

ENGAGING VOICE

REPORT

APRIL 2025

EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOL DIVISION



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Edmonton Catholic School Division (ECSD) actively works to involve students and their families together with teachers and community members for developing meaningful improvements in educational programs. The Engaging Voices Report presents ECSD's comprehensive, multi-faceted engagement process to improve program retention, accessibility, and student success in various initiatives.

This report highlights engagement efforts across several key areas that have taken place during the current school year:

- Language Programs (French Immersion and Spanish Bilingual)
- Enhanced Academic Program (EAP)
- Attendance Boundary Planning for St. Josephine Bakhita Catholic School
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Initiatives (AAC Goes to School & AAC Goes Home)
- Career and Bridging Fair

Key Objectives and Findings

The engagement process to collect community feedback, which would help guide program decisions, curriculum refinement, and support system strategies.

Key findings are as follows:

- Retention concerns in the French Immersion and Spanish Bilingual programs and require targeted strategies to increase student completion rates.
- Academic accessibility enhancements through the Enhanced Academic Program (EAP), ensuring students receive intellectually rigorous learning opportunities.
- Community feedback led to adjustments in the attendance boundaries for St. Josephine Bakhita Catholic School, improving transparency and ensuring accessibility in student placement.
- The implementation of AAC within classrooms and homes has strengthened communication support for students using augmentative and alternative communication devices, enhancing their ability to engage in learning.
- The Career and Bridging Fair expanded its reach to provide students with better post-secondary connections which prepare the students for life after high school.

Impact and Next Steps

ECSD uses partner feedback to develop its strategic plan which results in new student support services, curriculum modifications, transportation accessibility enhancements, and program growth. The upcoming actions will maintain ongoing engagement while using data for decision-making and building stronger relationships between ECSD and its community members.

ECSD demonstrates its commitment to student success and program excellence through this engagement-driven approach which ensures all learners receive necessary resources and opportunities for success.

STRATEGIC GOAL STATEMENT

ECSD's Organizational Excellence Priority Goal O2 is being met by ECSD staff in their engagement with schools, community and partners.

Goal O2: Staff will utilize ongoing communication, collaboration, and engagement processes to become more effective, efficient, and responsive to the needs of students, families, and each other.

- Create ongoing opportunities for dialogue between home and school to build awareness of and participation in student learning.
- Utilize engagement processes to ensure that student voice is reflected in their learning experiences.

Additionally, this process ensures that information is disseminated to inform appropriate publics.

RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

Goal O2 emphasizes the importance of communication, collaboration, and engagement among staff to enhance effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness. This goal is driven by:

- **Student Needs:** Ensuring that students receive the best possible support and education requires a cohesive and responsive organizational structure.
- **Community Feedback:** Surveys and engagement sessions have shown that there is a need for improved collaboration and communication within the Division.
- **Board Direction:** The Board of Trustees has identified organizational excellence as one of the key areas to support the Division's mission and vision.

Connection to Previous Planning or Goals

Goal O2 builds on the foundation laid by previous strategic plans, such as the Division Plan for Continuous Growth. This plan has consistently emphasized collaboration, alignment of resources, and continuous improvement as critical components of organizational success. The focus on communication and engagement aligns with past priorities aimed at fostering a Christ-centered learning environment and enhancing operational efficiency.

Relevant Data or Trends

Data from the Alberta Education Assurance Measure Results and ECSD surveys have informed this priority. Key trends include:

- High levels of student engagement and citizenship, indicating the effectiveness of collaborative efforts.

ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Through a comprehensive series of engagement initiatives, ECSD has actively sought input to guide decision-making, enhance program offerings, and build strong relationships across the Division.

Throughout 2024–2025, ECSD conducted multiple engagement processes focused on key areas:

- **French Immersion Program**
 - Addressing retention challenges to strengthen the K-12 French Immersion pathway.
 - Gathering insights from students, families, and educators to enhance programming and support structures.
- **Spanish Bilingual Program**
 - Exploring ways to improve language learning, retention, and cultural connections.
 - Engaging families and students to identify strategies for long-term program sustainability.
- **Enhanced Academic Program (EAP)**
 - Ensuring high intellectual engagement and support for students seeking rigorous learning opportunities.
 - Consulting community partners to refine curriculum, accessibility, and student retention strategies.
- **Attendance Boundary Engagement for St. Josephine Bakhita Catholic School**
 - Involving families in discussions on school placement, transportation, and student enrollment.
 - Using feedback to finalize boundary decisions and improve accessibility options.
- **AAC Goes to School & AAC Goes Home**
 - Strengthening support for students using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC).
 - Engaging educators and families to improve communication strategies in classrooms and at home.
- **Career and Bridging Fair**
 - Connecting students with career pathways, educational institutions, and industry professionals.
 - Gathering feedback to ensure post-secondary preparation and workforce readiness.

FRENCH IMMERSION ENGAGEMENT

The Edmonton Catholic School Division (ECSD) is committed to sustaining and strengthening its French Immersion program, which has been a cornerstone of the division for over 50 years. With an 80% attrition rate presenting challenges to the program's long-term viability, ECSD took strategic steps to address these concerns through an inclusive engagement process.

Intent of Engagement

The engagement process was designed to:

- **Inform:** Gather insights from community members on challenges within the French Immersion program and identify potential strategies for improving student retention.
- **Shape:** Influence program development by incorporating feedback from families, teachers, administrators, and students.
- **Support:** Provide data-driven recommendations for decision-making regarding the program's sustainability.

By focusing on these areas, the engagement initiative aimed to ensure that more students complete the K-12 French Immersion pathway, achieving fluency in an additional language and experiencing the associated academic, cognitive, and cultural benefits.

How Engagement Supported Decision-Making

The insights gathered through this process play a critical role in guiding ECSD's strategic actions and decisions related to the French Immersion program. Partner feedback informs program modifications, resource allocation, and the development of targeted initiatives to address retention challenges and enhance overall program quality.

Engagement Strategies

The engagement process leveraged a variety of strategies to ensure comprehensive partner involvement:

- **Communication:** Sharing information about the engagement process and program goals with the wider community.
- **Consultation:** Seeking input from parents/guardians, families, teachers, and administrators through surveys and discussions.
- **Collaboration:** Conducting in-class questionnaires and organizing six student focus groups for Grades 7 to 12 to deeply understand their experiences.

Roles and Responsibilities

ECSD contracted a third-party research firm to facilitate the engagement process. Y Station played a pivotal role in designing and executing the consultation activities, analyzing partner feedback, and providing actionable recommendations. ECSD staff supported the process by ensuring transparency and encouraging active participation from all partners.

This thorough approach reflects ECSD's dedication to engaging its community and utilizing diverse perspectives to shape the future of its French Immersion program.

Engagement Activities

ECSD started engaging with the French Immersion community in Fall 2023. By the end of the 2023-2024 academic year, the engagement process was complete. Through the 2024-2025 academic year, ECSD has reported back to the French Immersion community on the results on the engagement as well as provided recommendations for action and implementation.

Activity Name	Target Audience	Status	Timeline	Key Purpose/Focus
Teacher & Administrator Feedback Sessions	FI Teachers & School Administrators	Complete	Fall 2023	Gather feedback on retention challenges, and recommendations.
Community Consultation Meetings	General Public & FI Advocates	Complete	Fall 2023	Engage broader community perspectives on FI program improvements and accessibility.
Parent/Guardian Surveys	Parents/Guardians of FI students	Complete	Spring 2024	Gather insights on program strengths, challenges, and support needs.
Student Focus Groups	Grades 7–12 FI Students	Complete	Spring 2024	Understand student experiences, motivations, and barriers to continuation.
Implementation Planning	ECSD Program Leads	Ongoing	2024-2025	Develop strategies to enhance retention and support student success.
Data Analysis & Reporting	ECSD Leadership & Board	Ongoing	Throughout 2024–2025	Analyze partner feedback, identify trends, inform strategic actions, and make recommendations.

Engagement Demographics

Fall 2023

The Fall 2023 What We Heard Report highlights the number of participants and demographics of the community partners who provided their valuable feedback on their values, experiences and programming needs.



EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

What We Heard

French Immersion Programming
Engagement

Total Participants

In the fall of 2023, ECSD engaged French Immersion Program stakeholders about their values, experiences, and programming needs.

352 Stakeholders, parents, students and staff, shared ideas.

168 via online survey and **184** at in-person sessions held at:

St. John XXIII Catholic Elementary/Junior High

Holy Cross Catholic Elementary/Junior High

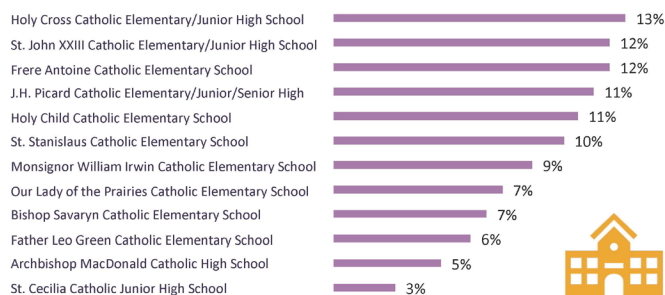
St. Cecilia Catholic Junior High School

J.H. Picard Catholic Elementary/Junior/Senior High



What School does your Child Attend:

(n=149)



Values

Top Three Values:

- The opportunity to learn a **new/second language** (80% of survey respondents).
- The opportunity to learn more about **French Canadian culture and cultural opportunities** (25% of survey respondents).
- French Immersion allows for **improved career opportunities** (17% of survey respondents).



Spring 2024

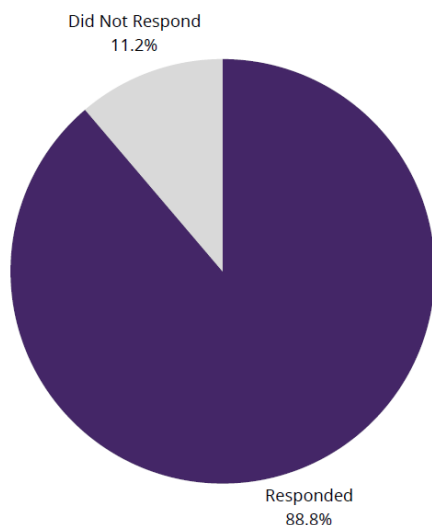
From April 29 to May 13, 2024, ECSD launched two questionnaires to capture insights, suggestions and feedback to help shape the future of French Immersion in the Division. The questionnaires were designed to reflect the two key French Immersion groups, French Immersion parents, guardians, staff, and students. There were 1383 community members who responded, representing 52% of ECSD's French Immersion families. Additionally, 902 French Immersion students in Grades 7 through 12, representing 89% of the French Immersion students in these grades, responded to the two questionnaires.

Outcomes and Decision Making

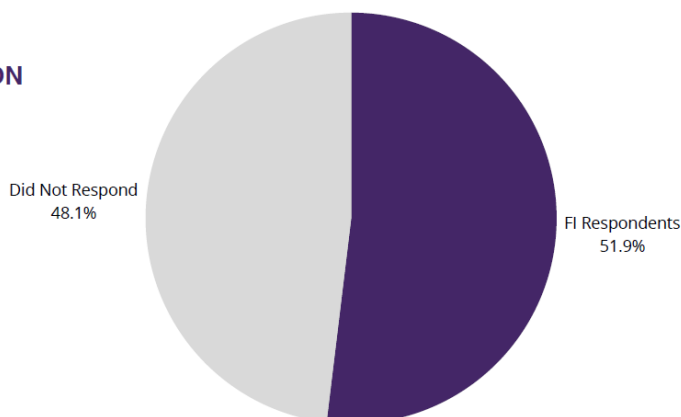
TWO QUESTIONNAIRES

Open from April 29 to May 13, 2024

RESPONSE RATE OF FRENCH IMMERSION STUDENTS (GRADES 7 TO 12)



RESPONSE RATE OF ECSD FAMILIES



SIX IN-PERSON FOCUS GROUPS

Archbishop MacDonald
J.H. Picard
Monsignor William Irwin
St. Cecilia
St. John XXIII
St. Stanislaus

There were four major themes that emerged from the French Immersion engagements. They were:

- Transportation
- Program Pathways and Locations
- Program Experience and
- Cultural Experience.

Following these themes, the following recommendations were made:

- Enhance bus services to French Immersion Junior High and Senior High schools.
- Review program pathways and locations to:
 - balance community school needs with French Immersion programming,
 - match areas of demand and population growth, and
 - reduce the number of school transition points.
- Enhance program and course offerings in French Immersion, particularly at the High School level; Enhance cultural opportunities.
- Enhance awareness of French Immersion resources for families.

Implementation

ECSD's Learning Services and Educational Planning have been working together on implementing the recommendations. While the implementation of all the recommendations is a longer-term process, Learning Services and Educational Planning began looking at what could be actioned and implemented in the first year. Here is a summary of the progress made in the first six months.



FI ENGAGEMENT Y1 - MID-POINT CHECK-IN

The "What We Heard" Report identified four key areas for action to enhance French immersion retention. This one-pager outlines the progress made in the first six months. A comprehensive Year 1 report will be available after the September 30th, 2025 enrolment count.

Transportation

Analysis

- Analyzed all FI bus routes for ride times
- Explore shuttle bus routes for a JH shuttle to JHP

Actions

- Additional bus routes will be added to decrease ride times
- One pager from transportation for admin/admin support to ensure common messaging
- Shuttle bus offered at St. John XXIII and Holy Cross for 2025-2026 but not viable at this time

Year 2

- Shuttle bus will be promoted earlier and regularly in Y2 to determine viability

Program Pathways

Analysis

- Inconsistencies in program pathway promotion between schools

Actions

- \$5000 (OLEP funds) allocated to each school to promote program pathways through targeted activities
- Time allocated at each FI principal meeting to plan activities
- Successes: increased social media posts, JH principals attending ELEM SAC meetings, JHP kiosk at every demo of learning, feeder volleyball tournaments, increased activities to promote JHP

Year 2

- Intentional planning to continue emphasizing program pathways, through targeted time at FI meetings

Program Experience

Analysis

- Students want engaging learning opportunities and choice.
- Parents want more tools to support their child's learning

Actions

- Individual schools have taken actions related to their specific feedback to enhance program experience.
- Ongoing principal professional learning on program experience
- Division allocated dollars
- Successes: Language Myth Busters promoted, MAC acknowledgement of FI completion at grad, St. John XXIII first trip to Quebec

Year 2

- Begin creation of a standard of program experience

Cultural Experience

Analysis

- Families and students value diverse cultural experiences

Actions

- \$5000 (OLEP funds) to provide cultural activities, \$1500 of ImmersArts funds used by all schools
- 2 Division events: Kitchen Party (100 people), Cabane à sucre (500 people)
- Successes: Significant increase in the number and variety of cultural activities facilitated by the Cultural Coordinator, Intentional planning and collaboration of diverse cultural activities

Year 2

- Continue to leverage the services of the Cultural Coordinator

Objectives

Objective	Timeline
Increase overall retention in French Immersion	By June 2027
Strengthen transitions from junior high to senior high	By June 2028
Enhance student satisfaction in the program	By June 2026
Improve parent awareness and engagement	By June 2027
Expand cultural and extracurricular participation	By June 2026

Monitoring and Evaluation

ECSD's Learning Services hosts French Immersion Principal meetings five times a year. The Implementation of the recommendations are a standing agenda item. Each meeting, Learning Services will lead the principals through a facilitated process to share what each school is doing to implement the recommendations at their site.

Additionally, Learning Services hosts professional development for all the French Immersion teachers (Somet) twice a year. These sessions will also provide the French Immersion teachers with the opportunity to discuss and share the implementation of the recommendations.

Finally, Educational Planning will look at updating the progress made based on retention and enrolment in the fall of each year, starting in September 2026.

SPANISH BILINGUAL PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT

Intent of Engagement

ECSD is committed to strengthening its Spanish Bilingual Program, ensuring students receive high-quality bilingual education from Kindergarten to Grade 12. To support this goal, ECSD launched a community engagement initiative to gather feedback from families, educators, and students about their experiences in the program and identify opportunities for improvement.

Through surveys and focus groups, ECSD is inviting students, staff and families to share insights on why they chose Spanish Bilingual education, what aspects of the program are working well, and what enhancements could be made to increase retention and student success. This engagement process is designed to inform future program development, ensuring alignment with community expectations and educational best practices.

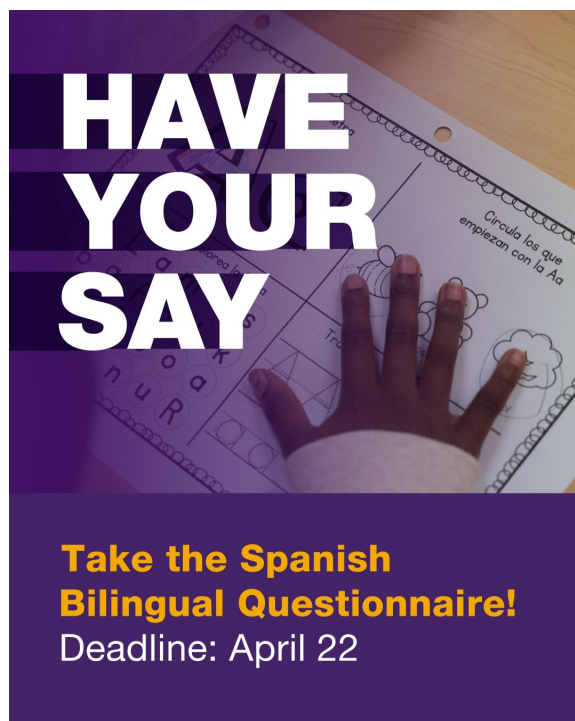
How Engagement Supports Decision-Making

The feedback collected through this engagement directly influences decision-making regarding program structure, student support, and long-term sustainability.

Engagement Strategies

To ensure broad participation and meaningful feedback, ECSD employed multiple engagement strategies:

- **Communication:** Outreach through postcards at home, school websites, and direct communication with families.



- **Consultation:** Questionnaire for parents, educators, and students to assess program strengths and areas for growth.
- **Collaboration:** Focus groups with Grades 7-12 students to gather firsthand insights into their experiences in the Spanish Bilingual program.

Roles and Responsibilities

The success of this engagement initiative relies on collaboration between:

- ECSD Leadership, Learning Services and Educational Planning.
- Parents and guardians who provide insights into their expectations and experiences with Spanish Bilingual education.
- Students and educators who shared perspectives on the program and language learning supports.

Engagement Activities (2024–2025)

Activity Name	Target Audience	Status	Timeline	Key Purpose/Focus
Spanish Bilingual Community Survey	Parents, guardians, educators, students	Ongoing	Spring 2025	Gather feedback on program strengths and areas for improvement.
Student Focus Groups	Grades 7-12 Spanish Bilingual students	Ongoing	Spring 2025	Understand student experiences and retention challenges.
Program Development Planning	ECSD Leadership, Learning Services and Educational Planning	Ongoing	Summer-Fall 2025	Use engagement findings to refine program and student supports.

Outcomes and Decision-Making

This engagement is ongoing, with the final What We Heard Report to be completed by Fall 2025. The final report will include recommendations by Learning Services and Educational Planning to implement the feedback received.

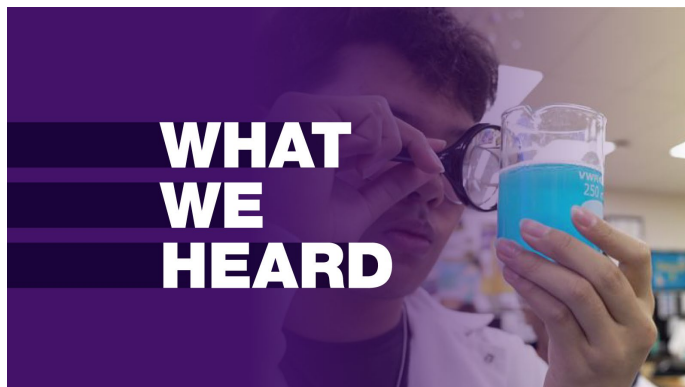
ENHANCED ACADEMIC PROGRAM (EAP) ENGAGEMENT

Intent of Engagement

ECSD is committed to providing students with high intellectual engagement through the Enhanced Academic Program (EAP). This program is designed for students who thrive in rigorous academic environments, enjoy being challenged, and seek opportunities to expand their knowledge and skills.

To ensure the program continues to meet the needs of students and families, ECSD launched a Division-wide engagement initiative to gather feedback from partners. Through questionnaires, families, staff, and students were invited to share their experiences, motivations for choosing EAP,

and suggestions for program enhancements. This engagement plays a crucial role in shaping the future of EAP, ensuring it remains aligned with student success and academic excellence.



How Engagement Supports Decision-Making

The insights gathered through this engagement will directly inform decision-making regarding program structure, curriculum development, and student support.

Engagement Strategies

To ensure broad participation and meaningful feedback, ECSD employed multiple engagement strategies:

- **Communication:** Outreach through newsletters, school websites, and direct communication with families.
- **Consultation:** Questionnaires for parents, educators, and students to assess program strengths and areas for growth.
- **Collaboration:** Student questionnaires designed to capture firsthand experiences and academic aspirations.

Roles and Responsibilities

The success of this engagement initiative relied on:

- Support from the leadership team, Learning Services and Educational Planning.
- Parents and Guardians' insight into their expectations and experiences with EAP.
- Students and Educators' perspectives on program effectiveness and academic challenges.

Engagement Activities (2024–2025)

Activity Name	Target Audience	Status	Timeline	Key Purpose/Focus
EAP Community Survey	Parents, guardians, educators, students	Ongoing	Spring 2025	Gather feedback on the program's strengths and areas for improvement.
Program Development Planning	ECSD Leadership and Educational Planning	Ongoing	Summer-Fall 2025	Use engagement findings to refine the program and make recommendations.

Outcomes and Decision-Making

This engagement is ongoing, with the final What We Heard Report to be completed by Fall 2025. The final report will include recommendations by Educational Planning to implement the feedback received.

ATTENDANCE BOUNDARY ENGAGEMENT ST. JOSEPHINE BAKHITA CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY/JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Intent of Engagement

ECSD is committed to ensuring that families have a voice in decisions affecting school attendance boundaries. With the opening of St. Josephine Bakhita Catholic Elementary/Junior High School in September 2025, ECSD launched an engagement process to gather feedback from families regarding proposed attendance boundaries.

Through a video presentation and an online survey, ECSD invited parents and guardians to share their perspectives. The feedback collected helped inform decisions regarding student placement, transportation, and programming, ensuring that the new school meets community needs while maintaining balanced enrollment across the division.

How Engagement Supports Decision-Making

The insights gathered through this engagement directly influenced decision-making related to boundary placement and student accommodation. Key areas informed by family input include:

- **Grade Configuration:** 79% of respondents supported opening St. Josephine Bakhita Catholic School as a K-9 school in its first year, which helped validate this approach.
- **Grandfathering of Students:** Families expressed concerns about students currently attending Bishop David Motiuk Catholic Elementary/Junior High School (BDM) who wished to remain at their current school. ECSD clarified that Grade 5 to 9 students from Rosenthal/Secord may stay at BDM, though transportation will not be provided.
- **Transportation Access:** The demand for a bus service to the new school was high. ECSD confirmed that yellow bus transportation will be available for eligible students, with further details provided in Spring 2025.

Engagement Strategies

ECSD employed multiple engagement strategies to ensure broad participation and meaningful feedback:

- **Communication:** Families were informed through school newsletters, Division and school websites, social media and direct emails.
- **Consultation:** Parents and guardians completed surveys to provide input on boundary concerns, transportation needs, and school programming.
- **Collaboration:** The ECSD planning team worked alongside partners to ensure transparent decision-making aligned with community needs.

Roles and Responsibilities

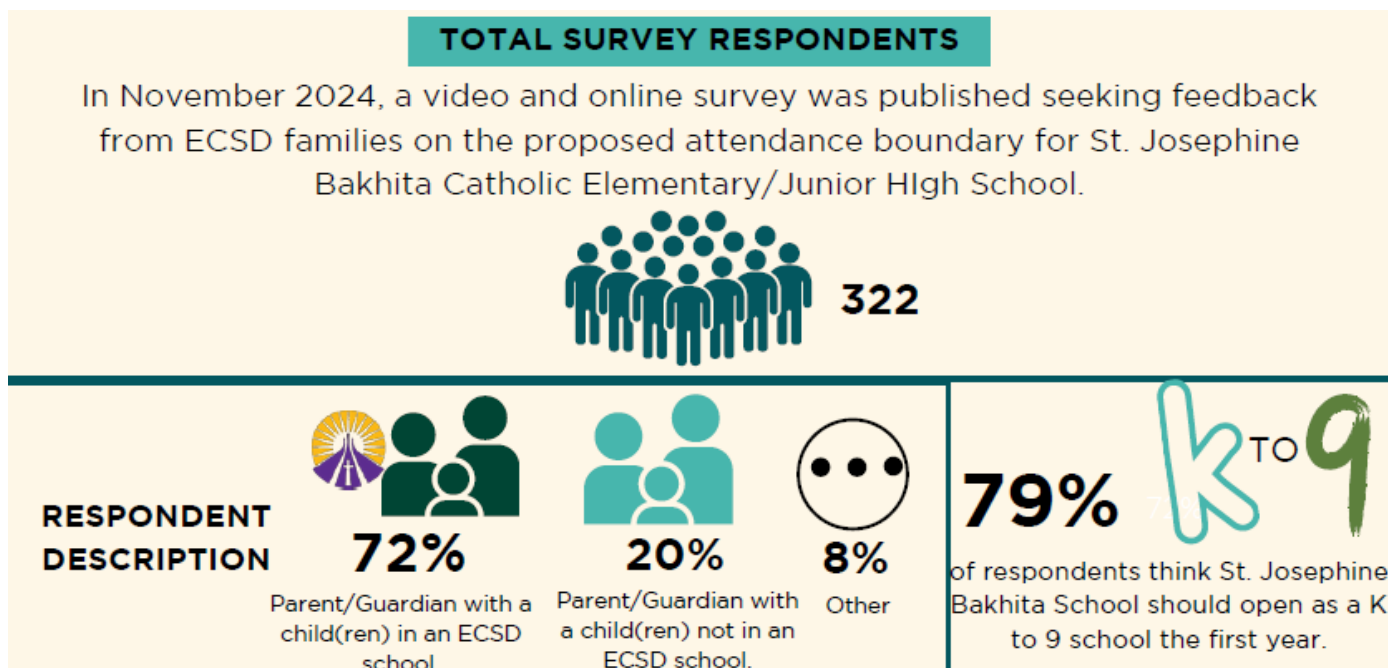
The success of this engagement initiative relied on collaboration between multiple groups:

- **ECSD Leadership** analyzed community feedback and refined the attendance boundary strategy.
- **Parents and Guardians** contributed insights through survey participation and direct feedback.
- **Educational Planning** reviewed survey results to align eligibility requirements with community needs.

Engagement Activities (2024–2025)

Activity Name	Target Audience	Status	Timeline	Key Purpose/Focus
Attendance Boundary Public Survey	ECSD families	Complete	November 2024	Gather feedback on proposed attendance boundaries.
Yellow Bus Transportation Planning	Eligible families	Ongoing	Spring 2025	Define transportation eligibility and logistics.
School Programming Development	Incoming students & families	Ongoing	Spring-Summer 2025	Align academic offerings with student needs and interests.

Engagement Demographics



Outcomes and Decision-Making

Decisions Made Based on Engagement

Partner feedback informed several key decisions regarding St. Josephine Bakhita Catholic School's attendance boundaries and student support:

- **Finalized Grade Configuration:** The school will open as K-9 in the first year, aligning with community feedback.
- **Clarification of Student Placement:** Families expressed concerns about grandfathering students from Rosenthal/Secord who currently attend BDM. ECSD confirmed students may remain but will not receive Division-provided busing.
- **Enhanced Transportation Options:** Due to strong interest, yellow bus transportation will be provided for eligible students, ensuring accessibility to the new school.

Outcomes and Benefits to the Community/Division

The engagement process resulted in tangible benefits for families and students:

- **Greater Transparency:** Parents felt heard, leading to increased trust in the decision-making process.
- **Improved Accessibility:** Families gained clarity on transportation options and school placement policies.
- **Stronger Community Support:** The consultation strengthened relationships between ECSD and the families it serves.

AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION (AAC) GOES TO SCHOOL

Intent of Engagement

The Edmonton Catholic School Division (ECSD) is dedicated to supporting students learning to use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices by providing high-quality coaching for staff. AAC Goes to School is a virtual, three-week program offered three times a year, designed to help educators integrate communication systems into curriculum-based activities such as science, reading, art, and writing. The initiative also includes Focus on Self-Regulation coaching, reinforcing the importance of student engagement and communication within academic settings.

Through this program, ECSD ensures that staff members receive expert guidance from AAC specialists, allowing them to model and implement AAC effectively in the classroom. To further support collaboration, adult-only coaching sessions are scheduled on Thursdays, creating a dedicated space for participants to discuss successes, concerns, and barriers encountered during AAC trials.

How Engagement Supports Decision-Making

The AAC Goes to School initiative plays a vital role in decision-making regarding the integration of AAC tools in classrooms and overall accessibility support within ECSD. The engagement process has informed several key areas:

- **Staff Training and Support:** Feedback from educators has guided the design and scheduling of AAC coaching sessions, ensuring training aligns with their classroom needs.
- **Program Expansion:** Based on rising participation, ECSD increased the number of available coaching sessions to accommodate demand across multiple schools.
- **Curriculum Adaptation:** Educators have received tailored coaching to integrate AAC into core subjects, making communication accessible for all students.

Engagement Strategies

To maximize effectiveness, ECSD employed a range of strategies to ensure meaningful engagement:

- **Communication:** Staff newsletters, direct school communications, and internal training memos promoted the program.
- **Consultation:** Educators participated in surveys and discussions to refine AAC coaching based on classroom needs.
- **Collaboration:** AAC specialists modeled different communication systems, ensuring inclusive learning experiences.

Roles and Responsibilities

ECSD worked collaboratively to develop AAC Goes to School, ensuring its success through shared expertise:

- **AAC Specialists** led coaching sessions and provided hands-on guidance to educators.
- **Educators and Classroom Support Teams** implemented AAC strategies with students.
- **Self-Regulation Program Leads** integrated communication and regulation techniques into the initiative.

Engagement Activities (2024–2025)

Activity Name	Target Audience	Status	Timeline	Key Purpose/Focus
AAC Goes to School Virtual Sessions	ECSD educators & classroom staff	Ongoing	Fall, Winter, Spring 2024–2025	Provide hands-on coaching and AAC modeling strategies.
Self-Regulation Coaching	ECSD educators	Ongoing	Throughout 2024–2025	Support educators in integrating AAC with student regulation practices.
Educator Feedback & Discussion Sessions	AAC participants	Complete	Thursdays in each session	Foster collaboration and problem-solving among staff.

Outcomes and Decision-Making

Decisions Made Based on Engagement

Feedback from participants has guided program refinement and expansion, leading to several validated decisions:

- **Increased Modeling Support:** Sessions now demonstrate multiple AAC systems to ensure accessibility across diverse student needs.
- **Improved Educator Readiness:** Staff confidence in using AAC in academic settings has grown, supported by post-training surveys.
- **Ongoing Engagement Enhancements:** Thursday discussion sessions allow educators to collaborate and refine implementation strategies.

Outcomes and Benefits to the Community/Division

The engagement process has led to tangible benefits for educators, students, and ECSD as a whole:

- **Improved AAC Implementation:** Educators report increased use of AAC in classrooms, making communication more natural and embedded within daily routines.
- **Enhanced Staff Confidence:** Post-survey results indicate growth in educator knowledge and responsiveness to student communication attempts.

- **Greater Inclusion:** The initiative has reinforced the importance of accessible learning experiences for students requiring AAC support.

Testimonials from Partners

"AAC is now a natural part of my teaching, not an added task!" – ECSD Educator

"I better understand how to integrate AAC into academics, making learning more accessible for my students." – Participant Feedback

Communication Practices

To ensure accessibility and program visibility, ECSD employed various communication methods:

- **Internal newsletters and staff outreach campaigns** promoting registration.
- **Post-session surveys** allowing educators to refine future training opportunities.
- **Collaboration with AAC specialists** to enhance engagement and inclusivity.

AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION (AAC) GOES HOME

Intent of Engagement

ECSD is committed to ensuring that students who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices receive consistent support both at school and at home. AAC Goes Home is a monthly online learning opportunity designed to connect families who have children using AAC. The program fosters a supportive community where families can ask questions, share concerns, and celebrate successes in their AAC journey.

By providing structured learning and discussion opportunities, ECSD empowers families to become active partners in their child's communication development. Through this engagement, parents and caregivers gain practical strategies to integrate AAC into daily routines, ensuring that communication is not limited to the classroom but fully embraced in the home environment.

How Engagement Supports Decision-Making

This engagement process directly informs ECSD's approach to family support and AAC education. The insights gathered from AAC Goes Home sessions have influenced key decisions:

- **Strengthened Parent Involvement:** Feedback has reinforced the critical role families play in AAC success, leading to enhanced family outreach and training initiatives.
- **Expanded Resources and Accessibility:** Based on participant input, ECSD increased AAC guidance materials, offering tailored learning for various AAC systems.
- **Greater Collaboration Between Home and School:** Families expressed the need for better alignment between home practices and school expectations, prompting ECSD to integrate home-based AAC strategies into classroom planning.

Engagement Strategies

To ensure meaningful participation and accessibility, ECSD employs multiple engagement methods:

- **Communication:** Regular invitations and updates through Division newsletters and direct outreach.
- **Consultation:** Parent surveys and discussions to shape the structure of AAC learning sessions.
- **Collaboration:** Sessions led by AAC specialists with interactive components, allowing families to connect and learn from one another.

Roles and Responsibilities

The success of AAC Goes Home relies on collaboration between:

- AAC Specialists who facilitate sessions and provide tailored coaching.
- Families and Caregivers who engage in learning, sharing experiences, and applying AAC strategies at home.
- ECSD Learning Services ensuring program accessibility and ongoing improvements.

Engagement Activities (2024–2025)

Activity Name	Target Audience	Status	Timeline	Key Purpose/Focus
Monthly AAC Goes Home Learning Sessions	Families of AAC Users	Ongoing	August 2024 – June 2025	Provide education, support, and community connection for families.
Virtual Parent Discussion Groups	Parents & Caregivers	Ongoing	Monthly	Share successes, barriers, and strategies for AAC use at home.
Resource Development & Accessibility Expansion	Families & AAC Specialists	Ongoing	Throughout 2024–2025	Improve materials and accessibility tools for families.

Outcomes and Decision-Making

Decisions Made Based on Engagement

The feedback collected from AAC Goes Home has guided several key decisions:

- **Increased Parent Training:** More structured learning sessions introduced, focusing on AAC integration at home and in the community.
- **Greater Collaboration Between Home and School:** New resources designed to bridge AAC learning between school and home environments.

- **Expanded Support for Families:** Additional one-on-one coaching and discussion sessions provided based on family needs.

Outcomes and Benefits to the Community/Division

The engagement has led to tangible benefits for families, students, and ECSD's AAC programs:

- **Greater Family Confidence:** Parents report feeling more prepared to use AAC effectively at home.
- **Improved AAC Usage Beyond School:** Families express increased comfort by incorporating AAC into daily routines, social interactions, and recreational activities.
- **Stronger Community Connections:** The initiative fosters a sense of belonging and shared learning, reinforcing the importance of AAC accessibility beyond the classroom.

Testimonials from Partners

"Engaging with other families learning to use AAC has been so important for us." – **Parent Feedback**

"I understand now that AAC isn't just for school – it's a daily tool for communication in every setting."
– **Caregiver Feedback**

"This has expanded my opportunities to use AAC more confidently!" – **Participant Testimonial**

Communication Practices

To ensure effective engagement, ECSD employs multiple outreach methods:

- Division newsletters and targeted family communication.
- Interactive online sessions encourage discussion and shared learning.
- Collaborative resource development ensuring accessibility for families.

CAREER AND BRIDGING FAIR

Intent of Engagement

ECSD is committed to supporting students in their transition from high school to post-secondary education and career pathways. The annual Career and Bridging Fair serves as a key initiative to equip students and their families with essential knowledge about career education, Indigenous education, and inclusion support. By connecting students with industry professionals, educational institutions, and support organizations, ECSD ensures that learners are well-informed about their opportunities after high school.



The poster features a collage of images on the left showing various career-related activities: a person in a police uniform, a person in a medical setting, a person in a construction setting, and a person using a VR headset. The collage is overlaid with the 'EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS' logo. The top left corner has a 'CAREERS' logo. The title 'Career and Bridging Fairs' is written in a large, elegant script font. Below the title, the text 'Explore Options, Gain Insights, Make Connections, Get Inspired.' is written in a smaller, elegant script font. On the right side, there is a box containing the date, times for different groups, and the location.

CAREERS

Career and Bridging Fairs

Explore *Options*, Gain *Insights*,
Make *Connections*, Get *Inspired*.

November 27, 2024

Grades 9-12: 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM	All students & parents/guardians: 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM
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Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre
(9405 50 Street)

This engagement process also recognizes the importance of early career exploration, guiding students from junior high onward to make informed decisions about their high school courses and long-term goals. Additionally, the fair provides valuable resources to families, including immigrant families who may need guidance in navigating the Canadian education and workforce systems. To enhance accessibility, ECSD partnered with One World One Centre, offering translation services for attendees requiring language support.

How Engagement Supports Decision-Making

By engaging students, families, and educational staff, the Career and Bridging Fair directly influences decision-making regarding program development and career-readiness strategies. Through feedback and discussions with partners, ECSD has adapted its high school programming to better align with student interests and industry needs.

- **Curriculum Adjustments:** Based on student requests and industry feedback, ECSD is piloting a Learner's CTF course for Grade 9, helping students obtain their learner's license earlier to support career pathways requiring driving.
- **Expanded Career Planning Tools:** The Division has integrated myBlueprint into Grades 10-12, with plans to introduce it in junior high, ensuring students have a structured path to explore career options.
- **Industry Collaboration:** Insights from businesses and unions inform ECSD's approach to workforce preparation, bridging gaps between student learning and real-world career expectations.

Engagement Strategies

To ensure broad participation and meaningful impact, ECSD utilized a multi-tiered engagement strategy:

- **Communication:** Targeted outreach via newsletters, direct teacher communication, and social media campaigns.
- **Consultation:** Surveys from students, parents, vendors, and educational staff to assess priorities and challenges.
- **Collaboration:** Partnerships with CAREERS Next Gen, union halls, associations, and government agencies to strengthen industry connections and student career options.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Career and Bridging Fair was developed collaboratively with multiple partners:

- ECSD Learning Services, Indigenous Learning Services, and Student Services led the initiative, ensuring comprehensive student support.
- Industry and community partners provided career insights and mentorship opportunities.
- One World One Centre facilitated multilingual support for families needing translation services.

Engagement Activities (2024–2025)

Activity Name	Target Audience	Status	Timeline	Key Purpose/Focus
Career and Bridging Fair at Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre	Division students (Grades 9-12) and families	Ongoing	November 27, 2024	Connect students and families with career pathways, educational options, and industry professionals.
Vendor Outreach & Recruitment	Industry partners, unions, education organizations	Ongoing	Year-round	Expand career exploration opportunities for students.
myBlueprint Expansion	Junior & senior high students	Ongoing	Implemented 2024-2025	Guide students in planning their education and career pathways.

Outcomes and Decision-Making

Decisions Made Based on Engagement

Based on partner feedback, ECSD refined and expanded its Career and Bridging Fair, resulting in several validated decisions:

- **Enhanced Career Planning Resources:** Integration of myBlueprint and Chatter High to help students understand career paths and educational requirements.
- **Improved Accessibility:** Expanded translation services for diverse families, ensuring equitable access to career planning information.



- **Increased Engagement Opportunities:** Growth in vendor participation and interactive experiences, such as Indigenous speakers and Try-a-Trade activities.

Outcomes and Benefits to the Community/Division

The fair has led to tangible benefits for students and families:

- **Stronger Career Awareness:** Post-event surveys show a 65% increase in attendance, with 97% of parents and 90% of students finding professional interactions useful.
- **Greater Student Engagement:** Expanded participation in career-oriented programs, leading to more informed high school course selection.
- **Positive Industry Relations:** Strengthened partnerships with unions and businesses, opening new opportunities for ECSD students.



Testimonials from Partners

"Thank you for creating this opportunity for students — it really is impactful!" – **Vendor Feedback**

"I appreciated the ECSD staff answering questions about the career fair. I plan to attend again next year." – **Parent Feedback**

"The fair helped me understand what courses I need for my career interests!" – **Grade 11 Student**

SUMMARY

The Edmonton Catholic School Division remains steadfast in its commitment to engaging the voices of students, families, and staff in all decision-making processes. By actively seeking and incorporating feedback from our diverse community, we ensure that our educational programs are responsive, inclusive, and aligned with the needs and aspirations of those we serve. This collaborative approach not only enhances the quality of education but also fosters a strong sense of belonging and partnership within our Division. Together, we will continue to build a vibrant and supportive learning environment where every voice is heard and valued.