



CREATING COMMUNITIES OF BELONGING:

Advancing equity, diversity,
inclusion and anti-racism

Strategic Plan: 2025-2028

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Land Acknowledgement

Edmonton Catholic Schools — Treaty Six Land Acknowledgement of Traditional Territories

We acknowledge 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 our collective communities to build a stronger understanding of all people who dwell on this land we call home.

Introduction

The Edmonton Catholic School Division (ECSD) is committed to ensuring that our mission to provide a Catholic education in a faith-filled, Christ-centered learning environment is inclusive of every child of God. This document outlines the strategic priorities and key strategies that will guide the integration of equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism into the life and work of our Catholic schools.

Rooted in Catholic Social Teaching, our approach to equity and inclusion reflects our call to love and serve one another, with particular care for those who have been marginalized or excluded. These guiding principles sustain our steadfast commitment to uphold the inherent dignity of every human person.

This document is shaped by the voices of ECSD students, families, and staff gathered through both qualitative and quantitative engagement. It represents an ongoing journey toward advancing a Catholic school division that radiates the compassion of Christ while honoring the distinct identity of schools and departments within the Division.

This strategic plan is designed to grow and adapt alongside our division as we continue our collective journey rooted in respect, honesty, accountability, right relationships, and shared responsibility. We recognize that this work is ongoing and requires continuous reflection and collaboration.

Implementation will follow a site-based stewardship model that prioritizes the unique strengths and needs of each school. Schools are expected to undertake actions in areas of this plan where they have identified a need for growth. Acknowledging that this is a 3-year plan, the actions that are taken on a yearly basis will change based on the success of the school's strategic work and meaningful growth in this area.

Our commitment to the Division's mission is animated by Gospel values and guided by the Catholic understanding of human dignity, justice, community, and peace.

Priority: Belonging and Inclusion

By fostering a culture of respect and acceptance rooted in Catholic values, we seek to enhance student engagement and academic success. Inclusion is a proactive and intentional approach that fosters a culture of shared belonging and mutual respect. Jesus taught us to love one another as He has loved us (John 13:34). Belonging in our faith tradition is not simply a

social value—it is a Gospel imperative. When students, staff and families experience belonging, they encounter Christ in one another. Inclusion in representative education builds compassionate citizens and fosters dialogue and collaboration among people of different faiths, cultures, backgrounds, and lived experiences.

Key Strategies:

- A. Create opportunities for students and staff to understand and celebrate the uniqueness and diversity of themselves and others as children of God.
- B. Develop interpersonal and intercultural skills that reflect Gospel values of charity, respect, and mercy, to promote language and action that creates a welcoming, caring, safe, inclusive Catholic environment.
- C. Consistently use the “Diversity Criteria for Resources” template and the “Provincial Resource Review Guide” to ensure that resources reflect the diversity of our students, families and staff.

Division Actions:

- Facilitate listening circles and restorative conferencing opportunities for students, families and staff to engage in feedback on issues of equity, diversity, discrimination and inclusion.
- Implement restorative practices in responding to discrimination and racism.
- Provide professional development opportunities for staff in the areas of cultural competence, restorative practices, and trauma informed practices.
- Continue to curate age-appropriate videos and teaching resources to celebrate diversity within ECSD.

Possible School Actions:

- Respond to the need for, promote, and/or establish student groups that celebrate various identities and/or equity from a social justice perspective and respond to those needs as identified (LIFE groups, BSA, Equity Council/Group).
- Embed restorative practices and listening circles in classrooms and schools to support issues within the school community.
- Provide opportunities for students and student groups to share their perspectives on belonging and inclusion within their school community.
- Promote school activities—such as cultural days, cultural months, “Belonging Week”, religious celebrations and liturgies—that celebrate diversity and reflect our communion with people of all nations.
- Participate in “Be an Upstander” program.
- Collaborate with groups such as *Black Youth Mentorship Program* at the University of Alberta.
- Celebrate the achievements of individuals from diverse backgrounds and communities throughout the year, beyond the heritage months currently recognized.
- Create classroom displays and school-wide bulletin boards featuring students’ stories, family backgrounds, and personal talents under a theme such as “Made in the Image of God.”
- Implement peer mentorship or “buddy” programs between grades to support new or marginalized students, fostering empathy and understanding.

Priority: Building Competence in Diversity

St. Paul reminds us that the Body of Christ has many parts, each with unique gifts (1 Corinthians 12). Developing competence in diversity allows us to fully appreciate these God-given differences and contribute to a community that lives out the Christian call to “act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). We are committed to fostering an inclusive and respectful environment within our Catholic educational community because it is essential for the well-being and growth of all members. Educating

students and staff about the diverse cultural and spiritual dimensions of our community helps build awareness and appreciation for the richness of our shared experiences. Empowering students and staff to reflect on how their actions contribute to a community free from discrimination and bias is vital. Self-awareness strategies are critical for creating a compassionate, just and equitable Catholic educational environment where every individual feels valued and respected.

Key Strategies:

- D.** Continue to curate, develop and utilize resources and learning opportunities to educate students and staff about diverse cultural and spiritual dimensions of the members of our Catholic educational community.
- E.** Build student and staff capacity in self-awareness to reflect on how their actions contribute to a community that is free from discrimination and bias (educating for community life).
- F.** Encourage dialogue and reflection that aligns anti-racism and equity with our faith’s call to uphold human rights and the dignity of all.

Division Actions:

- Continue to build capability and accountability for leaders and staff in advancing equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism in the division through professional development opportunities and through existing structures in leadership meetings.
- Provide training for leaders and staff on how to facilitate and engage in conversations with members of their school/work community about their lived experience by utilizing listening circles and restorative practices.
- Continue to provide restorative practices, trauma informed practices, and training on Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) so that these paradigms can be used to inform decisions, practices, and policies at the school and Division level.
- Curate a bank of resources for on-demand staff professional learning on equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism and cultural diversity.
- Provide professional learning opportunities (small or large scale) that are focused on the interrelatedness of equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism and a Catholic worldview.

Possible School Actions:

- Monitor student data sources including discipline, attendance and achievement data through an equity lens to identify patterns and create responsive supports.
- Incorporate regular classroom reflection activities (e.g., journal prompts, morning meetings, circle discussions) that encourage students to examine their role in building a welcoming, caring, and just school community rooted in faith.
- Explore prevalent cultures and identities in your school community to be responsive to their needs.
- Systematically review school policies (such as Student Code of Conduct), procedures and documents through an equity lens to identify systemic barriers. Appropriate tools would include Catholic Social Teachings, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+), and Restorative Practices.

Priority: Education and Awareness

Catholic education nurtures the mind, heart, and soul. As Catholic educators, we are called to form disciples of Christ who live out justice, peace, and human dignity by weaving the Church's teachings—such as solidarity, subsidiarity, and care for the poor and marginalized—into all areas of learning.

Catholic Social Teaching calls for the protection of human rights and responsibilities, advocating for the well-being of all, especially the poor

and vulnerable. By promoting justice and solidarity, it fosters compassion, connection, and community, building awareness of God's call to appreciate and value diversity. Integrating these Catholic principles into various subjects enhances understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Knowledge grows from sharing diverse experiences and perspectives, ensuring that all voices are valued and integrated, especially those often rendered invisible due to systemic barriers.

Key Strategies:

- G.** Explicitly connect Religious Education curriculum across the grades to build understanding of the concepts of equity, diversity, and inclusion from a Catholic worldview.
- H.** Intentionally and authentically connect principles of our Catholic faith to subject areas across the grades to build awareness of God's call to appreciate the diversity of all as we build and live in a just community (permeation).
- I.** Enhance the Community of Practice (CoP) model for teachers and staff to collaboratively examine their experiences, enabling deeper learning and the sharing of best practices.
- J.** Continue to engage in professional learning that builds knowledge of Catholic Social Teaching, human rights, and identifying and responding to racism and discrimination.

Division Actions:

- Create a scope and sequence to demonstrate how the Religion curriculum explicitly aligns with the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism.
- Provide professional learning and support on how to connect all curriculum to the topic of equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism from a Catholic perspective.
- Continue to curate resources on Catholic Social Teaching, discrimination, equity, diversity and inclusion for use in student learning that address responses to racism.
- Provide professional learning on how to respond to and address racism and discrimination.

Possible School Actions:

- Explore noteworthy Catholic figures and their contributions to equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism, e.g. Pope Francis, Pope Leo XIII, Saint Óscar Romero.
- Permeate Catholic Social Teaching (CST) principles—such as dignity of the human person, solidarity, and care for creation—into daily lessons.
- Provide presentations to help educate students on discrimination to help them understand how discrimination occurs, identifying and addressing what went wrong, and learning ways to prevent it.
- Provide equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism learning opportunities for staff during staff meetings and as options during division professional learning sessions.
- Participate in communities of practice (CoP) in the areas of restorative practices, trauma informed practices and GBA+.
- Increase representation of diversity within classroom materials or library resources from a Catholic perspective whenever possible.

Appendix

[Embracing Diversity Report 2024-2025](#)

[Strategic Plan 22-25: Past Division Wide Actions and Menu of Actions](#) (pages 8-14)

[Division Plan for Continuous Growth](#)

[AP 171: Respect in the Workplace](#)

[AP 171: Respect in the Workplace Guide](#)

[AP 172: Reporting of and Responding to Discrimination and Racism](#)

[AP 172: Guidebook for the reporting of and responding to discrimination and racism](#)

[Reporting Discrimination and Racism Online Form](#)