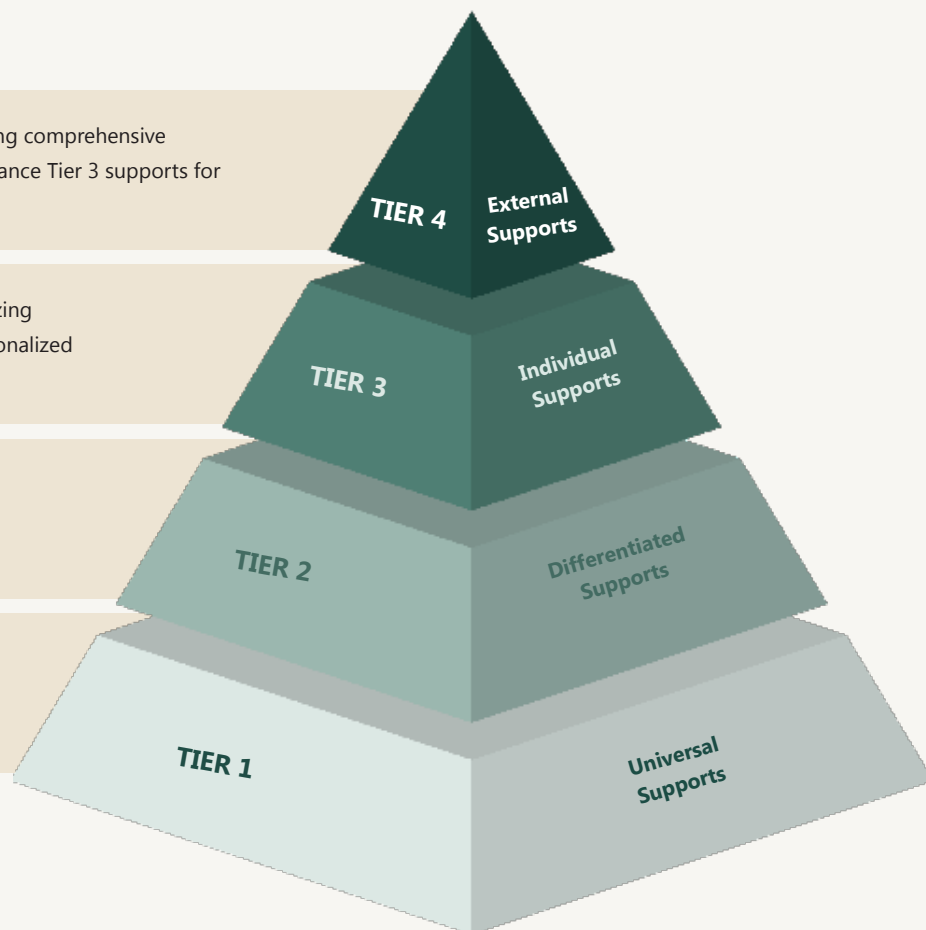
The Pyramid of Intervention

Interventions offer intensive support via MDT, involving comprehensive assessments to develop individualized plans that enhance Tier 3 supports for complex needs.

Support plans are tailored for each student, emphasizing behaviour intervention, structured routines, and personalized instruction.

Targeted supports like small-group instruction, self-regulation coaching, and flexible work spaces for students requiring more than Tier 1 strategies.

Supports for all students is achieved through proactive measures based on the UDL framework.



At the universal level (Tier 1), Behavioural Therapy supports inclusive and preventative practices such as clear expectations, positive reinforcement, and Universal Design for Learning. These approaches establish strong foundations for learning, belonging, well-being, and a sense of safety and predictability across entire school populations.

At targeted and specialized levels, the team works alongside school staff to respond to students experiencing increased or complex needs, providing flexible and responsive supports that adapt to changing circumstances.

Students are supported through Tier 1 strategies that contribute to their individual success. With Behavioural Therapy support present across more than 90 schools, these universal practices extend to entire school communities.

Targeted and Specialized Supports

To support students experiencing increased complexity, Behavioural Therapy collaborates with multidisciplinary teams to implement a range of individualized and targeted interventions.

Behaviour Support Plans

Behaviour Support Plans are developed for students requiring Tier 3 support. These plans are individualized, aligned with IPP and teacher goals, and created collaboratively with the teacher, MDT, and families. They focus on building student strengths to support meaningful participation in inclusive learning environments.

De-escalation Support Plans

De-escalation Support Plans are designed for students who may experience behaviours that pose a risk to themselves or others. Grounded in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NVC), these plans emphasize proactive strategies that support regulation and reduce the need for physical restraint.

NVC techniques are used to ensure safety. The team also supports staff by promoting predictable routines, inclusive classroom strategies, and providing resources such as protective equipment when needed.

Routine Support Plans

Routine Support Plans provide structure and predictability by outlining clear expectations, transitions, and daily routines. These supports reduce uncertainty and help students regulate and engage more effectively in learning. Routine Support Plans are tailored to individual needs and may include visual supports and step-by-step guidance that help students navigate their day with confidence.

Targeted Small Group Interventions

Small group interventions provide focused, structured support for students with specific, complex learning or behavioral needs. These settings allow for more individualized attention, targeted instruction, skill development, and opportunities to practice strategies in a supportive environment.

These supports also provide consistent routines which help students build confidence, transfer learning into the classroom, and participate more fully in their school community.

Specialized Roles

The Behavioural Therapy Team is composed of specialized roles that work together to provide, layered, responsive supports:

Emotional Behavioural Specialists (EBS)

Provide targeted intervention and consultation to support students experiencing emotional and behavioral challenges. EBS staff work directly with teacher and school teams to develop strategies that promote regulation, engagement, and inclusion.

Therapeutic Assistants, Behavioural Therapy (TABT)

Provide hands-on, day-to-day support to students by implementing strategies and interventions. TABTs support skill development, emotional regulation, and participation within inclusive classroom environments.

Board Certified Behavioural Analysts (BCBA)

Conduct assessments and design individualized behavior support plans using evidence-based practices. BCBA's provide specialized expertise for students with complex behavioural needs and promote positive outcomes for students.

Crisis Prevention Specialists

Support schools in developing safe, proactive, approaches to crisis situations. They provide training and guidance in de-escalation, helping staff respond effectively while maintain safety for students and staff.

EBS Mentors

Provide coaching and mentorship to EBS staff, strengthening consistency and capacity across the system when responding to complex student needs.

REACH Team (BCBA, OT, SLP, FSLW)

A multidisciplinary team that provides two-week, intensive, school-based support for students with complex needs. Referrals trigger targeted in-school support to stabilize learning environments and build capacity within schools teams.

Together, these roles ensure that supports are coordinated, responsive, and aligned across universal, targeted, and specialized levels.

Building staff capacity is essential to sustaining inclusive learning environments in the face of increasing complexity.

The Behavioural Therapy Teams supports professional learning and capacity building by offering the following training for staff:

- Non-Violet Crisis Intervention (NVCI) training
- Introduction to disengagement skills and Positive Behaviour Supports (PBS)
- Restorative Practice training to support positive school climate and conflict resolution
- Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) training
- On-site professional development for school staff by EBS staff on topics such as Positive Behaviour Supports, Setting Boundaries and Limits, ADHD Practical Class Accommodations, and Universal Design for Learning

Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapists (OTs) advance ECSD's vision by strengthening the system's response to addressing student complexity. Through a developmentally informed lens, OTs address the neurological, emotional, sensory, and environmental factors that impact students' access to learning. By supporting regulation and participation, building functional skills, and adapting learning environments, OTs reduce barriers associated with complex needs. This work directly supports ECSD's Learning Conditions by promoting autonomy, sustained engagement, and inclusion across K-12 contexts.

OTs provide comprehensive assessment of factors that impact participation in learning, including motor skills, self-regulation, sensory processing, executive functioning, assistive technology, visual perceptual skills, self-care skills, life skills, and physical and social environments.

OTs also support families with system navigation, including access to family doctors and specialized health services to address factors that impact participation at school, such as sleep patterns, nutrition, chronic health conditions, medication, and home supports.

For students with complex regulation needs, behaviours are often an outward expression of unmet developmental, neurological, sensory, or environmental factors. Behaviour-only approaches are often ineffective when these underlying needs are not addressed. OTs contribute essential expertise by identifying and addressing root causes of dysregulation, supporting regulation, access, and participation through a whole child, function informed approach.

In partnership with families, OTs consider broader developmental factors, including sleep, nutrition, chronic conditions, and experiences of stress or trauma, allowing for more responsive and sustainable supports.

Formal and informal assessment data informs both individualized intervention and universal supports. Through purposeful intervention, occupational therapy supports the development of student competencies and contributes to the Portrait of a Graduate.

Autism Working Group and Micro-Learning Spaces

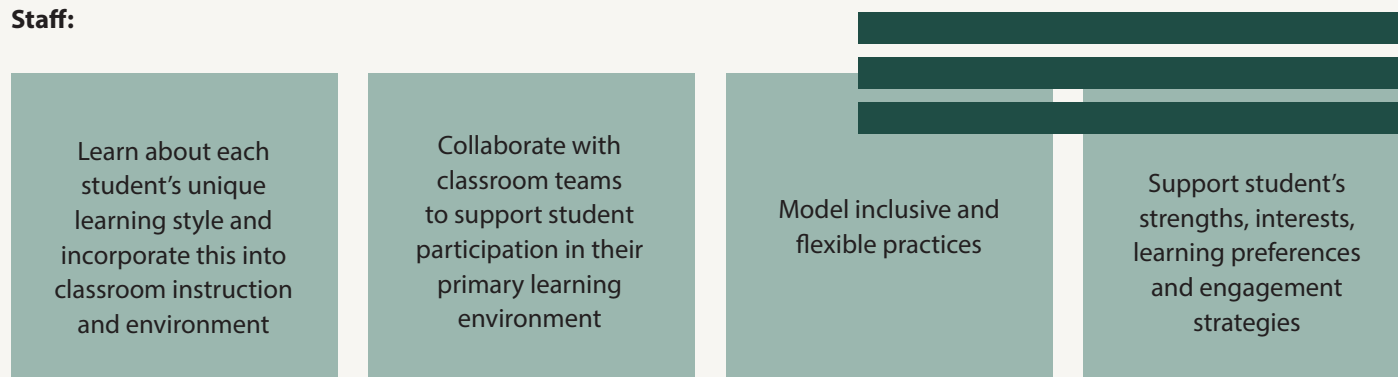
Under the guidance of the OT management team, the group developed guidelines for micro-learning spaces within schools. To foster belonging, safety, and respect for each student's unique way of learning, several schools have created micro-learning spaces that support diverse learning styles and encourage social interaction and exploration of special interests.

These spaces are intentionally designed to shift the focus away from structured academic tasks toward exploration, social connection, and emotional resilience. This reduces the pressure to perform and replaces it with opportunities to engage meaningfully with materials and peers. While created with neurodiverse learners in mind, the benefits of these spaces enrich learning for all students by nurturing curiosity, creativity, and community.

Capacity building for staff supports understanding how to use these spaces to balance student needs with environmental demands.

In these spaces:

Staff:



Students:



The Occupational Therapy teams support system capacity through targeted professional learning for school teams, support staff, and Learning Services personnel.

Since September 2025, OTs have delivered professional development to over 500 Educational Assistants and 60 Therapeutic Assistants (TAOT).

Professional learning topics have included:

- Sensory spaces
- Reframing autism and neurodiversity-affirming practices
- Self-regulation supports
- Printing and assistive technology
- Sensory-based interventions
- Trauma-informed practice
- Supporting students with selective mutism

These sessions emphasize developmentally informed, preventative approaches that move beyond behaviour-focused responses and instead address regulation, environmental fit, and participation. This supports consistency of practice, strengthens staff confidence, and reduces escalation and crisis driven responses.



Speech Language Pathology

Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) play a critical role in addressing increasingly complex learner needs related to communication, language, regulation, and social participation. Through evidence informed, classroom embedded practices, SLPs reduce barriers that impact students' access to instruction, peer interaction, and engagement across all curriculum areas. Their work supports students with language delays or disorders, behaviour communication intersections, and self regulation challenges, with particular attention to learners who are non speaking, Deaf or hard of hearing, or learning English as an additional language. In the post pandemic context, SLP supports have intensified to respond to heightened complexity, ensuring equitable access to learning and meaningful participation within inclusive school environments.

The Speech Language Pathology (SLP) team addresses increasing classroom complexity by providing early, layered, and collaborative supports that reduce barriers related to communication, language, regulation, and participation. ECSD's universal kindergarten speech language screening—unique in Alberta—enables early identification and timely, evidence informed responses, preventing escalation of needs and supporting equitable access for young learners.

As students' needs become more complex across grades, SLPs work in partnership with educators to strengthen classroom practice through consultation, professional learning, and targeted strategies aligned with Individualized Program Plans (IPPs). Students with language delays or disorders are supported to access instruction, engage socially, and participate meaningfully across curriculum areas. For students with complex communication needs, including those requiring Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), the SLP team coordinates specialized supports that enable consistent access to learning and classroom participation. Through shared responsibility and embedded service delivery, SLPs support schools in responding effectively to diverse and intersecting needs within increasingly complex classrooms.

The following information highlights three key areas of support that the Speech-Language Pathology Team has provided to address complex needs.

Augmentative & Alternative Communication Support

To effectively support the over 250 ECSD students who require Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems, the division prioritized system wide capacity building through extensive AAC and communication partner training. More than 800 Educational Assistants and Therapy Assistants received targeted instruction on supporting AAC users from our SLP team, strengthening consistent, responsive communication supports across schools. Multilingual Parent AAC Nights offered in Spanish and Ukrainian further extended this support beyond the classroom, recognizing that AAC systems are most effective when used consistently at school, at home, and within the community. Through partnerships with the intercultural liaison team, families accessed information in their first languages, fostering shared responsibility, belonging, and continuity of support, all key conditions for Optimal Learning and meaningful participation for students with complex communication needs.



Reading Intervention

There is a strong, well-established link between the ability to read, behavior regulation, and mental health across childhood and adolescence. This year, the SLP team was trained to deliver explicit, planned, and sequential instruction in how sounds (phonemes) connect to letters and letter patterns (graphemes) to support early reading development using Alberta Education's Systematic Guide to Phonics Intervention. Under the guidance of our Reading Specialists, twenty-two Therapeutic Assistants for Speech-Language have worked with over 200 students in small groups and 1-1 to deliver this program. Results of the intervention will be tracked through teacher administered pre and post screens.



Inclusive Peer Supports

This year, the Speech-Language Pathology team partnered with school administrators and classroom teachers at five sites to implement a Peer Support Network Project. This project created structured peer groups where students first learned about neurodiversity and were then supported to communicate, play, and learn with their autistic classmates while being taught to respond to varied communication, social, and sensory needs. The Peer Support Network Project addresses classroom complexity by intentionally creating responsive learning environments that recognize and value learner diversity and connects to Alberta Education's learning outcomes of building healthy relationships, fostering friendships, and helping students understand and value differences. By embedding support within daily classroom interactions, the project reduced barriers to student engagement and participation and ensured that learning environments were adapted to meet the strengths, needs, and identities of all learners. By intentionally building peer-capacity to support communication and participation, the project reflects ECSD's commitment to inclusive school communities grounded in shared responsibility and belonging.

Physical Therapy

The Division's physical therapists provides assessment and intervention across all schools for students with mobility and gross motor needs. With a caseload of 46 students, physical therapists work alongside occupational therapists to support student access, staff safety, and barrier-free learning environments

This role includes assessing student mobility, training staff in the safe use of specialized equipment and lifts, supporting community referrals (e.g., Glenrose Hospital seating clinic), and recommending environmental modifications to ensure accessibility. Examples of environmental accommodations include classroom seating adaptations, accessible entrances, parking accommodations, bathroom equipment (e.g., change tables), and furniture layout adjustments.

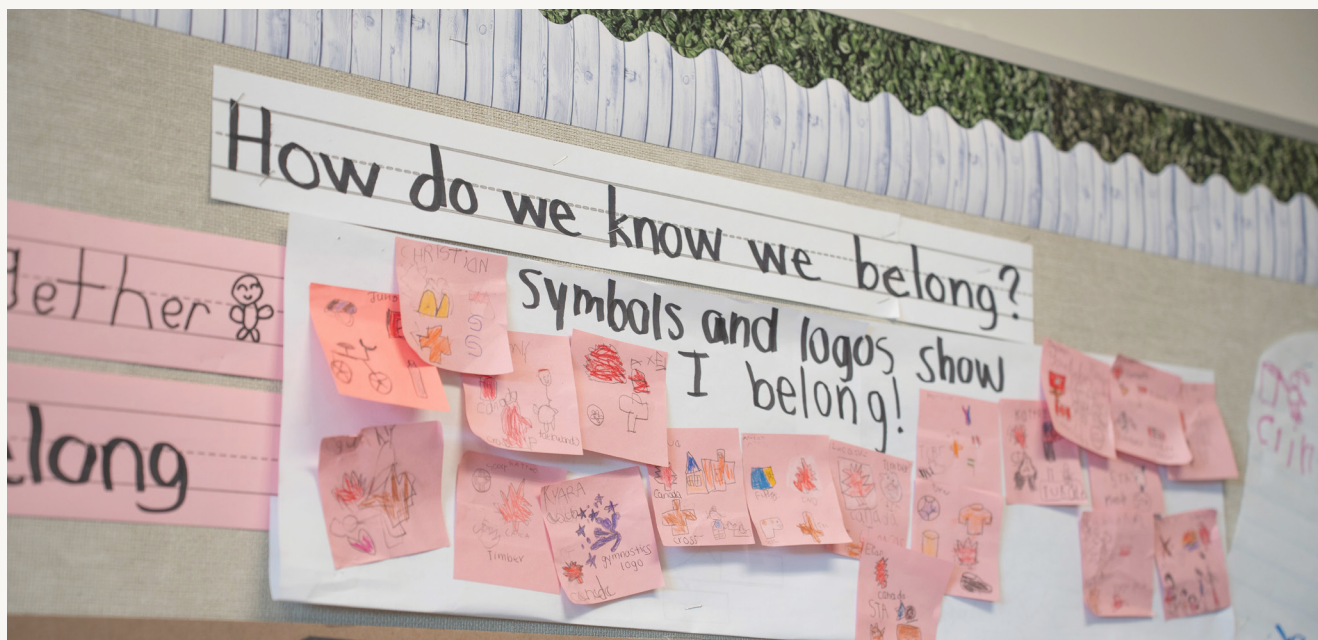
Environmental adaptations provide opportunities for full participation in activities with peers. For some students, school may be the primary setting where they can access adapted equipment or mobility supports that may not be available at home. These opportunities support independence in mobility, as well as relationship-building with peers and staff.

School-Based Mental Health Support

Mental health therapy adds value to the Division's response to student complexity by addressing the emotional, relational, and psychological factors that impact attendance, regulation, and readiness to learn. This includes supporting needs that may not present as observable behaviour, such as anxiety, school avoidance, and internalizing distress.

Guided by the Division's Plan for Continuous Growth and the Integrated Health and Well-being Framework, the Mental Health Team supports a holistic evidence-based approach to student well-being, integrating mental, spiritual, physical, social and emotional development within school environments.

Through a renewable three-year partnership with Recovery Alberta, Mental Health and Addictions, the Division ensures that students and families can access mental health specialists who work directly within schools. These specialists build trusted relationships within school communities and support students and families in navigating and accessing mental health services beyond the school setting.



Access and Service Delivery

Mental health specialists work alongside school teams to build capacity through professional learning and universal supports. This helps reduce stigma and ensures that students, staff, and families can access mental health support in both school and community settings.

Consistent access to mental health specialists supports increased awareness, stronger relationships, and greater comfort in seeking support. When access is reduced, referrals decrease and there is limited capacity to monitor students who were previously receiving support.

All schools have access to a mental health therapist. Some schools have a resident therapist, while others access support through a mobile mental health team. In addition, schools have access to a School Risk Team that responds to immediate, in-the-moment crises.

Tiered Mental Health Supports

Using a multi-tiered system approach, mental health support is provided in the following ways:

Psychoeducation



Short, accessible presentations for staff and students, delivered through staff meetings, announcements, or classrooms

Long-Term Strategies



Resources designed to coach and promote long-term mental health development across age groups

1:1 Counselling



Individual support for students experiencing mental health challenges, trauma, or family-related concerns

Community Referrals



Collaboration with Family School Liaison Worker to connect students and families with external agencies and mental health services

International and national guidance recognizes schools as a primary access point for child and youth mental health services, particularly for students who face barriers to community-based care. Sustained access to school-based mental health specialists strengthens prevention, builds staff and family capacity, and supports long term student wellbeing, making these services a critical component of inclusive learning environments.

Family School Liaison Workers

Family School Liaison Workers (FSLWs) play a key role in schools across the Division by supporting students and families with complex needs through a holistic, relationship-based approach. The work focuses on the social, emotional, behavioural, and environmental factors that impact student engagement, well-being, and learning, to reduce barriers and strengthen connections between school, home, and community.

FSLWs provide direct support to students through individual and group work that supports emotional regulation, coping skills, social skills development, and problem solving. They build safe, trusting relationships where students feel heard and supported. For students experiencing trauma, mental health concerns, or family instability, FSLWs use trauma-informed and strength-based practices to help students regulate, build resilience, and engage more successfully at school.

FSLWs also work closely with school teams, including classroom teachers, administrators, and Inclusive Learning staff. They contribute to collaborative planning, share relevant social emotional and family context, and help develop responsive, student-centered supports. As part of multidisciplinary teams, FSLWs assist with identifying concerns, assessing risk, and supporting implementation of plans that reflect the unique needs of each student.

A significant part of the FSLW role is supporting families. FSLWs engage families in a respectful, culturally-responsive way, meeting families where they are and recognizing their strengths. They provide guidance, advocacy, and connections to community support, including mental health services, housing resources, and child and family services. This helps promote continuity, reduce service gaps, and ensure coordinated support for students and families.

Advocacy is central to the FSLW role. FSLWs advocate for student and family voice, equitable access to support, and inclusive practices within schools. They also fulfill mandated reporting responsibilities when concerns for student safety arise, while continuing to support families through those processes whenever possible.

Overall, FSLWs strengthen relationships between students, families, schools, and community partners. Their work supports student well-being, enhances school-based capacity, and contributes to caring, inclusive learning environments where students with complex needs can succeed.

Family School Liaison Workers play a key role in supporting cross-ministry collaboration within schools:

- Providing information, liaison, and referral to community agencies (Alberta Children's Services, Alberta Justice, Edmonton Police Services, and Alberta Health Services)
- Supporting system navigation across education, health, and social services
- Coordinating supports and facilitating communication between families and schools
- Crisis intervention and prevention, short-term solution-focused counseling, and support
- Participating in case conferences and shared planning

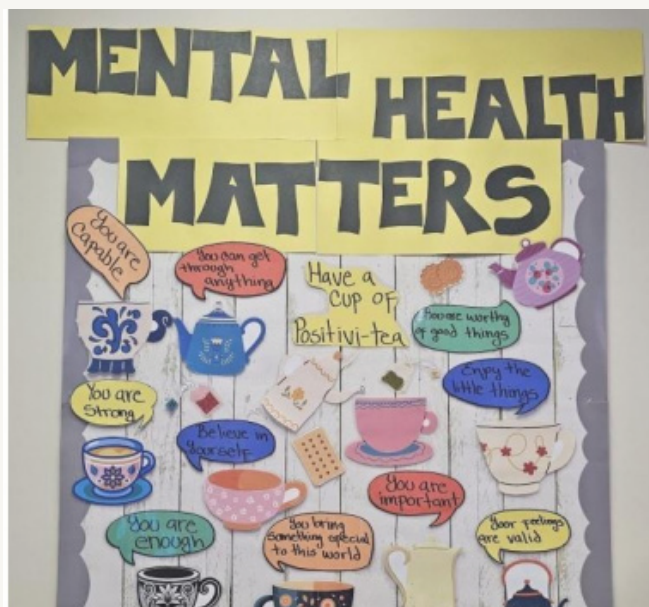
Through this work, FSLWs help ensure that every students' needs are addressed holistically.

Practice in Action

A Grade 3 student presents with high anxiety, frequent somatic complaints, and difficulty separating from caregivers at the start of the school day. Attendance is inconsistent, and the student often becomes overwhelmed in busy or unstructured environments. The family is experiencing housing instability and financial stress, which has increased the student's anxiety and impacted routines at home.

The FSLW begins by building a connection with both the student and caregiver, establishing consistent check-ins and providing reassurance and predictability. Using a trauma informed and developmentally appropriate approach, the FSLW supports the student with simple regulation strategies, emotional language, and gradual transitions into the classroom to reduce morning distress.

The FSLW consults with the classroom teacher and school team to support preventative strategies that increase the student's sense of safety and belonging. These supports may include a consistent arrival routine, visual schedules, access to regulation tools, and adult check-ins during high stress times. The FSLW helps ensure responses remain consistent and supportive as the student builds coping skills.



Recognizing the impact of family stress, the FSLW works closely with the caregiver to provide practical support, education, and connections to community resources for housing, financial assistance, and mental health. The FSLW helps bridge communication between home and school, ensuring expectations and supports are realistic and aligned.

As the student's needs evolve, the FSLW participates in school-based team discussions to share context, monitor progress, and adjust supports as needed. When concerns arise, the FSLW supports problem-solving and advocacy while maintaining a relationship-based, strengths-focused approach.

With ongoing FSLW support and collaboration, the student demonstrates improved attendance, reduced school anxiety, and increased participation in classroom activities. The family reports feeling more supported and connected, strengthening the partnership between home and school and promoting long term student success.

Reframing Curriculum Community of Practice

The Reframing Curriculum Community of Practice (COP) is built on the belief that all students, especially neurodivergent and autistic learners, have the right to access quality education and curriculum.

This COP is led by the collaboration of curriculum and inclusive consultants from Learning Services. This collaboration allows for specific and intentional curriculum planning that is inclusive and meets the needs of all learners. Consultants are responsive to the complexity of diverse classrooms by providing professional learning guided by feedback from teachers and data collection. In-class model lessons are taught by consultants where teacher participants are invited to observe practical application of professional learning and strategies.

The Reframing Curriculum COP has provided teachers with many tools and strategies specific to Math, English Language Arts and Literature, Science and Social Studies. Teachers can design grade-level, curriculum-aligned learning experiences that support the learning of all students. Consultants, instructional coaches and teachers work side-by-side to address specific complexities in the classroom by using the resources shared. Professional learning is an ongoing process at school sites with consistent check-ins from consultants.

This year, two groups participated in the COP, consisting of 40 classroom teachers and instructional coaches from various elementary schools.

Sessions include:

- professional learning in all 4 core subject areas
- school spotlights and tours
- model lessons
- planning time with consultant support available



REFRAMING CURRICULUM SESSIONS		
SESSION TITLE	SESSION OVERVIEW	BIG TAKEAWAYS
Welcome to Reframing Curriculum	<p><u>English Language Arts</u>: ELAL consultants shared templates and exemplars of comprehensive literacy routines. These routines use the same text over several days to provide repetition with variety, which supports all learners.</p> <p><u>Spaces EDU</u>: Participants were guided through an introduction to Spaces EDU, an assessment platform that showcases evidence and progression of student learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to neurodiversity • Literacy routines • Literacy planners • Digital portfolio to show progression of student learning
Planning with Meaning: Competencies, Verbs and Sparked Interests	<p><u>Spaces EDU</u>: Participants were guided through Spaces EDU profiles of real ECSD students. The information posted about each student helped participants see the value of different forms of assessment and how the platform can create a window into the classroom for families.</p> <p><u>Curriculum</u>: Participants reviewed Alberta Education's Competency Progressions and explored how these can be connected to the skills in the curriculum to create access points in lessons for diverse learners. Planning tools and strategies were also provided to support planning based on student interests and strengths.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Alberta's new curriculum structure and layout • Showcase of digital portfolios of autistic students at Father Micheal Mireau School • Planning based on student interests and strengths • Utilizing Alberta Education resources to provide access for all students
Crunching Numbers, Everyone Can Do the Math	<p><u>Descriptive Teaching</u>: Participants learned that descriptive teaching is a strategy used with students who use AAC devices. This approach helps students develop understanding of academic vocabulary, which is not typically included in AAC systems.</p> <p><u>High Impact Practices</u>: Participants explored the high impact practices outlined in the ECSD's Math Framework. These practices were then observed in action during the model lesson included this session.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted strategy supports for students with complex communication needs • Highlighting ECSD's Math Framework to build foundational math skills
Hands-On, Minds-On and The Science Assessment Toolkit	<p><u>Backwards Design Prompts</u>: The Division's assessment consultants shared their Backwards Design Prompts, which help teachers use Co-Pilot to plan curriculum-aligned learning experiences for students with complex needs.</p> <p><u>Science Assessment Toolkit</u>: Participants learned about the Science Assessment Toolkit and how it can support assessing diverse learners' understanding of concepts in Science.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving assessment practices in science • Modeling hands on learning to increase engagement for all learners • Supporting teacher planning through the use of digital tools
Unlocking New Social Studies: Entry Points from Crates to Verbs	<p><u>Planning</u>: The Division's social studies consultants provided a framework to help teachers to plan for their complex learners using the Division's curriculum crates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the new social studies curriculum for Grade 4-6 • Creating accessible lessons for the K-3 Social Studies curriculum



CROSS-MINISTRY COLLABORATION & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The growing complexity of student needs underscores the importance of cross-ministry collaboration, particularly with mental health and addiction partners, to ensure comprehensive and seamless support for children and youth. System-level partnerships strengthen shared responsibility for student well-being and enhance the effectiveness of school-based responses.

This collaboration strengthens continuity of care for students and families, supports timely access to services, and enables schools to respond more proactively rather than relying on crisis-based interventions.

Cross-ministry collaboration is supported through partnerships with:

- Alberta Health Services (AHS)
- Mental health and addiction services
- Community agencies and cultural organizations
- School-based mental health clinicians
- Mental Health Literacy project partners

These partnerships strengthen access to services and support continuity of care for students experiencing complex needs.



Nutrition Program: Supporting Student Readiness to Learn

Edmonton Catholic Schools' Nutrition Program is a foundational strategy in responding to increasing classroom complexity by ensuring that students' basic needs are met as a prerequisite for learning.

Grounded in a commitment to student health, well-being, and dignity the program supports positive food experiences and access to nutritious meals, recognizing that hunger directly impacts engagement, behaviour, and academic success.

Through a multi-faceted approach, including nutrition education, community partnerships, and access to healthy food, students are better able to engage in learning with improved focus, energy, and overall cognitive functioning.

Scale and Impact Across the Division

The scope of the Nutrition Program reflects its critical role in addressing socio-economic complexity across the Division.

- 28 schools currently provide universal breakfast and/or lunch programs
- 46 additional schools offer snack programs

This universal approach reduces stigma and ensures equitable access for all students, particularly those experiencing food insecurity.

By addressing hunger proactively, schools are able to mitigate its impact on:

- attendance
- behaviour
- emotional regulation

These are key factors influencing both classroom environments and student success.



Partnerships and System Alignment

The Nutrition Program reflects a strong, collaborative model aligned with broader wraparound supports across the Division. Partnerships include:

- Edmonton Food Bank
- Breakfast Clubs of Canada
- e4c
- PC Children's Charity
- Edmonton Catholic Schools Foundation
- Rotary Club
- University of Alberta

These partnerships enhance the program's sustainability and impact, while also connecting students and families to additional community resources. Funding from Alberta Education and the Canadian Federal Government also play a key role in sustaining and expanding access to nutrition supports.



EARLY INTERVENTION AND EARLY YEARS

Early intervention is a critical lever in responding to increasing classroom complexity, as it supports the early identification of learning and well-being needs and enables timely, responsive intervention. Focused attention in the early years strengthens learning trajectories and reduces the need for more intensive supports over time.

Increasing complexity is being observed in the early grades, highlighting the importance of coordinated transitions from ECS into school settings and strong family engagement early on. ECS and Kindergarten to Grade 3 environments serve as key leverage points, where early identification and responsive, multi-tiered supports can be implemented to support student development.

Early Childhood Educators and Extensions Programming

Early Childhood Educators support children in 100 Voices by offering small group and individual play experiences that consider each child's developmental growth and social-emotional learning needs. Children engage in music and rhyme activities, active and outdoor play, and interest-based experiences that support exploration and participation.

Educators focus on building relationships through play-based engagement and by facilitating peer-to-peer interactions. These experiences are grounded in the dispositions to learn outlined in *Flight: Alberta's Early Learning and Care Framework*, supporting children to seek, participate, persist, care and be playful.

Early childhood educators also support Kindergarten through extension opportunities in schools with identified high needs. These programs provide additional opportunities for play-based learning that support social-emotional development, relationship-building, and a sense of belonging within the learning community.

Programming is intentionally designed based on children's interests and developmental needs, supporting interaction with peers, positive relationships with adults, and the development of citizenship within their community. This work is delivered through a strength-based lens and aligns with *Flight* as a guiding framework.



REACH: MULTIDISCIPLINARY SUPPORT FOR COMPLEX NEEDS

The REACH team directly supports the learning conditions required for effective teaching and learning by strengthening the environments in which students and staff operate. By addressing complexity through coordinated, multidisciplinary, and capacity building approaches, the REACH team enhances conditions that allow learning to occur consistently, safely, and equitably across schools.

Stabilizing Learning Environments

The REACH team supports schools in responding to complex behavioural, mental health, and social emotional needs in ways that promote safety, dignity, and belonging. Through early intervention, de-escalation support, and trauma informed planning, the team helps stabilize learning environments, reducing disruption and fostering conditions where students and staff feel supported and secure.

Inclusive and Equitable Access

By working with schools to respond to diverse and intersecting student needs, the REACH team strengthens inclusive learning conditions that prioritize access, participation, and equity. Supports are designed to maintain students in their community schools whenever possible, reinforcing inclusive practice and ensuring that complexity does not become a barrier to learning or belonging.

Collaborative Practice and Shared Responsibility

The REACH team reinforces learning conditions that value collaboration and collective efficacy. By integrating multidisciplinary perspectives into school-based problem solving, the team ensures that complexity is addressed through shared understanding and coordinated action, rather than isolated decision making. This strengthens instructional coherence and consistency across classrooms and schools.

Staff Capacity and Well Being

Sustainable learning conditions depend on staff who feel competent, supported, and well resourced. The REACH team builds school capacity through coaching, consultation, and strategy development aligned with evidence informed practice. This support reduces staff overload, enhances professional confidence, and contributes to healthier learning and working conditions.

System Responsiveness and Coordination

The REACH team contributes to learning conditions by improving system responsiveness and predictability. Clear pathways for accessing support, timely intervention, and alignment with broader Inclusive Education and Mental Health structures ensure that schools can respond proactively to emerging complexity rather than relying on reactive measures.

In summary, the REACH team strengthens learning conditions by creating stability, fostering inclusion, building capacity, and promoting collaboration in the face of increasing complexity. Their work ensures that learning environments remain responsive and supportive, enabling both students and staff to succeed.

CONCLUSION

Responding effectively to growing complexity in schools requires more than individual interventions; it requires strong system conditions that sustain optimal learning environments. When roles are clearly defined, supports are coordinated, and expertise is mobilized early, schools are better equipped to maintain learning conditions that support engagement, regulation, and academic growth for all students.

This report demonstrates that optimal learning conditions are strengthened when inclusion is understood as a shared responsibility supported through multidisciplinary collaboration, aligned processes, and leadership structures that prioritize well-being alongside learning. These conditions not only respond to immediate needs, but also build long-term capacity within schools.

By continuing to invest in consistent system supports, collaborative teams, and inclusive practices, the Division reaffirms its commitment to learning environments where students feel supported, empowered, and ready to learn, and where staff are sustained in their vital work of nurturing the whole child.





EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMO

May 26, 2026 Public Board Meeting **3.4**

Date: May 26, 2026

To: The Board of Trustees

From: Lynnette Anderson, Chief Superintendent

Originator: Ryan Feehan, Superintendent of Leadership Services

Resource Staff: Sandra Talarico, Manager, Religious Education Services
Susanna Kaup, Catholic Identity Consultant, Religious Education Services
Susan Makale, Executive Director, Office of the Chief Superintendent

Re: **Moving to Bishop's Assurance Model in our Schools Report**

Background:

Bishops' Assurance is a provincially developed framework that strengthens how Catholic school divisions demonstrate, reflect on, and renew their Catholic identity. Rooted in the Alberta and Northwest Territories Bishops' shared responsibility for Catholic education, the framework provides a common assurance model that emphasizes faithfulness to Catholic teaching, transparency, and ongoing growth rather than compliance.

The move toward Bishops' Assurance is grounded in the legacy of the 2014 Growing Forward Catholic Education Symposium, which provided a shared understanding of what constitutes an authentic Catholic school through the Five Marks of Catholic School Identity. While the Five Marks continue to express the essential characteristics of Catholic schools, Bishops' Assurance builds on this foundation by introducing a more intentional, system-level process for reflection, evidence, and accountability in living Catholic identity across divisions. In this way, Bishops' Assurance represents a movement from describing Catholic identity to actively assuring it through continuous discernment, collaboration with our archdiocesan partners, and reflective practice.

Within this context, the Division has continued its annual work in strengthening Catholic identity through the Five Marks of Catholic School Identity and the Faith Formation Plan. This year has been a transition year for our Division as we have moved toward implementing the Bishops' Assurance model. As we complete the transition to this provincial assurance model, we will now focus our work on this framework. As such, we are pleased to provide a report on the Bishops' Assurance and a final progress report on our Five Marks of Catholic School Identity and Faith Formation Plan 2025-26.

Recommendation:

That based on the evidence provided in the Moving to Bishop Assurance Model in our Schools Report and the Five Marks of Catholic School Identity and Faith Formation Plan Progress Report, the Board of Trustees determines that the following Quality Indicators have been met, as per *Board Policy 12 - Appendix B*, relative to the current evaluation period:

- QI 1.1 Ensures that all school leaders actively promote education in a Catholic context.*
- QI 1.2 Provides staff with a program of activities which reinforces and forms personal faith development and professional growth in effectively teaching religious education programs.*
- QI 1.3 Ensures religious celebrations and social justice are organized by schools and departments.*
- QI 1.4 Facilitates cooperative religious initiatives involving school, home and parish.*
- QI 5.5 Ensures all staff have access to appropriate professional learning and/or training.*
- QI 10.5 Promotes positive public engagement in the Division*

Attachments:

- Moving to Bishop’s Assurance Model in our Schools Report
- Five Marks of Catholic School Identity and Faith Formation Plan 2025-26 Progress Report



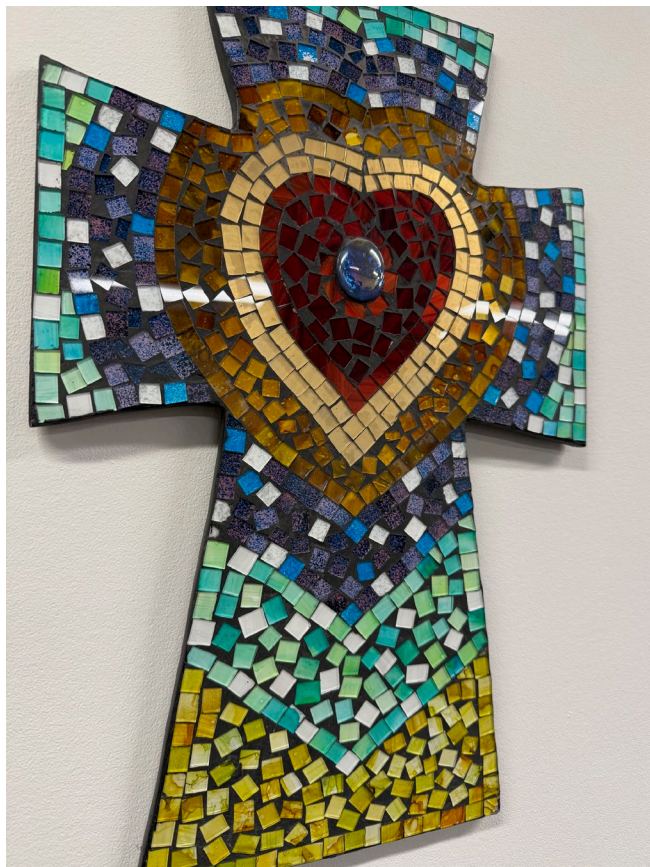
HOPE

People of



**MOVING TO THE BISHOPS' ASSURANCE MODEL
IN OUR SCHOOLS REPORT**

A Journey of Learning and Growing



MOVING TO THE BISHOPS' ASSURANCE MODEL IN OUR SCHOOLS REPORT

A Journey of Learning and Growing

MAY 26, 2026

INTRODUCTION

Catholic education is rooted in a dynamic and living tradition that calls educators, students, and communities into transformation. The movement from the foundational *Five Marks*

of Catholic Identity toward the developing framework of *Bishops' Assurance* represents not a departure, but a deepening of this mission. It reflects a shift from showing what makes a school Catholic to actively living, measuring, and renewing that identity in intentional and accountable ways.

This report explores how Edmonton Catholic Schools continues its journey of faith and growth through two key areas: progress toward the *Bishops' Assurance* and support for the school-parish-home connection. Together, these two areas reveal a system striving for faithful, reflective, and Spirit-led transformation.

A. PROGRESS TOWARDS BISHOPS' ASSURANCE

To strengthen its mission and purpose, Edmonton Catholic Schools has concentrated its work primarily on the *Five Marks of Catholic School Identity* and the Faith Formation Plan. This year, the division will include another significant element: implementing the *Bishops' Assurance* model. As we shift to this provincial assurance model, the division will turn its attention to this new framework. For us, the transition to *Bishops' Assurance* marks a significant moment in the evolution of Catholic education within the division. Rooted in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Edmonton, this framework emphasizes transparency, accountability, and continuous faith development.



❖ Historical Context

In 2014, Catholic education leaders from across Alberta and the Northwest Territories gathered for *Growing Forward: Catholic Education Symposium on Catholic Education*, a landmark event that brought together more than 200 delegates, including representatives from Catholic school boards, senior administrators, trustees, superintendents, chaplains, bishops, priests, and other faith leaders. The symposium created a dedicated space for collective discernment amid growing complexity in publicly funded Catholic education.

The gathering was anchored by a keynote address from Archbishop Michael Miller, CSB, then Secretary of the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education. Drawing on his book *The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools* (2006), he invited participants to reflect on the distinctive mission of Catholic schools in contemporary society, emphasizing the importance of remaining firmly rooted in Church teaching while responding thoughtfully to modern educational realities.

At the heart of the symposium was the guiding question: *What is an Authentic Catholic School Today?* Through keynote presentations, facilitated table discussions, and plenary dialogue, delegates engaged in prayerful reflection and substantive conversation on Catholic identity, given the practical challenges faced in an increasingly pluralistic and rapidly changing context.

Insights and reflections from the symposium were synthesized into a comprehensive report articulating a shared understanding of Catholic identity in education. This work led to the identification of the *Five Marks of an Authentic Catholic School*, key characteristics that define faith-filled learning environments, and to the establishment of a common language and framework for Catholic school divisions across the province.

In alignment with the work of the symposium, the *Five Marks of Catholic School Identity* are embedded within the Division's Foundation Statements, as shown in Board Policy 1. This framework provides a shared expectation across all schools for how Catholic faith is intentionally lived, expressed, and lived each day by students and staff. In the Division Plan for Continuous Growth 2023-2026, under the priority of *Living our Faith*, Goal F2 outlines: *ECSD Schools and departments will clearly demonstrate their Catholic identity as presented in the Five Marks of Catholic School Identity model.*

When the Division first embraced this framework in 2015, a three-year implementation plan was introduced to adopt the Five Marks framework across schools; a plan that was well-received and appreciated by schools. As is our standard practice, after three years of intentional work in the Five Marks, the division considered the framework part of its culture, and the implementation plan was retired. Our schools continue to affirm the Five Marks.

Drawing on anecdotal feedback and a range of survey results, Administration, over the past year, has engaged in purposeful discernment to name the evolving needs of the division and discuss how best to support its schools and departments. This work builds on Edmonton Catholic Schools long-standing role as a provincial leader in articulating and living Catholic school identity, particularly in its early and ongoing engagement with the *Five Marks of an Authentic Catholic School*.



Given her exceptional faith leadership, Chief Superintendent Anderson intentionally reinstated a focus on the Five Marks as a shared framework for strengthening Catholic identity across the Division. This renewed emphasis supported coherence, clarity, and collective responsibility for nurturing faith-filled learning environments. Further, a cross-departmental committee was introduced to find practical, accessible ways to advance each Mark, and through collaborative dialogue, the group developed a one-year plan that offered concrete, attainable strategies to strengthen Catholic identity in daily practice.

In addition to the *Five Marks of Catholic School Identity*, the symposium also informed the development of the *Catholic School Identity Assessment Tool (CSIAT)*, a formative resource designed to support reflection and growth. Rather than serving as a compliance mechanism, the CSIAT encourages dialogue and continuous improvement by helping school divisions and leaders assess how effectively the Five Marks are reflected in their policies, practices, relationships, and learning environments.

Today, the 2014 Provincial Symposium remains a foundational moment in Alberta's Catholic education landscape. Its legacy continues to shape ongoing conversations about Catholic identity, mission integrity, and the shared responsibility of all stakeholders in fostering authentic Catholic schools.

Renewing Partnership and Shared Responsibility

Building on the foundation introduced by the 2014 Provincial Symposium, and the subsequent development of the *Five Marks and the Catholic School Identity Assessment Tool (CSIAT)*, Catholic education leaders recognized the need to renew and strengthen relationships across the provincial landscape. In May 2023, a series of roundtable meetings was convened, bringing together the Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories, the Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta (CCSSA), the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA), GrACE (Grateful Advocates for Catholic Education), and other key partners.

These gatherings appeared from a shared recognition that, while each organization remained deeply committed to Catholic education, there was a need to strengthen relationship-building, improve communication pathways, and clarify roles and responsibilities among partners. Participants acknowledged that evolving educational, legal, cultural, and societal pressures called for a more intentional and coordinated approach to leadership within publicly funded Catholic education.

The roundtable format fostered a respectful and candid environment for dialogue, attentive listening, and mutual reflection. Conversations focused on understanding each partner's distinct mission, authority, and sphere of influence, while finding areas of overlap where collaboration could be enhanced. Particular attention was given to the relationship between the bishops' pastoral leadership and the governance and operational responsibilities of trustees, superintendents, and school divisions, alongside the advocacy role of organizations such as GrACE.



A consistent theme throughout the discussions was the importance of presenting a unified and coherent voice in support of Catholic education across Alberta and the Northwest Territories. Participants recognized that effective public witness, advocacy, and faith leadership are strengthened when grounded in trust, shared language, and a mutual understanding of Catholic identity and mission.

The May 2023 roundtable meetings reaffirmed that Catholic education is a shared ministry of the Church, one that depends on collaboration rather than parallel efforts. By strengthening communication, clarifying expectations, and deepening mutual respect, partners are committed to working more intentionally together and to supporting one another in leadership, faith formation, and responses to emerging challenges. These conversations marked a meaningful step toward renewed unity and collaboration in the service of students, families, and the broader Catholic community.

❖ Ongoing Dialogue and Relationship Building

A solid foundation is clear, given the ongoing dialogue with Archdiocesan representatives. Invitations extended to their team members to attend Opening School Mass, Faith Development Day, weekly liturgies at Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre, Religious Education gatherings, and Board Meetings have created meaningful opportunities for engagement. These encounters have fostered a spirit of openness and mutual trust, strengthening the relationship between the school division and the Church.

❖ Research and Initial Planning

Significant groundwork has also been completed at the leadership level. Research into the practices of four pilot school divisions has offered valuable insights into how *Bishops' Assurance* can be implemented effectively. This learning process has been complemented by direct consultation with the Bishop's Liaison, which has helped to clarify expectations and align divisional efforts with episcopal priorities. A key milestone was the collaborative meeting scheduled in April, where principals, Religious Education Services, Leadership Services, and system administration came together to begin shaping a pilot model for implementation within the division. The inclusion of diverse voices ensures that the process is still grounded in the lived realities of schools.



❖ A Framework for Implementation

At its core, *Bishops' Assurance* invites the Division into a continuous cycle of reflection and renewal:

- **Reflect** – Assess the current reality of Catholic identity within schools
- **Discern** – Identify areas for spiritual and communal growth
- **Act** – Implement purposeful and meaningful changes
- **Witness** – Live out faith authentically and visibly
- **Renew** – Sustain growth through ongoing reflection and action

This cycle emphasizes that Catholic identity is not a static checklist but a lived experience that evolves over time. The impact of this approach is both systemic and local. At the divisional level, it fosters coherence and shared direction. At the school level, it empowers communities to take ownership of their faith journey.

❖ Looking Ahead

Over the next three months, the Division can expect:

- Development of a pilot model for *Bishops' Assurance*
- Continued collaboration with Archdiocesan leadership
- Increased clarity around expectations and implementation processes
- Opportunities for schools to engage in reflective practice

The movement toward *Bishops' Assurance* represents a shift in mindset moving from a traditional accountability model of reporting to an assurance model where the focus is on building confidence among those within and beyond our Edmonton Catholic community and showing how the Division is actively living, strengthening, and growing its Catholic identity in cooperation and conversation with the Archdiocese.



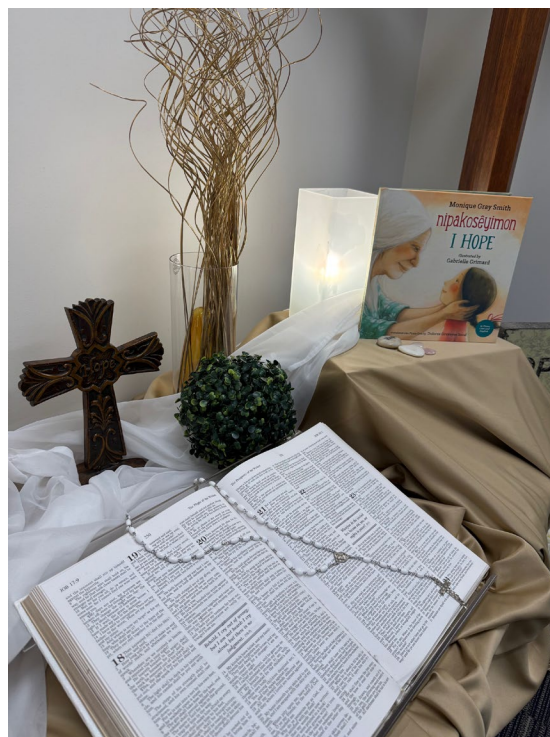
B. THE SCHOOL, PARISH, AND HOME

In addition to the school-parish-home relationship, which remains a cornerstone of Catholic education, Catholic Education Week and Sacramental preparation also provide students with formative encounters with grace and community.

❖ Catholic Education Week

Catholic Education Week - *Anchored in Christ, A Beacon of Hope* (May 10–15, 2026), offers a meaningful opportunity to celebrate the distinctiveness and vitality of Catholic education. Besides external resources developed in collaboration with the ACSTA, Religious Education Services has created a division-wide Liturgy of the Word for Monday, May 11th. By participating in a shared liturgical experience across all schools and sites, the division reinforces its collective identity as a faith community. The intentional design of Catholic Education Week highlights several key priorities:

- Promoting a unified spiritual experience across schools
- Supporting educators with practical and meaningful resources
- Encouraging student participation in faith-centred activities
- Strengthening the visible expression of Catholic identity



Catholic Education Week serves not only as a celebration, but as a catalyst, inviting schools to reflect on their mission and renew their commitment to forming students in faith, hope, and love. Here are some other strategies that will foster and promote Catholic Education Week in our schools:

- Displaying Catholic art in the classrooms and hallways
- Meeting with the school's local Pastor to support the school-parish-home relationship
- Creating optimal learning opportunities related to the Catholic faith

❖ A Shared Responsibility

Edmonton Catholic Schools supports this mission by promoting alignment with the archdiocese-established *Standards for Preparing Children and Youth for the Sacraments*. The Standards emphasize that sacramental preparation is a collaborative effort involving:

- Schools
- Parishes
- Families



Each partner plays a distinct and essential role. Schools contribute by fostering religious understanding, nurturing faith development, and encouraging participation in parish-based sacramental programs.

❖ **School-Parish Collaboration**

Administrators, too, play a critical role in shaping the vision, culture, and effectiveness of their schools. Their leadership ensures that goals are aligned, resources are used wisely, and communities are supported with clarity and purpose. In many ways, the strength of a school depends on the commitment and insights of its administrators. Like other responsibilities, administrators are also expected to meet regularly with local pastors to discuss:

- Liturgical planning
- Pastoral needs
- Sacramental initiatives

In many areas, these partnerships are strong and fruitful, reflecting a shared commitment to building the Kingdom of God, working closely to support students and families, and creating cohesive and supportive faith communities. In some regions, parish leaders are navigating significant pastoral demands. There is a shared desire among parish and school leaders to maintain strong, respectful relationships grounded in open communication and mutual support. Within an established and positive school parish relationship, continued engagement, relationship-building, and clear, flexible communication structures support effective sacramental preparation and the ongoing strengthening of the partnership.

❖ **Deepening Partnerships**

The school-parish partnership continues to be a central priority for the Division. Last year marked a major step forward as Division leadership and priests of the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton gathered in a spirit of communion and shared mission. This coming together affirmed the essential role Catholic schools play in supporting parents as they nurture faith in their children, while also serving as a vital bridge between the home and the parish. The opportunity to share a meal, engage in open conversation about both the strengths and complexities of our partnership, and celebrate the Eucharist together strengthened relationships and deepened mutual understanding. These moments of connection support the Division's ongoing mission of catechesis and evangelization and reflect a shared commitment to bring the Gospel of Christ to the families we serve. With the recent installation of Archbishop Stephen Hero, the next school-parish meeting is October 28, 2026. With the presence of His Grace, Archbishop Stephen Hero, Archdiocesan leadership, local pastors, and division administrators, this gathering aims to:

- Foster dialogue and mutual understanding
- Address barriers to collaboration
- Reinforce shared responsibilities
- Find practical ways to support sacramental participation

By uniting everyone, the Division shows its commitment to deepening our rich partnership with the parishes and to enhancing the sacramental experience for students.



❖ Integrating the Journey: From Identity to Assurance

The actions outlined in this report are not isolated efforts; they are interconnected elements of a broader journey. *Bishops' Assurance* and the School-Parish-Home relationship all contribute to a deeper realization of Catholic identity.

The *Five Marks of Catholic Identity* provide a foundation, a description of what Catholic schools are called to be. *Bishops' Assurance* builds on this foundation by asking how well these Marks are lived and how they can grow. This shift reflects a more mature understanding of identity:

- From definition to practice
- From intention to evidence
- From maintenance to renewal

For us, the School-Parish-Home context embodies it. *Bishops' Assurance* sustains and strengthens it.

CONCLUSION

For many years, Edmonton Catholic Schools has intentionally and faithfully strengthened Catholic identity through the *Five Marks of Catholic School Identity*, supported by Board policy, divisional planning, faith formation initiatives, leadership development, and school-based practice. This work has been embedded in the culture of our schools and departments and continues to shape daily decisions and experiences for students and staff. The move toward *Bishops' Assurance* does not signal a beginning point; rather, it represents an alignment that builds on this established foundation by providing a consistent assurance lens across Catholic school divisions. This shift formalizes and makes visible the depth of work already underway, moving the system from well-established practice toward a shared, transparent model that offers confidence in the Church, trustees, families, and the broader community that Catholic identity is lived, strengthened, and renewed in intentional and accountable ways.

Edmonton Catholic Schools is engaged in a meaningful journey of learning and growth. Through intentional planning, collaborative relationships, and a commitment to continuous improvement, the Division is deepening its Catholic identity in both visible and transformative ways. The move toward *Bishops Assurance* challenges the system to reflect honestly, act purposefully, and witness authentically. It recognizes that true growth in faith is ongoing; rooted in grace, guided by discernment, and sustained through community.

As the Division continues this journey, it does so with a clear understanding: Catholic education is not simply about preserving tradition, but about living it fully, courageously, and faithfully in today's world.



Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.

— Romans 12:12 —



Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre

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five marks
THE FIVE MARKS
OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL IDENTITY



FAITH FORMATION
PLAN 2025-2026 PROGRESS
REPORT

Faith formation includes a comprehensive and holistic approach to nurturing individuals' spiritual growth and development within the framework of Catholic teachings and practices. Rooted in the belief in God's revelation through Scripture and Tradition, faith formation emphasizes the importance of encountering Christ and deepening one's relationship with Him.

At the same time, faith formation involves evangelisation and catechesis, which provides systematic instruction in the teachings of the Church, including doctrine, morality, prayer, and social justice. While this instruction is often provided through religious education programs, parish-based ministries, and spiritual retreats, faith formation within the Church and broader community through fellowship and service. It is through these communal experiences that Catholics are invited to live out their faith in concrete ways, embodying the values of love, compassion, and solidarity in the world.

STANDARD ONE:

AN EXCELLENT CATHOLIC SCHOOL IS DRIVEN BY A MISSION WHICH VIEWS ALL PEOPLE WITH AN INHERENT DIGNITY AS CHILDREN OF GOD.

GOAL: MAKING MISSION VISIBLE, KNOWN, AND LIVED

ACTIONS TAKEN

- The focus of this goal this year was on updating school vision statements to reflect the Division Vision: *Our Students will learn together, work together, and pray together in answering the call to a faith-filled life of service.* Schools were provided with support materials and resources. As schools complete their vision statements, they receive a graphic of their new mission and vision to include in their school hallway screens. This is designed to complement the mission banner they received last year. The school mission and vision are also included in the School Plan for Continuous Growth and on the landing page of their school website.
- Included in the *Grace for the Heart and Soul* Guide is an optional school activity titled **Exploring Our Namesake and Inspiring Our Mission**, which supports schools in deepening their understanding of their namesake. The activities within the guide may be used throughout the year to strengthen growth in key areas of faith life.
- School anniversary celebrations have been supported by Religious Education Services in the creation of liturgies that highlight the school's namesake.

STANDARD TWO:

AN EXCELLENT CATHOLIC SCHOOL HAS A VISIBLE AND TANGIBLE CATHOLIC VISION EVIDENT IN ITS PHYSICAL SPACE, LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS, AND PRAYER LIFE.

GOAL: MAKING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH VISIBLE, KNOWN, AND LIVED

ACTIONS TAKEN:

- The *Grace for the Heart and Soul* Guide offered several activities to support this work, including **Teaching Mass** and reflection; **Connecting Mind, Body, and Spirit Through Prayer** (from an Indigenous perspective); **Creative Prayer**; and an exploration of the Liturgical Calendar, which included a plan to make its elements more visible within the school community. Additional activities focused on **Connecting to Creation Through an Indigenous Lens** and **Service Opportunities**, with explicit connections to Catholic Social Teaching and an emphasis on making acts of service visible within the school community.
- All grade 8 students participated in the Father Michael Mireau Youth Faith Day which included Mass and an uplifting presentation by Jesse Manibusan, a composer, singer-songwriter, and faith leader.
- In addition to the Division-wide Liturgical opportunities that we typically provide, schools were also provided with liturgical resources to celebrate the end of the Jubilee Year of Hope.
- Images of Pope Leo XIV and Archbishop Hero were provided to every school and are prominently displayed.
- All schools have a dedicated Catholic prayer space with common guidelines that details what should be incorporated into this space.
- New schools have dedicated chapels space and have been supported in the creation of this space.

STANDARD THREE:

AN EXCELLENT CATHOLIC SCHOOL HAS AN ACADEMIC CURRICULUM THAT INTEGRATES A VISION OF FAITH WITHIN THE LEARNER OUTCOMES AND TEACHING STRATEGIES.

GOAL: KNOWING, UNDERSTANDING, AND APPLYING FAITH IN OUR LEARNING AND WORK

ACTIONS TAKEN:

- With the advancement of the artificial intelligence application Magisterium.com, which is a closed system that refers only to Church documents in its searches and responses, one of the activities that was provided to all schools as part of *Grace for the Heart and Soul* was **Empowering Catholic School Staff with Magisterium AI**. This session was designed to help staff explore how to use the site to strengthen the Catholic worldview and/or content in their daily practice and in their own faith lives.
- This year, Elementary Curriculum engaged in a deep exploration of permeation, developing and piloting a thoughtful planning process in mathematics in partnership with Religious Education Services to ensure learning is experienced in light of the Gospel. This intentional work is now extending into Physical Education and Wellness, with a clear plan to showcase permeation across all subject areas through School Teams in 2026–2027, as we bring to life the Optimal Learning condition of Catholic Faith Permeating.
- In our French Immersion program, some of our curriculum crates have been intentionally designed to ensure permeation of Catholic values across grade levels and subject areas, in alignment with the 5 Marks of an Excellent Catholic School. In K–3 FILAL, learning experiences such as FNMI sharing circles honour the inherent dignity of every child, ensuring that each voice and contribution is valued as a reflection of their identity as a child of God. Across grade levels, interactive learning strategies are used to support students in listening attentively and sharing multiple perspectives in respectful and meaningful ways. For example, in Social Studies, strategies such as the inside/outside circle provide structured opportunities for students to engage with a variety of viewpoints, deepening understanding while fostering respect for others. In Grades 4–6 FILAL, listening and speaking activities are also connected to reflective practices that affirm students’ identities as language learners, recognizing the dignity and growth of each individual. In Social Studies crates, themes such as quality of life,

charity, and volunteerism are explored through authentic Catholic examples, including Catholic Social Services and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, highlighting our shared responsibility for the common good.

- Within Secondary Curriculum, consultants engaged in exploratory work examining the use of artificial intelligence as a supportive tool for enhancing the integration of faith across subject areas. Through collaborative work with classroom teachers, they modeled and demonstrated intentional strategies for embedding Catholic perspectives into lesson design, ensuring that faith-based principles are meaningfully and authentically reflected in instructional practice.
- In the area of Physical Education and Wellness, consultants partnered closely with Religious Education Services to align curriculum outcomes related to growth and development with Catholic teachings. This collaboration ensured that content is presented through a faith-informed lens, supporting both the spiritual and personal development of students in a manner consistent with Catholic values.
- As draft curricula continue to be implemented in Social Studies, Physical Education and Wellness, Career Education and Financial Literacy, and Mathematics, working groups composed of teachers are actively engaged in the development of targeted student learning activities. These activities are intentionally designed to be rooted in Catholic values and faith traditions, promoting coherence between academic learning and the broader mission of Catholic education.
- Teachers are supported in their faith permeation goals through professional development sessions created through a collaboration between Religious Education and Learning Services Consultants. These certificated staff can select Faith-centered Division Focused Professional Development sessions.

STANDARD FOUR:

AN EXCELLENT CATHOLIC SCHOOL HIRES AND NURTURES TEACHERS THAT ARE LIVING WITNESSES TO THE GOSPEL, AND INTENTIONAL DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH.

GOAL: IGNITING THE SPARK TO GROW IN FAITH AS A COMMUNITY AND AS AN INDIVIDUAL.

ACTIONS TAKEN:

- All staff participated in Faith Development Day, which included Eucharistic Mass and then engaging virtual presentations by David Wells and Terry Hershey on People of Hope, our theme for the year.
- *Grace for the Heart and Soul*, our yearly staff faith formation afternoon, offered a variety of activities for sites to choose from. The activities were rooted in the Six Tasks of Catechesis. Sites appreciated the menu of activities to choose from based on their staff needs and interests.
- Schools and departments have a distinct faith goal that is lived and reviewed throughout the year.
- Lay chaplains serve as support to staff in questions or issues related to Faith.
- The Division has offered in-person and online Catholic courses to any staff that want to learn more about their faith. There were over 175 registrations for these courses this year.
- Religious Education Services, including Division Chaplains, support spiritual wellbeing of staff through the implementation of the Wellbeing Framework.
- The principles of Catholic Social Teaching are intentionally connected to Creating Communities of Belonging, Catholic Educational Leadership, Assistant Principal Catholic Educational Leadership and Chaplain meetings.
- Division Wide Celebrations were well attended including Opening School Mass and Faith Development Day.

STANDARD FIVE:

STANDARD FIVE: AN EXCELLENT CATHOLIC SCHOOL RECOGNIZES THAT EACH AND EVERY MEMBER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COMMON GOOD.

GOAL: WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE COMMON GOOD

ACTIONS TAKEN:

- One of the activities provided in the Grace for the Heart and Soul Guide was titled “getting to Know Pope Leo XIV. This was a digital exploration of his life’s journey as well as the learnings from the first year of his papacy.
- The Division continues to support the home, school parish relationship through regular parish and school visits.
- The Division works alongside our Catholic Partners such as the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton, Ukrainian Eparchy, St. Joseph College, Catholic Social Services and the broader Catholic community through many social justice projects.
- The Senior Team from the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton attended numerous events and celebrations throughout the year.

The Catholic school “must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven, and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel.”

(The Joy of the Gospel, 114)



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BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMO

May 26, 2026 Public Board Meeting **4.1**

Date: May 26, 2026

To: The Board of Trustees

From: Sandra Palazzo, Board Chair

Re: **May 2026 Board Chair Report on #ECSDfaithinspires**

May has been a month filled with moments of celebration, reflection, and gratitude across Edmonton Catholic Schools. Throughout our schools and Division events, the Board of Trustees has had many opportunities to witness the faith, dedication, and sense of community that continue to define Catholic education. Whether celebrating student accomplishments, recognizing staff milestones, or gathering together as a community, these moments serve as important reminders of the impact our schools and the people within them have on the lives of students and families each day.

One of the highlights of the month was the Board of Trustees Retirement Gala, where Trustees had the honour of recognizing 61 retiring staff members from across our Division. This annual event is a deeply meaningful opportunity to personally thank those who have dedicated their time, talents, and hearts to serving students and families within Edmonton Catholic Schools. Each retiree leaves behind a legacy of care, faith, compassion, and commitment that has helped shape our schools and strengthen our Catholic learning communities. The achievements and successes we celebrate throughout our Division are made possible because of the incredible staff who support students each and every day. Across all employee groups — ATA, AUPE, Unifor, and Out of Scope — our staff continue to demonstrate extraordinary dedication and professionalism in service of students and families. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all those retiring this year and wish them every blessing as they begin this exciting new chapter.

This month also brought encouraging news for school divisions across Alberta with the Province's recent class size reduction grant announcement. Edmonton Catholic Schools is grateful to be included in this important investment, which will support our ongoing efforts to address enrolment growth and respond to the increasingly complex needs of students in our classrooms. Investments that help reduce class sizes create more opportunities for meaningful student support, stronger learning environments, and enhanced student well-being.

As we move closer to the end of another school year, we continue to give thanks for the many people who contribute to the life of Edmonton Catholic Schools: our students, staff, families, parish partners, volunteers, and supporters. Together, we continue to nurture faith-filled learning communities where students are supported to grow academically, spiritually, and personally.

Attached is a summary of meetings, events, and activities undertaken in my role as Board Chair since my last report. This summary does not include those meetings and events that I attended as a Trustee representing my Ward.

Recommendation:

That the Board of Trustees acknowledges receipt of the **May 2026 Board Chair Report on #ECSDfaithinspires** for information purposes.

May 2026 Board Chair Report on #ECSDfaithinspires**Summary of Meetings, Events, and Activities****Meetings and Events:**

- Attended Chief Superintendent Evaluation Workshop with Board of Trustees
- Attended Site Blessing of St. Genevieve Catholic Elementary/Junior High School in West Laurel with Board of Trustees and Chief Superintendent
- Attended ASBA Zone 2/3 Edwin Parr Awards Banquet Evening
- Attended the Archbishop Student Leadership Award Recognition event
- Attended Board of Trustees Retirement Gala with Board of Trustees and Chief Superintendent
- Attended 2026 Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Student Award ceremony
- Attended Retirement Gala Committee Meeting
- Attended 2026 Honouring Ceremony with Board of Trustees and Chief Superintendent
- Attended Chief Superintendent's Award of Excellence with Board of Trustees
- Attended St. Gerard 75th Anniversary Celebration with Chief Superintendent and Board of Trustees
- Attended Community Engagement Committee Meeting with Board Representatives
- Attended Ben Calf Robe Pow Wow with Board of Trustees and Chief Superintendent
- Attended Blueprints Conference with Chief Superintendent and Board of Trustees
- Attended Ministerial Engagement with Board Chairs
- Attended International Baccalaureate Gallery Walk with Board of Trustees
- Attended St. Maria Goretti 50th Anniversary Celebration with Board of Trustees
- Attended meeting with Metro Chairs
- Attended virtual meeting with ASBA and Board Chairs
- Attended virtual meetings and briefings with Chief Superintendent, Administration, and Board of Trustees
- Attended virtual agenda setting meetings with Vice-Chair
- Attended Public, Governance, and Audit and Finance meetings with the Board of Trustees

Activities:

- Participated in Class Size Reduction Grant Announcement with the Government of Alberta
- Addressed numerous media requests
- Attended to correspondence and emails





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BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMO

May 26, 2026 Public Board Meeting **4.2**

Date: May 26, 2026
To: Board of Trustees
From: Lynnette Anderson, Chief Superintendent
Re: **Chief Superintendent's Report on #ECSDfaithinspires – May 2026**

Background:

The 2025-2026 school year is one which is marked with great hope. Our Division theme for the year continues to be People of Hope. This month brings many new opportunities for the students and staff of Edmonton Catholic Schools to engage in an excellent Catholic education. I wish to highlight some of my activities as Chief Superintendent alongside some of the happenings in our Division as they relate to the framework of our Division Priorities: Living Our Faith, Learning Excellence, Organizational Excellence, and Embracing Diversity. These priorities can be explored more fully on ecsd.net under our Division Plan for Continuous Growth 2023-2026 (Year 3).

Living Our Faith

- St. Maria Goretti Catholic Elementary School marked 50 years with a celebration rooted in faith and community. Students and staff gathered for a Liturgy of the Word and a formal program. The day also included taking a school photo, with each student receiving a copy as a keepsake to take home.
- ECSD students and staff wore blue in celebration of World Catholic Education Day. Observed 40 days after Easter on the Feast of the Ascension, this day honours the gift and global reach of Catholic education. Blue symbolizes piety and sincerity and is also associated with the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is especially honoured throughout the month of May. By wearing blue, we recognize the vital role publicly funded Catholic schools play in shaping both learning and faith across Alberta and Canada.
- For 75 years, St. Gerard Catholic Elementary School has provided a Catholic education to families in north-central Edmonton. The school community came together to celebrate this milestone with a special Liturgy of the Word and a formal program. To commemorate the anniversary, students and staff worked with an artist to create a piece of artwork honouring the school's legacy, which was unveiled at the celebration.
- With the snow gone and spring in full swing, more than 30 ECSD schools took part in the annual Schoolyard Clean Up. Students and staff are working together to pick up litter, care for their school grounds, and give back to their communities. It was an excellent opportunity to learn about stewardship and care for creation.
- ECSD students and staff tipped their hats for mental health, joining the Hats On for Mental Health Day movement to raise awareness and start important conversations. Across our schools, students and staff are taking part to normalize talking about mental health, support one another, and remind each other that no one is alone. Talking about mental health builds understanding, a sense of belonging, and encourages people to reach out for support.

- I was honoured to host the Chief Superintendent’s Award of Excellence Ceremony. From athletes to authors, role models to leaders, this year’s recipients are forging paths of success both in and out of the classroom. 58 students from 43 different junior and senior high schools have put faith in action by serving their communities, uplifting others, and leading by example. Some have overcome adversity, and all have focused on chasing their dreams while helping others along the way. Congratulations to all our recipients who were recognized at the awards ceremony at St. Joseph Catholic High School.

Learning Excellence

- IB students from St. Edmund, St. Clement, and Bishop David Motiuk Catholic schools shared their PYP and MYP exhibition projects at Lumen Christi, bringing months of learning to life! Through inquiry-driven work, students explore real-world issues they care about, apply learning across subject areas, and explain their thinking with confidence. The exhibitions reflect strong student voice, thoughtful problem-solving, and rigorous learning grounded in curiosity and purpose.
- More than two dozen ECSD students put their skills, creativity, and knowledge to the test at the Provincial Skills Canada Competition. The students competed in different events highlighting trades, skills, and technology. Some students were rewarded with medals in Car Painting, Culinary Arts, Hairstyling, Robotics, and Mechanical Insulation. And the St. Joseph Catholic High School Culinary Arts team found a recipe for success by winning Gold and earning an invitation to the Skills Canada National Competition in Toronto! Congratulations to all students who participated.
- Dozens of students from Grades 5-12 took part in the Be an Upstander showcase at Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre. Guided by ECSD educators, with support from the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, students put their learning on display with informative, creative, and thoughtful presentations. These projects explored important human rights and social justice issues, including Men’s Mental Health, Houselessness in Edmonton, Indigenous Rights, and Animal Testing. Some students will continue to inspire with their advocacy and insight at the Be An Upstander regional showcase at the Royal Alberta Museum at the end of May.
- In preparation for the new Junior High Curriculum implementation in Mathematics, Social Studies, Physical Education and Wellness, and Career Education and Financial Literacy next year, Learning Services is hosting professional learning for administration teams and instructional coaches that will cover topics including:
 - Going deeper with new curriculum – what has changed? What hasn’t? How are expectations changing?
 - Getting a sneak peek at the resources we are creating with working groups
 - Discussing assessment practices for the new curriculum
 - Learning about our plans for piloting
 - Providing feedback on implementation plans



Organizational Excellence

- On Red Dress Day, the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit people, students across the Division learned about this complex issue as appropriate for their age. It is a time to honour those who have been lost, stand with families and survivors, and recognize the ongoing impacts of violence in Indigenous communities. Braided Journeys students and staff participated in a Walk of Remembrance. Gathering in prayer and reflection, students walked together in solidarity, carrying forward a shared commitment to awareness, respect, and change.
- Our Division celebrated Bus Driver Appreciation Day on May 4. We recognize and thank all of our bus drivers for the essential work they do. We are grateful for their faithful service and the important role they play in supporting our school communities.
- I was honoured to join the Board of Trustees as they celebrated many of the 83 staff members who are marking the culmination of their vocation to Catholic education at the Board Retirement Gala. Our Division is grateful for the faith-filled, generous service of these valued employees, and we wish them well in their exciting new journey.

Embracing Diversity

- The Ben Calf Robe Traditional Pow Wow brought together children and adults from across the community in prayers for peace. Held annually on Mother's Day weekend, the pow wow celebrates Indigenous culture, identity, and community through drumming, singing, and dancing. This year's theme, "Prayers for Peace," invited participants to carry those prayers through every song, drumbeat, and dance step shared throughout the gathering. Hosted at the indoor fieldhouse at Commonwealth Community Recreation Centre, hundreds gathered to take part in this meaningful tradition, which has been bringing the community together for more than 40 years.
- Students had many opportunities to engage in learning through various activities during Asian Heritage month. Asian Heritage Month is a time for us to learn more about the diverse culture and history of Asian communities in Canada, as well as to acknowledge the many achievements and contributions of people of Asian origin who, throughout our history, have done so much to make Canada the country we know and love.

Recommendation:

That the Board of Trustees acknowledges receipt of the **Chief Superintendent's Report on #ECSDfaithinspires – May 2026** for information purposes.

