

| Edmonton Catholic Schools |

SUPPORTING ATTENDANCE AND FAMILY-SCHOOL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN ECSD - UPDATE

| November 2025 |



ATTENDANCE AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Edmonton Catholic Schools recognizes that two foundational elements contribute significantly to student success and to the strength of our school communities. The first is consistent school attendance. The second is the presence of clear, respectful, and supportive processes that help families navigate concerns when they arise. Together, these two areas influence how students experience school, how families feel supported, and how staff build strong relationships with the communities they serve.

Leadership Services plays a central role in sustaining both of these important pillars. Through the work of Division Principals, Leadership Services provides guidance, coaching, and process support to ensure that attendance concerns are addressed early, thoughtfully, and in ways that reflect both compassion and accountability. Division Principals work alongside school leaders to interpret data, plan interventions, and apply consistent procedures so that students who are struggling with attendance receive timely support. This collaborative work helps schools identify emerging concerns, develop strategies that align with Division expectations, and connect students to services that remove barriers to regular attendance. Leadership Services also provides essential support for parent-school conflict management. When families raise questions or concerns, the Division ensures that they are welcomed, heard, and assisted through clear and structured processes. Division Principals help principals understand procedural expectations, prepare for challenging conversations, and navigate complex matters in a way that preserves dignity and fosters trust. Other Division departments, including Inclusive Education, Indigenous Learning Services, Human Resources, and Communications, offer specialized expertise so that responses are coordinated and thorough. Together, these supports help ensure that parents feel valued as partners in their child's learning and that their concerns are handled with care, professionalism, and consistency.

Taken together, the work outlined in this report reflects a larger commitment on the part of the Division. The goal is to create learning communities where students are present and engaged, where families feel confident in bringing forward questions, and where staff are equipped to respond with clarity, fairness, and compassion. Supported by School-based staff, Leadership Services and the collaborative work of multiple departments, we are committed to strengthening student well-being and reinforcing the support and communication pathways that are essential for students to achieve optimal learning within Catholic education.

SUPPORTING ATTENDANCE

Edmonton Catholic Schools continues to recognize regular school attendance as a foundational element of student success. When students attend school consistently, they are more likely to experience academic growth, positive relationships, and a sense of belonging that supports their overall well-being. Chronic absenteeism, however, remains one of the earliest indicators that a student may be experiencing challenges within or beyond the classroom. These challenges may include mental health concerns, academic struggles, social pressures, or systemic barriers that affect daily routines and engagement.

During the 2024–25 school year most students across the Division attended school at or above the 90% threshold. Attendance patterns across grade levels demonstrate notable variation. With the support of our Attendance Lead in Leadership Services, Site-Based administrators and school staff, the Division’s approach remains grounded in a trauma-informed, equity-centered philosophy. This approach emphasizes early outreach, compassionate problem-solving, and collaboration among school teams, families, Division personnel, and community partners. Together, these efforts aim to ensure that barriers to attendance are identified early, addressed promptly, and resolved with sensitivity to each student’s unique context.



THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE

Attendance is deeply connected to a student’s experience of safety, belonging, and readiness to engage in learning. When students miss school, the effects accumulate quickly, impacting academic confidence, peer relationships, and long-term trajectories. The Division’s data reveal that illness remains the most common reason for student absences, with hundreds of thousands of illness-related absences reported across elementary, junior high, and high school settings. Excused absences unrelated to illness, as well as unexcused absences, also represent a significant portion of missed

instructional time. These patterns emphasize the need for ongoing communication with families and the importance of clear expectations around attendance.

High school students demonstrated a Division-wide attendance average of 87%, while elementary students averaged 94%. These figures underscore the increasing complexity of factors that influence attendance as students grow older, and they highlight the importance of early, relationship-based interventions that prevent attendance concerns from becoming entrenched.

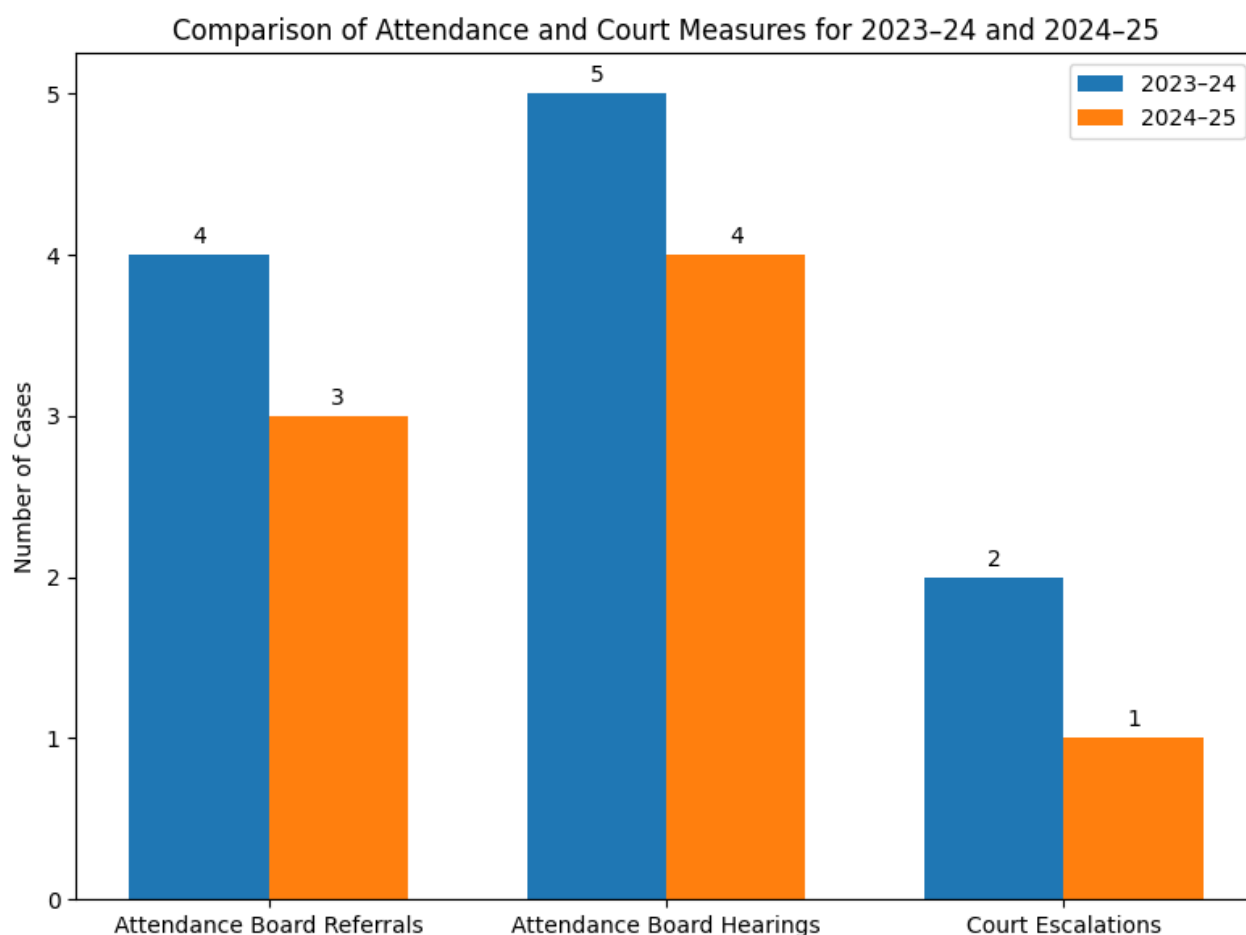
The data also suggest that students benefit when schools act quickly and collaboratively. Consistent monitoring, timely outreach, and restorative family engagement remain central to supporting students before absenteeism becomes chronic or overwhelming.



OUR RESPONSIBILITY

Alberta's Education Act outlines the statutory obligation for students to attend school regularly and describes the responsibilities of school authorities in monitoring and supporting attendance. Edmonton Catholic Schools upholds these requirements through Administrative Procedure 330, which designates the principal as the attendance officer and outlines expectations for accurate attendance recording, communication with families, and timely intervention when attendance becomes a concern.

When attendance concerns persist despite school and Division support, the matter may be escalated to the Attendance Board. During the 2024–25 school year, the Office of Student Attendance and Re-engagement (OSAR) supported schools through a small number of referrals and hearings, as well as consultations across multiple sites. Court escalations were infrequent. Recent OSAR data and feedback from principal engagements, provide a clear picture of how schools are addressing attendance challenges and where improvements are needed. The numbers tell an encouraging story:



- In addition, OSAR facilitated **19** consultations across **8** schools, reflecting a strong commitment to early intervention and collaborative problem-solving.

These trends suggest that schools are moving away from punitive measures and toward proactive, relationship-based strategies. These findings suggest that interventions implemented at the school and Division levels are often sufficient to address attendance issues without requiring formal escalation.

OUR APPROACH

Edmonton Catholic Schools uses a comprehensive system of tools, processes, and expectations to monitor, understand, and respond to student attendance.

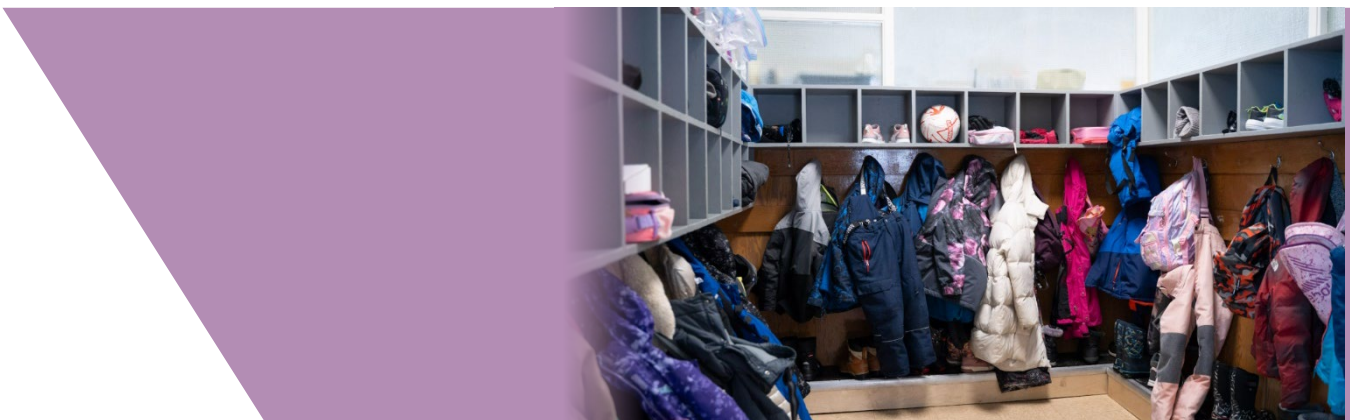
PowerSchool and SafeArrival continue to provide accurate and timely attendance information, allowing teachers, school leaders, and families to remain informed. Standardized coding for illness, excused absences, unexcused absences, and vacations has improved consistency and reduced reporting errors across the Division. Attendance is recorded by period in junior high and high school, and twice daily in elementary schools. When additional information is provided by families after an absence, records are promptly updated to ensure accuracy.

Division standards set clear expectations:

- Students are expected to maintain at least 90% attendance
- Those with 10 or more unexcused absences are identified for further support.

Training and mentorship programs build capacity among school leaders and staff by promoting positive attendance culture and welcoming environments, teaching strategies for family engagement and collaboration, and fostering student motivation and ownership of learning and attendance goals. In 2024–2025, 25% of principals and 35% of assistant principals participated in mentorship sessions, and schools with trained leaders reported a marginal improvement in attendance.

The Division continues to support schools through professional learning, data dashboards used by the vast majority of schools, and targeted mentorship for school leaders. Workshops, consultations, and support from multidisciplinary teams ensure that schools have access to the expertise needed to understand and respond to the complexities underlying absenteeism.



SUPPORTING STUDENTS THROUGH TIERED INTERVENTION

At the heart of this work is the Multi-Tiered System of Support a framework that provides universal and individualized interventions tailored to student needs. Early identification, personalized strategies, and culturally responsive practices are central to this model.

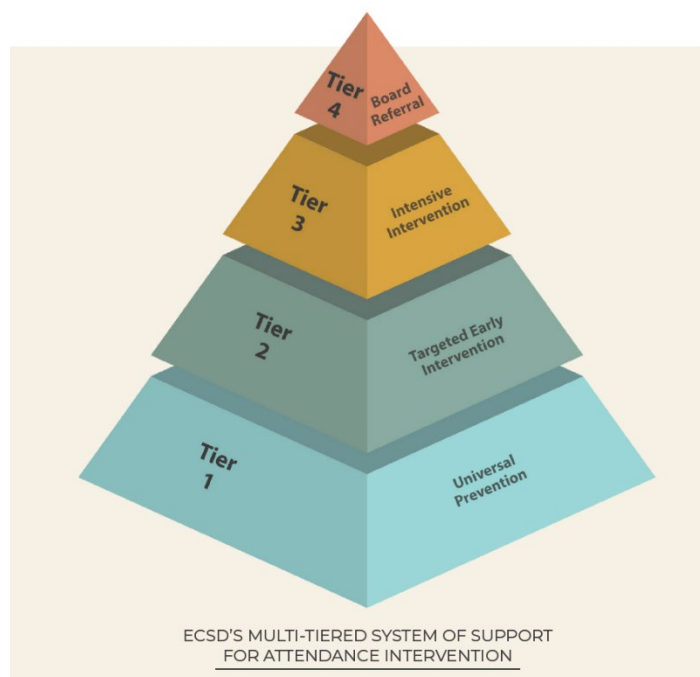
Schools implementing MTSS have seen reductions in chronic absenteeism, particularly at the elementary level, where rates dropped from 15.35% in 2023 – 2024 to 11.81% in 2024 – 2025.

At the 1st Tier, also known as the Universal Tier, schools focus on creating welcoming environments where students feel valued and connected. Staff invest time in building relationships, establishing routines, and promoting school belonging. Attendance awareness efforts, family communication strategies, and culturally responsive practices contribute to a supportive atmosphere that encourages regular attendance.

When early signs of absenteeism emerge at around 10% of absenteeism, the 2nd Tier is employed and targeted interventions are initiated. Teachers reach out to families, work collaboratively to understand underlying issues, and engage resources such as Inclusive Education consultants, Family School Liaison Workers, and mental health supports. Schools also draw on Indigenous Learning Services and Intercultural Liaisons to ensure that communication and problem-solving are culturally respectful and responsive.

At the 3rd Tier, students experiencing significant attendance challenges receive individualized, wraparound support. Trusted adults maintain regular contact, mental health providers offer counselling, and FSLWs work directly with families to address underlying barriers. Partnerships with external agencies, including Recovery Alberta, Child and Family Services, and School Resource Officers, provide additional layers of support when needed.

When absenteeism persists despite these efforts, schools collaborate with Leadership Services and our Attendance Lead to determine whether referral to the Attendance Board is appropriate. Even at this 4th Tier, these cases, schools remain engaged and committed to maintaining supportive, compassionate relationships with students and families.



SUSTAINING SUPPORT THROUGH COLLABORATION

Sustaining progress in attendance requires close collaboration across multiple levels of the Division. Principals play a vital leadership role by monitoring data, guiding school-based strategies, facilitating team discussions, and engaging families in ongoing problem-solving. Division supports, including multidisciplinary teams, specialists, and central office staff, provide expertise that helps schools respond effectively to complex situations.

Community partnerships continue to strengthen the network of care surrounding students. The YMCA Alternative Suspension Program supports learners who require a structured environment during periods away from school. Recovery Alberta provides caregiver education and mental health resources. OSAR assists with documentation, guidance, and formal processes when necessary.

Regular consultations, the use of real-time attendance dashboards, and consistent communication among school staff contribute to a cohesive, Division-wide culture of support.

SCHOOL-BASED ATTENDANCE PROCESSES

Across grade levels, schools are using structured processes to identify and respond to attendance concerns. In high schools, students are required to attend all scheduled classes, and parents or guardians are expected to notify the school of absences. Patterns of lateness and frequent missed assessments signal the need for additional support, and Grade Coordinators play an important role in monitoring these concerns.

Elementary schools use monthly monitoring to identify students whose absences exceed 10%. Educators reach out to families early, followed by support from assistant principals, Family School Liaison Workers, and principals as needed. When absences continue despite outreach, registered letters are used to formalize communication and ensure families are aware of expectations and available supports.

Junior high schools combine monthly teacher monitoring with school-wide attendance reports generated in October, December, and February. Teachers communicate regularly with families about missed assignments and emerging patterns, and administrators coordinate meetings and referrals to support services. When attendance does not improve, schools collaborate with School Operations Services to determine next steps.

Across all settings, attendance processes emphasize early identification, relationship-focused communication, and coordinated intervention.

STRATEGIES FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Improving attendance among Indigenous students requires culturally grounded practices that affirm identity and strengthen family and community connections. Schools work closely with Indigenous Learning Services, the Braided Journeys program and external partners to ensure that supports honor cultural traditions, family structures, and ways of knowing. This includes creating welcoming environments, addressing practical barriers such as transportation and access to food or supplies, and offering learning experiences that reflect students' histories, interests, and perspectives.

Culturally respectful communication, flexible meeting times, and supportive relationships play a significant role in strengthening trust. When students feel seen, valued, and supported, they are more likely to attend consistently and participate actively in their learning.



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING HIGHLIGHTS

Professional learning this year focused on strengthening relationships, enhancing cultural understanding, and deepening restorative practices. These priorities reflect our belief that meaningful connections and inclusive environments are essential for student success and well-being. Staff engaged in targeted sessions designed to build capacity and foster a shared commitment to equity across the Division.

Sessions included:

- Allyship: Exploring practical ways to stand in solidarity with marginalized communities and create spaces where all voices are valued.
- Restorative approaches: Learning strategies that emphasize repairing harm, rebuilding trust, and promoting accountability within school communities.
- Family engagement: Strengthening partnerships with families to ensure collaborative support for student learning and attendance.
- The importance of trust, identity, and belonging: Understanding how these elements shape positive school culture and influence student engagement.

These learning opportunities reinforce the Division's commitment to equity and well-being as core components of a comprehensive attendance strategy. By equipping staff with tools to nurture relationships and respond to diverse needs, we are laying the foundation for environments where every student feels seen, supported, and empowered to thrive.

OUR COMMITMENT TO ADDRESSING ATTENDANCE CONCERNS

Edmonton Catholic Schools remains deeply committed to supporting students in attending school regularly and feeling connected to their learning environments. The Division's focus on collaboration, data-informed decision-making, equity, and early intervention has contributed to meaningful improvements in attendance practices across schools.

Moving forward, efforts will continue to center on strengthening relationships, refining school-based processes, enhancing professional learning, and addressing systemic factors that influence attendance. Through collective commitment and a focus on compassion and accountability, the Division will continue to foster environments where every student feels supported, welcomed, and prepared to succeed academically, socially, and spiritually.

PARENT–SCHOOL CONFLICT RESOLUTION

INTRODUCTION

Edmonton Catholic Schools affirms its commitment to welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning communities. When families bring concerns forward, staff receive them with hospitality, respond through clear processes, and communicate outcomes in a timely and transparent manner. The work of Leadership Services ensures that schools are supported with guidance, messaging, and procedural clarity so that families experience coordinated communication and feel respected throughout the resolution process.

Parents are offered a clear and consistent pathway to raise a concern, receive acknowledgement, and understand next steps. This includes knowing who will respond, how information will be reviewed, and when follow-up will occur. These practices reflect the Division's commitment to engaging families in ways that honour dignity, promote trust, and support the well-being of students.

This commitment is rooted in Catholic teaching and in a belief that conflict can be an opportunity for deeper understanding and restored relationships. Concerns are listened to carefully and addressed within a faith-centered, student-focused framework. Edmonton Catholic Schools recognizes that questions or disagreements are a natural part of any learning community. For this reason, protocols and procedures are designed to handle conflict ethically, respectfully, and consistently.

BACKGROUND

Administrative Procedure (AP) 152 – Dealing With Parent-School Conflict Management provides the foundation for the Division’s approach to parent school conflict. The procedure outlines ethical expectations for every interaction and is grounded in three central beliefs. The first is that conflict resolution must be ethical and focused on the needs of the student, the family, staff members, and the school community. The second is that concerns should be approached proactively. This means inviting early conversations before issues escalate and encouraging reconciliation that reflects Catholic values and the importance of communion. The third belief is that solutions must prioritize the best interests of students, individual schools, and the Division.

In practical terms, school staff support parents by clarifying the specific concern, identifying the desired outcome, and determining what evidence or information needs to be reviewed. Staff collaborate with families to establish how communication will occur, what the timeline will be, and how progress or success will be measured. These practices reduce frustration and create shared understanding.

PRINCIPLES FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Effective conflict resolution relies on clear communication, mutual respect, and timely action. AP 152 provides guiding principles to support families and staff in addressing concerns constructively and collaboratively. AP 152 establishes key principles for effective conflict resolution:

1. The principle of *first contact* encourages families to begin with the person most directly involved in the issue. This approach helps prevent misunderstandings, protects relationships, and often leads to timely, meaningful solutions. Typically, teachers and parents meet to clarify facts, review evidence of learning when appropriate, and agree on next steps for the student.
2. Fairness and respect remain central throughout the process. Staff use language that promotes understanding, ask questions to clarify perspectives, and ensure parents have the opportunity to share concerns without interruption. Notes are kept brief and factual to reinforce transparency and accountability.
3. Timeliness is another essential principle. Staff acknowledge concerns promptly, usually within two school days, and provide reasonable timelines for meetings or follow-up actions. If additional time is needed to gather information, parents are informed of the reason and given an updated timeline.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PRACTICES

Conflict resolution practices in Edmonton Catholic Schools are grounded in the Education Act, the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers and Teacher Leaders, Board policies, and all relevant administrative procedures. Parents receive clear explanations of school-level processes and, when appropriate, are informed of options for review or appeal.

Schools maintain concise, factual records of conversations, meetings, and agreed actions while safeguarding privacy and sharing only necessary information. When an issue is appealed, the focus remains on the student's well-being. Schools prepare relevant documentation, identify where discretion was exercised, and outline how possible remedies were considered. Families are informed about how and when they will receive a final decision.

The escalation process provides a predictable and respectful path for addressing concerns. Most matters are resolved through a conversation with the classroom teacher. If further support is needed, the principal meets with the parent, reviews relevant information, and helps develop a fair and appropriate plan.

If a concern involves school administration or cannot be resolved at the school level, families may reach out to the department of Leadership Services for additional support in conflict resolution. Throughout the process, communication remains respectful, solution-focused, and centered on the student.

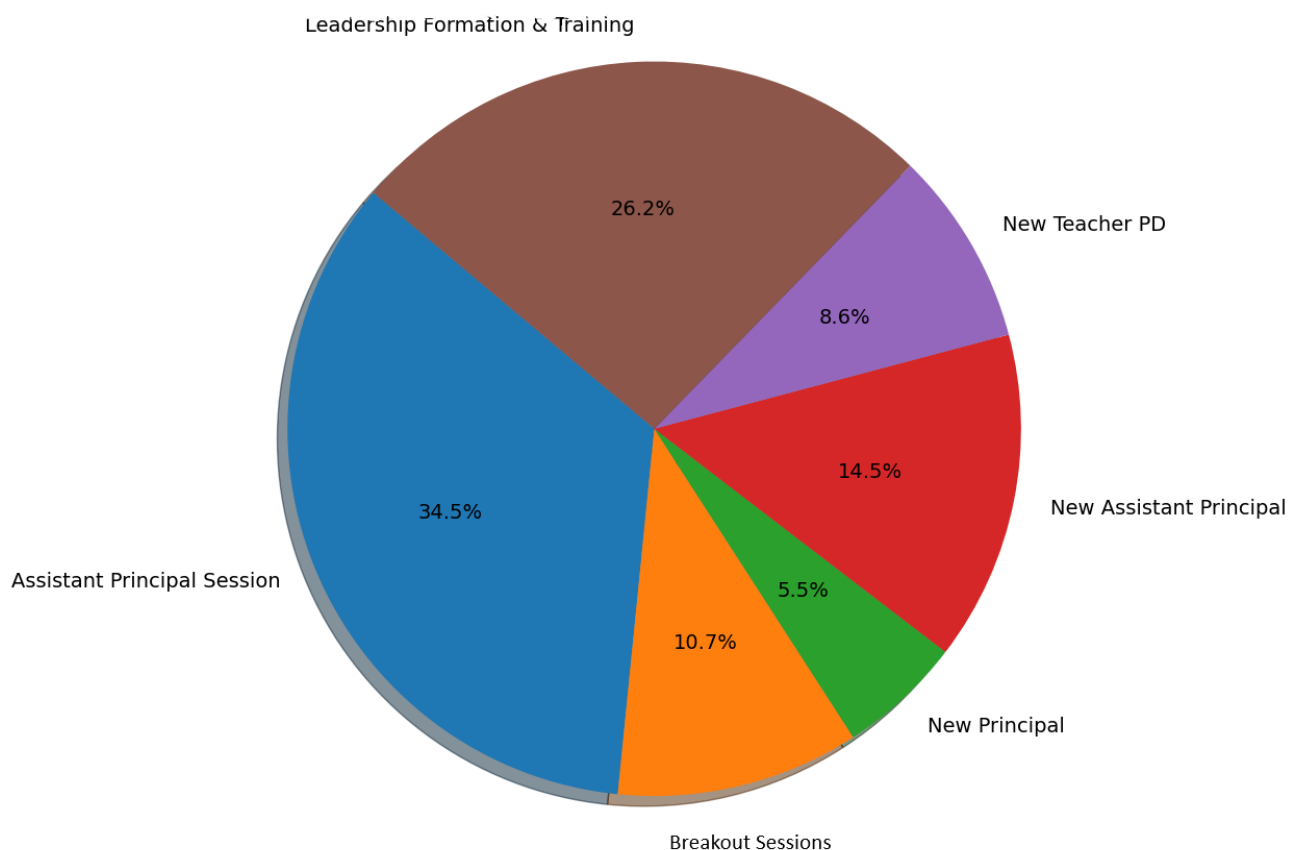


TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Our Division provides ongoing formation for school leaders to ensure responses to conflict reflect clarity, compassion, and fairness. Training emphasizes effective communication, conflict management strategies, and the importance of creating psychological safety during meetings. Leaders learn how to prepare for conversations, clarify shared purpose, document outcomes, and maintain a consistent focus on the student.

The following summary highlights the purpose and impact of each professional learning session, emphasizing how they build leadership capacity and ensure consistent, values-based practices across the Division:

- Leadership Formation and Training Participants receive foundational training in communication and solution-focused problem-solving aligned with Catholic values and Division procedures.
- New assistant principals are trained to communicate clearly and respectfully, address concerns at the appropriate level, build trusting relationships, and support conflict resolution in ways that uphold the well-being of all. They receive coaching on preparing meetings, establishing shared purpose, and documenting outcomes. This builds confidence and consistency in addressing parent concerns.
- New Principal Training and Principal Mentorship session focus on deepening their capacity to lead with dignity, respect, and fairness, ensure concerns are addressed promptly, establish transparent communication practices, and foster collaborative problem-solving.
- Catholic Educational Leader sessions reinforce AP 152 expectations through professional learning, discussion of real scenarios, and guidance on policy application.
- Division Principals in Leadership Services provide targeted support, coaching, and facilitation for challenging situations, ensuring consistency across the Division.



Administrative Procedures related to respect in the workplace, equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism further strengthen the Division's commitment to safe and respectful environments. These

procedures have their own training and support through the Creating Communities of Belonging department and offer guidance when concerns intersect with discrimination or safety issues and ensure supports are available for those affected.

KEY RESOURCES SHARED WITH SCHOOL LEADERS

Before high-stakes meetings, principals provide agendas, share relevant documents, and outline the meeting purpose. This preparation creates transparency and invites shared understanding. During meetings, principals restate the purpose, establish norms that promote respectful dialogue, and ensure that each person has the opportunity to speak. Plans developed during these conversations identify responsibilities, timelines, and follow up processes.

Leadership Services helps leaders align widely used conversation models with Division expectations. Tools drawn from resources such as *Fierce Conversations* and *Crucial Conversations* are applied within the context of AP 152. Techniques that help surface assumptions, clarify facts, or create psychological safety are used in ways that emphasize first contact, charitable dialogue, and the student's best interests. These tools do not replace Division procedures but support principled, values-based dialogue.

FACILITATING AND MEDIATING PRINCIPAL PARENT CONFERENCES

When concerns become complex or emotions run high, Edmonton Catholic Schools supports principals and families through facilitated conversations. Division representatives serve as neutral guides, helping both parties share perspectives, clarify concerns, and work collaboratively toward solutions. Their involvement promotes fairness, reduces tension, and keeps discussions constructive.

These meetings follow a clear agenda and remain grounded in the principles of AP 152. Facilitators ensure the focus stays on the student, dialogue remains respectful, and outcomes are documented in a written plan. When concerns involve discrimination or racism, staff explain reporting processes available to them in AP 172 - Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism: Reporting of and Responding to Discrimination and Racism, and ensure appropriate supports are available to those affected.

This mediation service strengthens trust between families and schools and reflects the Division's commitment to resolving conflicts ethically, collaboratively, and with the student's well-being at the center.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION COMMUNICATION STRUCTURES

The Division's communication process ensures that concerns raised by parents, students, and community members are received promptly, handled at the most appropriate level, and escalated when necessary. Concerns are typically brought forward in an escalating fashion if the parent/guardian feels it has not

been sufficiently addressed at the previous step. The following is a breakdown of the Division response structure.

School Conflict Resolution Process

Step	Who leads	Purpose	Key artifacts
First contact at the classroom level	Teacher	Clarify facts; address instructional/assessment concerns early	Parent Contact Meeting Notes; Email summary
School-level review	Principal/Administration	Facilitate resolution; ensure fairness, dignity, respect	Parent Communication: agreed next steps
Division support (as needed)	Leadership Services Division Principals	Advice, mediation, coaching, process and procedure checks	Process notes: alignment with APs and Education Act
Formal written appeal to the Chief Superintendent or Trustee	Superintendent of Leadership Services	Respond to the request and review/resolve the circumstances	Written appeal, school record and Leadership Services Notes; decision letter

When a concern begins at the school level, staff address it directly with the person most connected to the matter. If additional support is required, the Principal engages Leadership Services Division Principals for advice, mediation, coaching, and proactive planning. If a parent remains dissatisfied, a written appeal to the Chief Superintendent is submitted and reviewed, with a decision and rationale communicated in writing.

Where matters intersect with legislation or professional conduct, Leadership Services aligns steps with the Education Act, the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers and Teacher Leaders, and Division Administrative Procedures. When appropriate, the Division may inform Alberta Education. Division Principals act as the first Division-level contact for complex appeals, ensuring documentation is complete, timelines are monitored, and communication remains student-centered and respectful.



A COMMITTED APPROACH TO EFFECTIVELY ADDRESSING PARENT-SCHOOL CONCERNS

Edmonton Catholic Schools provides a coherent and values-driven approach to parent-school conflict through the expectations of AP 152. The Division's focus on early engagement, ethical conduct, and clear communication strengthens trust with families and reinforces the dignity of each person. This work, supported by Leadership Services and many other departments, ensures that concerns are addressed fairly and consistently and that relationships are strengthened in the process.

By integrating Catholic teaching with legislative and procedural expectations, Edmonton Catholic Schools supports school communities in resolving concerns constructively. The Division's investment in professional learning, process support, and collaborative problem solving helps sustain strong partnerships with families and ensures that each student experiences a safe, caring, and supportive learning environment.





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