



EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Public Board Meeting Agenda 2025-2026

#5

Date: January 28, 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 MacDonald
1.2 Land Acknowledgement	A. Mutala
1.3 Roll Call	
1.4 Approval of the Agenda	
1.4.1 Consent Items	
1.4.1.1 2026-2027 Division School Year and Year-Round School Year Calendar Update	
1.5 Minutes	
1.5.1 Minutes of Regular Board Meeting 4-2025-2026, December 17, 2025	
1.5.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes	
1.6 Alberta's Top 85 Employers 2026 Designation	L. Anderson

2 Business of the Meeting

2.1 Community of School Councils: "What We Heard"	L. Anderson, S. Makale
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3 Presentation and Review of Accountability Report (s)

3.1 AI Steering Committee Update	L. Anderson, T. Peterson
3.2 Faith Formation for Students and Staff	L. Anderson, R. Feehan

4 Celebration of #ECSDfaithinspires

4.1 Board Chair Report	S. Palazzo
4.2 Chief Superintendent Report	L. Anderson

5 Adjournment

5.1 Closing Prayer	D. Engel
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

January 28, 2026 Public Board Meeting **1.4.1.1**

Date: January 28, 2026

To: The Board of Trustees

From: Lynnette Anderson, Chief Superintendent

Originator: John Fiacco, Superintendent of Educational Planning

Re: Revision of the 2026-2027 Division School Year and Year-Round School Year Calendars

Background:

Attached are revised Division School Year and Year-Round School Year calendars for 2026-2027. An additional Division-wide PD day has been included for Nov 10, 2026 (before Fall break) resulting in a decrease in instructional days from 184 to 183. This move aligns with EPSB which gives families the same days off, resulting in savings for the Division that can be redirected to the instructional envelope.

Recommendation:

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

Attachments:

- Revised 2026-2027 Division School Year Calendar
- Revised 2026-2027 Year-Round School Calendar

ECSD SCHOOL CALENDAR 2026-2027



July 2026						
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August 2026						
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Non instructional Days

Cancellation of early dismissal

Non-Operational Days

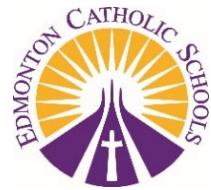
Early Dismissal

Statutory Holiday - Office/School Closed

Named Holiday - Office/School Closed

MONTH	Operational Days	Instructional Days
August	0	0
September	18	16
October	21	21
November	18	17
December	14	14
January	20	20
February	19	16
March	19	19
April	20	20
May	19	19
June	22	21
Total	190	183

ECSD Year-Round School Calendar 2026-2027



First Day of Operation

August 17, 2026

First Day of Instruction

August 18, 2026

Last Day of Instruction

June 29, 2027

Last Day of Operation

June 30, 2027

July 2026						
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August 2026						
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September 2026						
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October 2026						
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November 2026						
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December 2026						
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January 2027						
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February 2027						
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March 2027						
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April 2027						
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May 2027						
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June 2027						
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Non-instructional days

Cancellation of early dismissal

Non-operational days

Early dismissal

Statutory Holiday - Office/School Closed

Named Holiday - Office/School Closed

MONTH	Operational Days	Instructional Days
August	11	10
September	20	19
October	12	12
November	18	17
December	14	14
January	20	20
February	19	16
March	15	15
April	20	20
May	19	19
June	22	21
Total	190	183



EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Public Board Meeting Minutes 2025-2026

January 28, 2026 Public Board Meeting **1.5.1**
#4

Date: December 17, 2025
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 Engel 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 December 17, 2025 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.

1.5 MINUTES

1.5.1 Minutes of the November 26, 2025 Regular Board Meeting

Trustee **Thibert** moved that the minutes of the November 26, 2025 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

1.6.1 King Charles III Coronation Medal – Elizabeth McKay

The Board of Trustees recognized and celebrated Elizabeth McKay for being awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal.

1.6.2 Recognition of the Winner for the Best Teacher of the Ukrainian Language Abroad Award

The Board of Trustees recognized and celebrated Liliya Sukhy for being named the winner of The Best Teacher of the Ukrainian Language Abroad (Secondary School Teacher) Award Recipient.

2. Business of the Meeting

2.1 School Operations and Supporting Attendance in ECSD

Trustee **Turchansky** moved that based on the evidence provided in the Supporting Attendance and Family-School Conflict Management 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 3.3 Ensures that schools address attendance concerns.

QI 10.2 Ensures supports and services are in place to manage conflict effectively.

CARRIED

2.2 Alberta Education and Childcare Fall Assurance Report Overall Summary

Trustee Thibert moved that based on the evidence provided in the Alberta Education and Childcare Assurance Measure Results Report - Overall Summary Fall 2025, 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 2.4 Ensures the Division's academic and other provincially mandated Assurance results are published.
- QI 8.3 Develops short- and long-range plans to meet the needs of the Division and provide for continuous improvement.
- QI 10.3 Ensures information is disseminated to inform appropriate publics.

CARRIED

2.3 Annual Education Results Report (AERR)

Trustee Engel moved that the Board of Trustees approves the Annual Education Results Report 2024-2025.

CARRIED

Trustee Engel moved that, based on the evidence provided in the Annual Education Results Report 2024-2025, 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 2.1 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 2.4 Ensures the Division's academic and other provincially mandated Assurance results are published.
- 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

2.4 Opting Out of Alberta School Foundation Fund (ASFF)

Trustee Mutala moved that the Board of Trustees of the Edmonton Catholic Separate School Division hereby certifies that Division 4 of Part 6 of the Education Act, S.A. 2012, c.E-0.3 does not apply to the Board.

CARRIED

3. Presentation and Review of Accountability Report(s)

3.1 Using Screener Data to Drive Responsive Instructional Planning

Trustee Engel moved that 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 3.2 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.

CARRIED

4. Celebration of #ECSDfaithinspires:

4.1 Board Chair Report

The Board of Trustees acknowledged receipt of the Board Chair Report on #ECSDfaithinspires – **November 21 – December 19, 2025** for information purposes.

4.2 Chief Superintendent Report

The Board of Trustees acknowledged receipt of the Chief Superintendent's Report on #ECSDfaithinspires: **December 2025** for information purposes.

5. Adjournment

5.1 Trustee Pelech said the closing prayer.

5.2 Trustee Turchansky moved the meeting be adjourned at 5:32 PM.

CARRIED



EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMO

January 28, 2026 Public Board Meeting **1.6**

Date: January 28, 2026

To: Board of Trustees

From: Lynnette Anderson, Chief Superintendent

Originators: Susan Makale, Executive Director, Office of the Chief Superintendent
Janis Williamson-Bourget, Office Manager, Human Resource Services

Re: **Alberta's Top 85 Employers 2026 Designation**

Background:

Each year, Mediacorp Canada Inc. holds a Top Employers competition for companies to engage in that takes a comprehensive comparative look at various aspects of operations and human resources practices to determine which ones have the most progressive and forward-thinking programs. This year, the application process required the submission of detailed information about our practices in ten domains: Work Environment; Work Atmosphere and Communications; Health Benefits; Financial Benefits and Compensation; Family Friendly Policies; Programs for Experienced Employees; Employee Engagement; Training and Development; Vacation Policy and Paid Days Off; and Community Involvement.

Edmonton Catholic Schools is celebrating 11 years of being named one of the Top Employers in Alberta! Here are a few examples of the new developments that we highlighted for this competition year, which include information up to May 2, 2025:

- Our enrolments continued to grow, surpassing 50,000 students at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, and our staff continued to welcome them with joy to the beauty of Catholic education.
- As our student population soars, we have implemented some innovative programs to engage and recruit staff to serve the student population.
 - One of the many ways the Division demonstrates this is through its strategic involvement in the Spanish Visiting Teacher Program, developed in partnership with the Spanish Embassy and the Ministry of Education in Spain.
 - Edmonton Catholic Schools also hosted an inspiring Career and Resource Event at the Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre, celebrating and supporting educators at every stage of their professional journey. The evening was filled with energy, connection, and a shared passion for Catholic education. More than just a recruitment opportunity, the event showcased the many ways ECSD invests in its educators—whether they are just beginning their teaching careers or are experienced professionals seeking continued growth and support.

- Edmonton Catholic Schools launched an Integrated Well-being Framework aimed at enhancing the overall health and well-being of both staff and students. The framework focuses on creating a supportive environment that promotes all dimensions of well-being including mental, emotional, and physical well-being. By integrating comprehensive health strategies and resources, the framework seeks to foster a culture of care and resilience, ensuring that every member of the school community can thrive academically and personally.
- We are very excited to have launched the *SHINE: Leadership Development Framework* this year, which represents the key skills, behaviours, abilities, and knowledge required to lead from all levels of non-school-based roles at Edmonton Catholic School Division (ECSD). It fosters a collective understanding of what exemplary leadership looks, sounds, and feels like throughout the Division.
- We were delighted to open Father Michael McCaffery Catholic High School in September 2024, our first new high school in over a decade.

Our Communications team has created a special video to highlight the joy that our staff bring to their work every day:
<https://youtu.be/PEq-FBQpRYc>

I am pleased to present the Edmonton Catholic Schools' Board of Trustees with a Crystal Award to commemorate our designation as one of Alberta's Top 85 Employers 2026.

Recommendation:

That the Board of Trustees acknowledges and celebrates achieving the designation of one of Alberta's Top 85 Employers for 2026.





EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMO

January 28, 2026 Public Board Meeting **2.1**

Date: January 28, 2026

To: Board of Trustees

From: Lynnette Anderson, Chief Superintendent

Originator: Susan Makale, Executive Director, Office of the Chief Superintendent

Re: Community of School Councils “What We Heard” Report

Background:

Edmonton Catholic Schools develops and implements an educational strategic plan, known as our Division Plan for Continuous Growth, in a three-year cycle. We are currently in the third and final year of our [Division Plan for Continuous Growth 2023-2026](#).

The Board of Trustees is embarking on the journey of establishing the priorities to be used to develop the educational plan for the 2026-2029 cycle. A critical component of the establishment of those priorities is hearing the voice of the families in every school community. School Councils are the official voice of the families of our schools. To that end, the Board of Trustees of Edmonton Catholic Schools held a Community of School Councils (COSC) Meeting on November 18, 2025. An invitation was issued to all School Council Executives via the Principal to send two School Council representatives to the COSC alongside the Principal. 89 schools took part by voicing their opinions and providing feedback as part of the engagement. This feedback was separated into themes, which will be used to help establish the priorities for the Division Plan for Continuous Growth 2026 – 2029.

Recommendation:

That based on the evidence provided in the **Community of School Councils “What We Heard” 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 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.*

Attachment:

- Community of School Councils “What We Heard” Report



Community of School Councils
November 18, 2025

What We Heard

Introduction

Edmonton Catholic Schools develops and implements an educational strategic plan, known as our Division Plan for Continuous Growth, in a three-year cycle. We are currently in the third and final year of our [Division Plan for Continuous Growth 2023-2026](#).

The Board of Trustees is embarking on the journey of establishing the priorities to be used to develop the educational plan for the 2026-2029 cycle. A critical component of the establishment of those priorities is hearing the voice of the families in every school community. School Councils are the official voice of the families of our schools. To that end, the Board of Trustees of Edmonton Catholic Schools held a Community of School Councils (COSC) Meeting on November 18, 2025. An invitation was issued to all School Council Executives via the Principal to send two School Council representatives to the COSC alongside the Principal. Eighty-nine schools took part by voicing their opinions and provided feedback as part of the engagement.

Participants experienced a presentation in each of four areas of work that the Division will be focusing on over the next three years. The four areas were: Catholic Identity, Optimal Learning, Student Well-being, and Classroom Complexity. After each presentation, school representatives answered two questions with respect to the work:

- A- As a school community, how will this work enhance the school experience for all students?
and
- B- As a parent, what is most important to you in this area of work?

It is worth noting that the presentations were designed to provide an executive level glimpse of the work that was being done with the intention of gathering a corresponding high-level insight into the most important elements of the work from a parental perspective. As such, the themes and values that were captured are correlated to the information that was presented and may present limitations. For example, the Classroom Complexity presentation focused on speech language pathology and English as an Additional Language, resulting in feedback that is largely reflective of language acquisition.

The themes will be used to help establish the priorities for the Division Plan for Continuous Growth 2026-2029.

Executive Summary

Catholic Identity: School teams highlighted *Community of Belonging* and *Visible, Lived Faith* as the most prominent themes. Many schools are striving to nurture welcoming communities where every student feels accepted and valued, and to integrate faith deeply into daily practices (prayer, liturgy, symbols). Strengthening partnerships with local parishes and providing service and social justice opportunities were also frequently mentioned, ensuring faith is not just taught but acted upon. Parents echoed the importance of an inclusive, faith-centered environment: they want their children

in a school where Gospel values are visibly practiced and where each child “belongs,” is safe, and respected. Some parents, especially those who may not be active in church, also stressed *non-judgment*: that schools welcome all and allow children to explore faith at their own pace.

Optimal Learning: A common theme is establishing a shared framework and language across the Division for teaching and learning. School staffs believe having consistent, evidence-based practices in every classroom will enhance student experience by providing continuity and clarity as students progress. At the same time, there’s a strong push for Personalized Learning through UDL (Universal Design for Learning) and differentiation – tailoring instruction to meet students “where they are” so that every student can succeed. Respondents frequently mentioned incorporating hands-on, real-world learning to boost engagement and prepare students with practical skills. Continuous improvement through assessment, feedback, and data-informed instruction was another theme, albeit somewhat less prominent. Parents’ top priorities align with these: they value flexibility in teaching to fit their child’s learning style, ensuring their children are both challenged and supported. They also appreciate consistency (so that expectations and tools don’t wildly differ by teacher/year) and clear communication of progress. Overall, both educators and parents recognize that teachers need support and training to achieve these optimal conditions, though parents tended to focus more on outcomes for their child than on teacher professional development.

Student Well-Being: Across the board, respondents emphasized that mental health and well-being are foundational to the student experience. The most frequent theme was ensuring Accessible Mental Health Supports in schools – many suggested every school should have a counselor or Family School Liaison Worker (FSLW) available. Schools view themselves as a critical first point of contact for student mental health needs. Creating a culture where every student has a trusted adult and supportive relationships is another key idea: repeated stories noted that when students feel safe and “heard” by at least one adult, they are more likely to thrive. Specific well-being topics arose too – for example, some highlighted addressing sleep and screen-time habits as part of student wellness. Reducing stigma around mental health and encouraging students to ask for help was a strong theme from both staff and parents. Parents are particularly concerned that supports are readily available and easily accessible. They expressed gratitude for school-based mental health initiatives, noting it gives them “peace of mind” to know their child can get help at school. They also want schools to partner with families – keeping parents informed and even educating parents – to promote student well-being as a shared effort.

Classroom Complexity: This area generated many suggestions on how to support increasingly diverse and complex classrooms. A prevalent theme was bolstering Language Supports for English Language Learners (EAL) and students with communication needs. Many advocated for expanding EAL programming, speech/language services (TASL), and assistive communication (AAC) so that language barriers do not hinder any student. Another frequent theme was Early Screening & Intervention – identifying learning or developmental issues as early as possible (often in Kindergarten) so that timely help can be provided. Schools highly value having Specialized Staff & Resourcing (e.g. educational assistants, behavior specialists, psychologists) to address high needs; such supports not only help the students in need but also assist teachers and benefit the whole class. There was much discussion about Inclusive Education vs. Appropriate Placement: ensuring inclusion is meaningful and supported. Educators noted that simply placing all students together isn’t effective

without proper supports; some suggested thoughtful “streaming” or grouping can help each student feel successful. Parents echoed this in a nuanced way – they absolutely want *every* child supported but also don’t want the learning of others diluted. In fact, some parent feedback (especially in appendix comments) raised concerns about class sizes and the number of high-needs students per class, fearing that *without limits or more support, teachers can’t give average students enough attention*. Finally, Teacher Support & Professional Learning was acknowledged as critical: teachers need training and manageable workloads to handle complexity. Many responses called for more professional development and planning time for staff to collaborate on strategies for complex classrooms. Parents generally assume the Division will equip teachers; a few explicitly mentioned that overwhelmed teachers need more help, and that *“when staff are looked after, they will look after the kids.”*.

The information provided below is a synthetic Summary of “What We Heard” at the COSC.

Section 1: Catholic Identity

Question A (School Community Perspective): How will this work enhance the school experience for all students?

Themes and Frequency (Catholic Identity A)

Theme	Frequency (Mentions)
Community of Belonging – inclusive, welcoming school culture for every student as a child of God.	45
Visible, Lived Faith – integrating faith practices and symbols into daily school life.	30
Parish Partnership & Sacramental Life – strengthening connections with local parish and participation in sacraments.	25
Service & Social Justice Formation – educating students in service, charity, and social justice as part of faith.	20
Diversity & Inclusion within Catholicity – embracing cultural diversity and inclusion within the Catholic faith community.	15

Key Ideas:

- **Community of Belonging:** *“Belonging”* was the most repeated concept. Schools believe a welcoming, inclusive community rooted in Christ’s love will enhance every student’s experience. Many described creating an environment where each student feels accepted, loved, and part of a family – regardless of background or faith practice. This includes fostering respect for all, building community through shared values and traditions, and ensuring no one is marginalized. The idea of *“knowing they are loved as Children of God”* was

emphasized, underscoring that a strong sense of belonging can help students thrive academically, socially, and spiritually.

- **Visible, Lived Faith:** Respondents stressed that Catholic identity should be tangibly present in daily school life. This means faith permeation in all aspects of the school day – frequent prayer (classroom and school-wide), visible religious symbols and spaces (crucifixes, prayer tables), regular Mass celebrations, and weaving Gospel values into all subjects. By *living the faith* openly, schools reinforce a shared identity and provide students with constant opportunities to practice and witness their faith, not just learn about it. This was seen as enhancing students' formation and moral development.
- **Parish Partnership & Sacramental Life:** Many principals noted that stronger ties between school and parish will enrich students' faith experience. Examples included inviting priests into the school, participating in parish Masses and sacrament preparation, and generally "bridging" the school-family-parish triad. Regular interaction with the parish community and clergy is expected to deepen students' understanding of the sacraments and make their faith more relevant. Schools see the need to further build this "*stronger connection with our local parish is needed*" were common) – indicating that better collaboration with churches is a key enhancement for the student experience in Catholic schools.
- **Service & Social Justice Formation:** A distinctive aspect of Catholic education highlighted was developing students as "*stewards of social justice*" and compassionate leaders. Schools plan to enhance student life by providing service opportunities (both within school and in the broader community) and embedding Catholic Social Teachings. The idea is that engaging in charity, service projects, and justice initiatives will help students live the Gospel message of helping others. Respondents believe this will not only benefit the community but also give students purpose and leadership experiences. Some even stated a desire to *prioritize social justice actions over "book learning"* to truly form students' character.
- **Diversity & Inclusion within Catholicity:** Many schools in the Division are culturally diverse, so a notable theme was uniting diverse races and cultures under the Catholic faith. Participants feel the focus on Catholic Identity can enhance students' experience by teaching that *we are all one in Christ*, thereby fostering inclusion of non-Catholic families. Initiatives include highlighting the universality of Catholic values (love, forgiveness) that resonate across cultures and explicitly teaching students to welcome and respect those of different backgrounds as part of living their faith. Essentially, schools see Catholic Identity work as a way to celebrate diversity *within* a faith community – ensuring every student, whatever their heritage or level of faith practice, feels equally valued and "at home" in the school.

Examples:

- *Community of Belonging:* "No judgment amongst peers increases a sense of belonging. All students move forward feeling important no matter what walk of life they come from."
- *Visible, Lived Faith:* "Faith-infused teaching in all subjects... ensuring that materials and symbols are present in the classrooms."
- *Parish Partnership:* "Stronger connection with local parish is needed; [through it] students will grow in knowledge of faith."
- *Service & Social Justice Formation:* "Prioritize actions related to faith 'Social Justice' over book learning."

- *Diversity & Inclusion:* "Brings kids of different races and cultures together under the umbrella of the Catholic faith – despite their differences they unite ... every child, regardless of background, feels included and valued."

Question B (Parent Perspective): What is most important to you in this area of work?

Themes and Frequency (Catholic Identity B)

Theme	Frequency (Mentions)
Community of Belonging – a welcoming, inclusive school where each child feels they belong.	28
Visible, Lived Faith – that faith is practiced daily and not just taught academically.	22
Parish Partnership & Sacramental Life – connection to church and sacraments as part of school life.	10
Service & Values Education – instilling Christian morals, charity, and character in students.	7
Respect for Diversity – ensuring non-Catholic or less observant families are accepted (no judgment).	5

Key Ideas:

- **Community of Belonging:** Parents heavily emphasized the importance of their child feeling accepted, safe, and part of a community at school. Many parent responses echo the desire for *"family"* and *"community"* in the Catholic school context. They want no child to feel like an outsider. Several mentioned that when their child *"feels like they belong and are part of a community,"* everything else – learning, confidence – falls into place. This includes acceptance of those who may not attend church regularly: parents appreciate a school culture with no judgment for differing levels of religious practice. Overall, an inclusive, caring environment is the top priority for parents in Catholic Identity.
- **Visible, Lived Faith:** Parents want the school's Catholic character to be more than words on paper – it should be visible and tangible in daily life. As one parent group expressed, it's important that *"faith is lived, not just taught"* at school. They value things like daily prayer, religious celebrations, and staff modeling Christian values. This reassures parents that the faith formation of their children is being actively supported. Essentially, they are looking for a school environment where Gospel values are evident in how everyone is treated and how challenges are approached. A lived-faith community, in parents' view, helps reinforce at home the morals and beliefs they teach (or wish to see taught).

- **Parish Partnership & Sacramental Life:** While mentioned slightly less often than by staff, some parents did note the importance of connecting school and parish for their children. They appreciate when the school facilitates participation in Mass or sacramental prep during school time. For example, one parent group specifically highlighted having sacrament preparation in school (not only at church) as valuable, since it *"builds Catholic families from the bottom up"* and includes children who might otherwise struggle to attend church programs. Generally, parents see value in the school helping maintain a link to the Church, especially for busy families or children with accessibility challenges to attending parish events.
- **Service & Values Education:** Parents also care that a Catholic school helps shape their child's character and values. This came through as wanting the school to impart lessons in compassion, kindness, forgiveness, and service to others. They see moral development as a key part of Catholic Identity – for instance, learning to "be kind, ethical members of society" rooted in Gospel values. Some parents explicitly mentioned social justice and charity as important, hoping the school provides opportunities for their children to practice these in age-appropriate ways (food drives, service clubs, etc.). In short, beyond academics, parents value the *"good person"* aspect of Catholic education: that their child grows in empathy, character, and a service-oriented mindset.
- **Respect for Diversity:** A number of parent comments underscored the need for inclusivity within the Catholic school. Parents want assurance that if their family or others are not Catholic or not devout, they will still be welcomed. Phrases like *"a way in for every child"* and ensuring *"no judgement when students do not attend church"* were expressed. This reflects that Catholic schools serve diverse families, and parents value an environment that is true to its faith while welcoming everyone. One parent group described teaching children to welcome those of different religions into the community, because *"we are all God's people first"*. This theme, although not the top frequency, is significant – it's about the school living out Catholic values of universal love and hospitality, which is very important to parents.

Examples:

- *Belonging:* "When my child feels like they belong and are part of a community... all students are accepted."
- *Lived Faith:* "I want Catholic teachings and Gospel values to be visible in the way students are treated and the way the school responds to challenges. It's important my child feels safe, included, and valued."
- *Parish Connection:* "It's appreciated that our parish priest visits to lead Mass and celebrations – it connects the families to the church, especially for students who have challenges attending outside school."
- *Values and Service:* "Focus on charity, service learning and love of neighbor... matters most to me so my child learns to be a kind, caring member of society."
- *Respect for Diversity:* "Teaching our children to welcome others into our community even though they may have different religions... we are all God's people first and we welcome everyone."

Section 2: Optimal Learning

Question A (School Community Perspective): How will this work enhance the school experience for all students?

Themes and Frequency (Optimal Learning A)

Theme	Frequency (Mentions)
Consistent Instruction & Shared Language – common frameworks and language for teaching across classrooms/schools.	35
Personalized Learning & UDL – meeting each student's needs through differentiation and Universal Design for Learning.	40
Real-World Engagement & Agency – hands-on, relevant learning experiences that increase student engagement and skills.	25
Assessment, Feedback & Data Use – using data and formative assessment to guide teaching and student progress.	15
Teacher Capacity & Collaboration – building teacher skills and collaboration to improve learning for all.	20

Key Ideas:

- **Consistent Instruction & Shared Language:** A strong theme was the desire for consistency in teaching practices across the school and even division. Staff believe having a *"shared language and common approach"* to learning will benefit students. This means all teachers using aligned methods, terminology, and expectations, so that students experience continuity year to year. Many noted that a clear, common framework (often referencing the Division's optimal learning framework) will give every student an equal opportunity to succeed and help teachers work toward common goals. Essentially, by standardizing what good teaching looks like (while still allowing flexibility), schools can ensure no student "falls through the cracks" due to inconsistencies. This extended to things like consistent use of educational technology platforms and instructional routines, which staff feel will enhance clarity and reduce student confusion.
- **Personalized Learning & UDL:** The most frequently mentioned idea was adapting to diverse learning needs. Educators overwhelmingly support implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and other differentiation strategies so that *"every student is met where they are"* and can reach their full potential. They want to create flexible learning experiences – e.g. using multiple modalities, pacing, or supports – to include all learners (struggling, advanced, and everyone in between) in the classroom. Staff believe this focus will increase student success and engagement, as instruction will be tailored rather than one-size-fits-all. Many explicitly said *"all students can succeed"* with the right supports and emphasized giving teachers the tools to vary their instruction accordingly.

- **Real-World Engagement & Agency:** Optimal learning plans include making education more engaging and relevant. Respondents intend to enhance student experience through hands-on learning, collaboration, and real-world connections. For example, incorporating project-based learning, practical examples, or student choice in topics – methods that give students a sense of agency and tie learning to life outside school. The rationale is that when learning is meaningful, students become more motivated and active participants. Phrases like *“preparing them for the real world”* and *“students being agents of their learning”* were common. This theme suggests schools believe engagement and future-readiness go hand in hand: by simulating real-world scenarios and fostering critical thinking, students will be better equipped for life beyond school, which in turn elevates their school experience now.
- **Assessment, Feedback & Data Use:** Several respondents noted that systematically using assessment and data will help enhance learning for all. This includes things like common assessments, progress tracking, and timely feedback to students. One principal mentioned *“analyzing data [and] curating targeted instruction”* as a way to ensure each child progresses. Others talked about measuring outcomes to ensure the shared strategies are effective. While not as dominant as other themes, the idea here is that optimal learning relies on knowing where each student is (through assessment) and then responding – whether re-teaching, providing extra challenges, or adjusting methods. Feedback loops for students were also implied: students benefit when they understand their own growth. In short, data-informed teaching is seen as a support to personalization – enhancing the experience by *continually tuning* the instruction to student needs.
- **Teacher Capacity & Collaboration:** School teams recognized that achieving optimal learning conditions depends on investing in teachers. Many comments referred to providing training, support, and collaborative time for teachers to learn and apply new strategies. Professional development on UDL, time for teachers to co-plan and share best practices, and coaching from specialists are all part of this vision. Respondents noted that *“the development of all staff”* in understanding optimal learning is essential. By improving teacher skills and teamwork, instruction quality rises for every student. Also, some mentioned that specialists (like instructional coaches or learning coaches) working *“shoulder to shoulder”* with teachers in classrooms supports teacher growth and thus student learning. In summary, empowering teachers through collaboration and learning opportunities is viewed as a crucial enabler of all the other improvements (consistency, UDL, etc.).

Examples:

- *Consistent Instruction:* “Each child given the opportunity to experience excellent teaching and optimal learning is key; common shared language among all educators... creates equality across all schools.”
- *Personalized Learning:* “Ensures that all students receive instruction that meets them where they are and supports them in reaching their full potential... supports differentiated learning so that every student can succeed.”
- *Real-World Engagement:* “This will improve student engagement by incorporating hands-on learning experiences... preparing them for their future in the real world.”
- *Assessment & Feedback:* “How to measure it to ensure shared language? Use the competencies to mature their capabilities as a school community.” (i.e. establishing ways to

measure and track progress across skills). Also: "Ensuring unity in methodology across the Division – assessment and providing feedback to both students and parents."

- *Teacher Capacity*: "Ensuring that teachers have the time and training to be prepared to support students."; "Specialized supports in our school also support the professional development of our staff by working shoulder to shoulder in planning... being a valuable hands-on support in the classroom."

Question B (Parent Perspective): What is most important to you in this area of work?

Themes and Frequency (Optimal Learning B)

Theme	Frequency (Mentions)
Personalized Learning & UDL – teaching that adapts to individual student needs and learning styles.	28
Real-World Engagement & Success – ensuring learning is relevant, practical, and prepares students for the future.	18
Consistent Instruction & Expectations – having continuity in teaching methods, tools, and expectations across grades/teachers.	15
Communication & Feedback – clear communication of student progress and feedback to students/parents.	8
Teacher Support – (Implied) that teachers are well-supported/trained to deliver quality education.	3

Key Ideas:

- **Personalized Learning & UDL:** Parents place high importance on approaches that recognize their child as an individual. A common sentiment was that *every child learns differently*, so the school should provide flexible, personalized learning so that each can succeed. Parents want to see teachers differentiating – whether through varied instruction methods, pacing, or extra help – to match their child's unique learning style. For example, one parent group said it's important to *"allow my child to learn in the way they need for success"*. This indicates strong support for UDL-like practices from the parent side. Essentially, parents are looking for assurance that the push for optimal learning means no one is left behind or held back, because teaching will be tailored appropriately. They appreciate it when schools offer things like extra challenges for advanced learners, hands-on options for kinesthetic learners, or more visuals/repetition for those who need it.
- **Real-World Engagement & Success:** Many parents tied "optimal learning" to the idea that school should prepare students for life beyond school. They value initiatives that give students practical skills, independence, and real-world exposure. Some explicitly mentioned wanting their children to be ready for the "real world" and future success as a key outcome. Engaging, interest-based learning experiences are seen as important – if a child is excited about what they're learning, they will do better. For instance, parents liked to hear that

curriculum includes real-life lessons and hands-on projects, not just rote learning. They mentioned end goals like critical thinking, collaboration, and having a plan for after graduation as priorities. In short, parents want assurance that improvements in learning will translate to their child being well-equipped for the future – academically, socially, and in practical know-how.

- **Consistent Instruction & Expectations:** Some parents voiced concern about variability in teaching quality and methods. Therefore, a theme for them is consistency across teachers and grades. They find it important that the school (and division) define a clear approach so that their child isn't subject to a "luck of the draw" each year. For example, one parent group pointed out the need for consistent use of certain learning platforms or strategies year-to-year so that students "*know expectations*" without relearning systems. Overall, parents support the idea of a common framework (which aligns with staff's shared language theme) because it promises a more even and reliable educational experience for their child.
- **Communication & Feedback:** While not the largest theme, a number of parents stressed the importance of communication about their child's learning. They want regular updates and transparency so they can support at home. References were made to teachers "relaying student progress" and having consistent methods (like online platforms) to inform parents. Parents value knowing not just grades but how their child learns, where they struggle, and how they can help. In the context of optimal learning, this means that as new strategies are implemented, parents want to be in the loop. Good communication and feedback ensure that the learning partnership between school and home is strong. For instance, a parent in one school mentioned "*more communication about what and how students are learning so parents can support*" as a key point. This theme underscores that optimal learning isn't just about what happens in class, but also about engaging parents as partners through clear communication.
- **Teacher Support:** Although parents didn't often explicitly talk about teacher training, it's implicitly important to them that teachers be competent and supported. A few comments indicated awareness that if teachers are overwhelmed, it can impact students. For example, one parent group noted, "*if the staff is looked after, then they will look after the kids... staff need to be cared for... to care for students.*". Additionally, concerns about class sizes and resources (covered more under Classroom Complexity) show that parents know teachers' working conditions affect learning quality. Therefore, it's important to parents that the Division provide teachers what they need so that optimal learning goals can actually be achieved. They trust schools to handle this, but it surfaces in comments about ensuring the model is not "too much for teachers to aspire to" and that it's achievable in real classrooms.

Examples:

- *Personalized Learning:* "Allowing my child to learn in the way they need to for success – doing their best to set them on their journey."
- *Real-World Preparation:* "Have a variety of learning opportunities... I want students to be successful after school in the real world – have an end goal, preparing them for their future."
- *Consistency:* "Consistency between all teachers using a platform (like Google Classroom) so students know expectations year by year."

- *Communication:* "Communication from teachers to relay student progress." (Parent highlighting the need to know how their child is doing); "More time with print than online; more communication about what and how students are learning so parents can support what teachers are doing."
- *Teacher Support (parent view):* "If the staff are looked after, then they will look after the kids – staff need to be cared for by the Division so that they are emotionally, spiritually and physically fit enough to care for the students."

Section 3: Student Well-Being

Question A (School Community Perspective): How will this work enhance the school experience for all students?

Themes and Frequency (Student Well-Being A)

Theme	Frequency (Mentions)
Accessible Mental Health Supports – ensuring students have access to counselors, FSLW, therapists and well-being resources when needed.	50
Safe Relationships & Belonging – building trusting relationships and a safe, caring school climate for all students.	30
Healthy Habits (Sleep & Screens) – promoting healthy sleep routines and managing screen time/technology use for better well-being.	10
Stigma Reduction & Help-Seeking – normalizing conversations around mental health so students feel comfortable seeking help.	20
Family & Community Partnerships – involving parents and external agencies in supporting student well-being.	15

Key Ideas:

- **Accessible Mental Health Supports:** Nearly every school indicated that expanding or ensuring on-site mental health supports is a top way to enhance student experience. Many noted that school is often where issues are first noticed and can be addressed. Common ideas included having a counselor, FSLW (Family School Liaison Worker), or mental health therapist available to students as needed. Schools without such personnel expressed that getting equitable access (e.g., each school having dedicated support staff) would be transformative. The underlying belief is that when students can easily get help with mental or emotional challenges, they are more ready to learn and participate. Also mentioned were wellness programs, mental health clubs or "champions," and proactively teaching coping skills. In sum, the presence of readily accessible mental health resources at school is seen as critical to student well-being.

- **Safe Relationships & Belonging:** Educators highlighted creating a school environment where every student has at least one trusted adult and feels safe. They shared anecdotes and principles that “*relationship is everything*” – students learn and grow better when they know adults care about them. Schools plan to enhance well-being by training staff in relationship-building, implementing mentorship or “safe adult” programs, and fostering peer support networks. The concept of “community of belonging” appears here too: making sure each student is seen, heard, and valued (especially those who might be left out). A concrete example was establishing student wellness teams or clubs that allow peer-to-peer support and voice. Essentially, focusing on connections – student-to-adult and student-to-student – is viewed as fundamental to well-being. A student who feels supported and “has a person to go to” is far more likely to succeed.
- **Healthy Habits (Sleep & Screens):** A notable insight from some schools is concern about students’ physical well-being habits, particularly sleep and technology use. It was mentioned that “*sleep deprivation is an epidemic*” among students and that gaming/screen addictions affect readiness to learn. As part of well-being work, schools intend to educate students (and families) on healthy sleep routines and balancing screen time. Some said this focus was missing and should be included in the plan. Additionally, wellness initiatives like fitness activities or nutrition (though “sleep” was the most explicit common thread) are part of enhancing well-being. The idea is that improving these habits will lead to happier, more focused students. One school described using programs like APPLE Schools to emphasize balanced living – physical, mental, nutritional health. While not every school talked about this, those that did felt strongly that teaching healthy lifestyle habits is important for student success and should be part of the 3-year focus.
- **Stigma Reduction & Help-Seeking:** Many respondents stressed the need to create a culture where students feel comfortable seeking help for mental or emotional problems. This involves actively reducing the stigma around mental health. Strategies mentioned include open discussions, wellness days, student-led mental health advocacy (clubs or “champions”), and incorporating social-emotional learning so that talking about feelings is normal. An enhanced school experience would mean students don’t suffer in silence – they know it’s okay to not be okay, and they know how and whom to ask for help. Success looks like students recognizing when they need support (self-awareness) and actually reaching out sooner. Schools see value in peer education too (e.g., older students leading by example to normalize using supports). Ultimately, this theme is about breaking down barriers to accessing the very supports schools want to offer. If stigma is reduced, those accessible supports will actually get used, which can dramatically improve student outcomes and well-being.
- **Family & Community Partnerships:** The well-being of students doesn’t exist in a vacuum – engagement with families and outside services is key. Schools plan to involve parents and community resources more in their well-being efforts. This includes educating parents (e.g., information nights on mental health topics), communicating about available supports, and teaming up with community agencies (like Alberta Health Services, local counseling services, etc.). A few responses mentioned the importance of home-school collaboration: for instance, connecting families with aid (food hampers, clothing) or ensuring consistent messaging between school and home on wellness. By strengthening these partnerships, schools can extend support beyond the school walls and also respect cultural contexts (one example was

integrating Indigenous perspectives on spirituality and wellness in a school with that community, which involved community voice). In sum, working closely with families and community professionals is seen as a way to ensure students get 360-degree support, which enhances their overall school experience and well-being.

Examples:

- *Mental Health Supports*: "School is the place that so many students access their first mental health support... Access for each school to a trained professional in counselling (FSLW, MHT, Counsellor etc.)."
- *Safe Relationships*: "Every child needs a person they feel comfortable approaching with a problem in the school."; "The kids are comfortable to find a safe adult and there is no fear to talk to an administrator... Staff and students feel like they belong."
- *Healthy Habits*: "Sleep deprivation is an epidemic with our students; I think gaming and screen addiction should have been looked at as well."
- *Stigma Reduction*: "Discussing mental health topics without stigma; providing emotionally safe spaces... feeling comfortable asking for help."
- *Family Partnerships*: "Parental involvement, collaboration, and community – partnership with families and FSLW. Encourage parent ownership and partnership for child's well-being."; "We need roles like FSLWs, counselors to work together with parents and families to ensure the children are safe."

Question B (Parent Perspective): What is most important to you in this area of work?

Themes and Frequency (Student Well-Being B)

Theme	Frequency (Mentions)
Accessible Mental Health Supports – having counselors, FSLW, etc., readily available for students in need.	30
Safe Relationships & Belonging – children having trusted adults and feeling safe/accepted at school.	20
Healthy Habits & Balance – focus on students' healthy routines (sleep, physical activity) and managing stress/tech.	8
Stigma Reduction & Help-Seeking – environment where students aren't afraid or embarrassed to seek help.	15
Family & Community Involvement – parents and community working with schools on student well-being.	5

Key Ideas:

- **Accessible Mental Health Supports:** Parents overwhelmingly want to know that if their child struggles, help is available at school. It is “most important” to many that there are competent professionals (counselors, psychologists, FSLWs) on-site or on-call that their children can access easily. The presence of these supports provides parents with peace of mind. For instance, parents noted that *having support at school helps overcome stigma and barriers* – they see it as essential because they might not seek help externally. In general, parents appreciate initiatives like adding counseling services, wellness programs, or any resource that ensures their child’s mental health needs will be met promptly and effectively. They often phrased it as wanting their kids to be “supported with whatever they need in the moment” as issues arise. This theme is the top priority for parents: that the school division is fully committed to student mental health and has concrete supports in place.
- **Safe Relationships & Belonging:** Just like staff, parents feel strongly that their children should be known and cared for by adults at school. They want a school climate where their child feels comfortable confiding in teachers or staff if something is wrong. In parental terms, they might say “every child needs someone they trust at school.” Indeed, that exact quote comes from a parent group: *“Every child needs a person they feel comfortable approaching... in the school”*. Parents also mention the importance of general school safety (emotional safety). One parent group said, *“School is a safe place for students to ask for help”* – indicating that knowing their child is in a supportive environment is extremely important to them. Essentially, parents’ foremost interest is that their children are happy and secure at school, which they believe is a prerequisite for any other success.
- **Healthy Habits & Balance:** Some parents raised concerns about their children’s wellness habits and want the school to reinforce positive ones. For example, a parent noted, *“Students will learn how important sleep is and develop healthy sleep routines; better sleep will produce happier children”*. This shows parents do care about issues like sleep, exercise, nutrition, and screen time as part of well-being. While not all parents mentioned this, those who did often linked it to overall happiness and readiness to learn. They appreciate when schools talk about balance – such as teaching kids about moderating device use, or providing physical activity opportunities. To these parents, an optimal well-being program isn’t just counseling, but also preventative education on healthy lifestyle. They see the school as an ally in combating things like excessive gaming or poor sleep that they struggle with at home. Therefore, some parents feel it’s important that schools promote messages of healthy living and perhaps incorporate routines or curriculum around it.
- **Stigma Reduction & Help-Seeking:** Parents also value a school culture that encourages open dialogue about mental health. They want their children to feel it’s normal to talk about feelings and to reach out for help. In some cases, parents explicitly mention the word “stigma” – e.g., *“Decreasing the stigma around mental health... is crucial for students to feel comfortable to discuss [issues]”*. This priority might come from personal experiences; for instance, an immigrant parent group noted stigma in their community and was grateful the school addresses it so that their kids will use the support available. Parents know that even if services exist, they’re useless if kids are too ashamed or afraid to use them. So, they deeply appreciate efforts by the school to normalize mental wellness activities (like wellness days, posters, or just how teachers talk about stress). A parent summarizing their wish said: *“I want*

my child to know they're not alone and it's okay to ask for help when needed". This sentiment underscores why stigma-free culture is a parental priority.

- **Family & Community Involvement:** A few parents touched on the idea of being involved and informed in their child's well-being journey. They find it important when schools include parents – through communication about issues, offering resources or training to parents, or partnering with community services that families can also access. For example, one parent group's comment praised that the Division sees mental health as a priority and indicated they, as parents, are taking steps at home too. They value being seen as partners: one suggestion was having parent engagement evenings on topics like technology's impact on mental health (which some schools are doing). Although this theme wasn't as dominant in raw counts, it matters: parents want to be empowered and included. When the school provides information or workshops, it helps parents reinforce well-being at home. Additionally, community partnerships (like referrals to outside counseling or programs for families) were appreciated – parents know schools can't do it alone and welcome connections to broader support networks.

Examples:

- *Mental Health Supports:* "Having this support at school is essential. The resources are there – counselors, mental health therapists, social worker... the Catholic School Division's commitment gives me peace of mind."
- *Safe Environment:* "Every child knows they are not alone and that they have someone who cares and will help when needed."
- *Healthy Habits:* "Students will learn how important sleep is and develop healthy sleep routines; better sleep will produce happier children, positivity, and more active learning."
- *Reducing Stigma:* "Decreasing the stigma around mental health and well-being is crucial for students to feel comfortable to discuss shared experiences. Students feel comfortable asking for help."
- *Family Involvement:* "Give access to information for families and students... positive recognition of student success." (Parent noting schools should involve families in supporting well-being and celebrating progress); "Family through community supports... Food hampers for families in need." (Appreciating when schools help connect to community supports for home needs)

Section 4: Classroom Complexity

Question A (School Community Perspective): How will this work enhance the school experience for all students?

Themes and Frequency (Classroom Complexity A)

Theme	Frequency (Mentions)
Language Supports (EAL, Speech, AAC) – improving support for English Language Learners and students with speech/communication needs.	30
Early Screening & Intervention – identifying learning/behavior issues early (e.g. in K) and intervening promptly.	20
Specialized Staff & Resourcing – adding or leveraging specialist staff (EAs, coaches, therapists) and resources to support complex needs.	25
Inclusive Pathways & Appropriate Placement – balancing inclusion with targeted programs/streaming so each student is in the best environment to succeed.	20
Teacher Support & Professional Learning – equipping teachers with training, time, and manageable class conditions to handle diverse needs.	15

Key Ideas:

- **Language Supports (EAL, Speech, AAC):** Across many schools, a key aspect of addressing classroom complexity is bolstering supports for students with language barriers or delays. This includes English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners, as well as students with speech-language needs or those requiring Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). Schools plan to enhance all students' experience by implementing targeted language programs – for example, dedicated EAL classes or pull-outs for newcomers, hiring or training TASL (Teaching Assistant for Speech-Language) support, and using tools like translators or devices for non-verbal students. The idea is that when language needs are met, students can access the curriculum fully, and overall classroom understanding improves. Participants noted that focusing on EAL and communication helps not only those students but also benefits peers (through increased empathy and communication opportunities). Many expressed excitement that expanding these supports *"will greatly enhance opportunities for our EAL learners"* and others in the class.
- **Early Screening & Intervention:** Educators repeatedly emphasized the importance of catching problems early. They support comprehensive screening in the early years (Pre-K, Kindergarten) to identify developmental delays, learning disabilities, or other needs as soon as possible. Early identification is followed by early intervention – providing speech therapy, occupational therapy, behavioral support, etc., at a young age before issues compound. Schools believe this will significantly improve student outcomes: *"students who are helped earlier become more engaged and responsible"*, and gaps can be mitigated before affecting

self-esteem or academic progress. By the time those students reach higher grades, they will be more on par with peers, reducing the overall complexity later on. In summary, investing in front-loaded support is seen as a way to ease classroom complexity in the long run and ensure every child gets the help they need at the right time.

- **Specialized Staff & Resourcing:** Virtually all schools indicated that to handle complex classrooms, they need more specially trained staff and resources. This theme includes having educational assistants, behavior specialists (EBS), mental health therapists, etc., who can work with high-needs students. Many noted that they already see benefits where such supports exist – specialists not only directly help students but also mentor teachers (capacity building). There is a call to “expand specialized staff” so that complexity is shared and teachers are not alone in meeting diverse needs. Additional resources could also mean adaptive technology, sensory tools, or targeted curriculum adaptations. The enhancement for students is clear: with more adults and tools in the room, students with challenges get more attention and tailored instruction, and other students also benefit because the teacher’s time is freed up to some extent. A common refrain was that this work ensures all student needs are met – something only possible if sufficient supports are in place.
- **Inclusive Pathways & Appropriate Placement:** Many comments acknowledged the nuance that inclusion should not be one-size-fits-all. Schools plan to use this focus area to refine how students with complex needs are educated – balancing inclusion in mainstream classes with targeted programs or streaming where appropriate. For example, some high schools mentioned “streaming/programming appropriately in the Grade 9–10 transition” to ensure students are in courses where they can be successful (this could mean specialized classrooms for certain levels or needs). At the same time, they want to preserve the spirit of inclusion – making sure those who are included feel truly supported. Additionally, some mentioned the need for alternative pathways (like vocational programs, life skills programs) for students for whom the standard academic path isn’t a good fit. By customizing placements and programming, schools believe overall student experience improves: struggling students feel success in the right setting, and all students get instruction at an appropriate level. In essence, *the right support, for the right student, in the right setting* is the goal.
- **Teacher Support & Professional Learning:** Teachers are at the front line of classroom complexity, and respondents recognize that supporting teachers is pivotal. Plans to enhance student experience include giving teachers more training and help to manage diverse classrooms. This could be professional development on inclusive strategies, time to collaborate on individualized plans, or ongoing coaching. Another aspect raised was ensuring teachers are not spread too thin – some suggested lower student-to-teacher ratios or limits on number of high-needs students per class to keep workloads reasonable. When teachers feel equipped and less overwhelmed, they can focus more on students. For instance, one comment noted that with specialized staff taking some load, teachers can address needs of “middle” students who often get less attention. Schools see value in investing in teacher wellness and skills as a means to handle complexity. This theme often ties back to the others: e.g., using coaches (specialized staff) to train teachers, or using common planning time to discuss early intervention strategies. Ultimately, empowering teachers through knowledge, support, and better conditions is expected to directly enhance learning for all students in a complex classroom.

Examples:

- *Language Supports:* "Targeted EAL supports by continuing with Level 1 targeted class with supports from ELLE (English language learning facilitator)."; "Students... receive supports needed to express themselves effectively, such as TASL supports, AAC devices, sign language interpreters, EAL support."
- *Early Intervention:* "Early screening and full assessments will help identify delays and disorders sooner so that... intervention can support students; when issues are identified early, help can be provided earlier."
- *Specialized Staff:* "With the support of the ELLE, TASL, EBS, FSLW, students are receiving necessary intervention and support for their learning. These specialized supports... ensure that all student needs are met."
- *Inclusive Pathways:* " We need opportunities for students to feel success and having them all together is not creating this so providing different learning spaces may provide students with the same learning needs (with)... greater growth."
- *Teacher Support:* "By enriching this priority and supporting our complex needs with specialized staff or enhanced planning, we will allow teachers time to address the needs of the middle students who may get lost when focus is on the most complex."; "Ensuring teachers have the time and training to be prepared to support students (e.g. through smaller class sizes and more supports) is critical."

Question B (Parent Perspective): What is most important to you in this area of work?**Themes and Frequency (Classroom Complexity B)**

Theme	Frequency (Mentions)
Language Supports (EAL) – that students learning English or with language needs get adequate support and don't feel isolated.	15
Early Identification & Intervention – proactively identifying needs and providing help early in a child's schooling.	10
Specialized Staff & Resources – ensuring classrooms have educational assistants, specialists, and resources to handle special needs.	12
Balanced Inclusion & Class Composition – maintaining inclusive classrooms but with attention to appropriate placement and manageable mix of student needs.	8
Teacher Support & Class Size – having reasonable class sizes and supporting teachers so that all students (including the "average" ones) get attention.	5

Key Ideas:

- **Language Supports (EAL):** Parents – especially those from immigrant communities – expressed that it's crucial for schools to support English Language Learners so they can integrate and succeed. They want to be sure that newcomer students "*with little or no English will be supported and have access to learning*", and that these students "*will not feel isolated*" in the classroom. This is very important to parents of EAL children, as it affects both academic progress and emotional well-being. They take comfort in programs like intensive EAL classes, and the presence of staff who focus on language acquisition. Some parents also noted that helping EAL students ultimately benefits all kids, by fostering empathy and a richer learning environment. In summary, parents prioritize that language barriers are addressed head-on – no child should be left behind due to English proficiency, and having robust EAL support is a key part of what they expect in tackling classroom complexity.
- **Early Identification & Intervention:** Parents appreciate when schools are proactive in spotting and dealing with learning or behavioral needs. From a parent perspective, this means "*informing parents of issues early and [sharing] results of assessments*" and then acting on them. It is important to them that any difficulties their child has are caught as soon as possible, rather than waiting until the child has failed or fallen far behind. For example, parents of children who received speech therapy early often share success stories (one parent recounted how early SLP support in K–4 turned their child into a "high flyer" later on). Such stories underscore parent support for early intervention; they've seen that it works. Parents want schools to keep doing things like universal Kindergarten screening and immediate supports afterwards. Knowing that the school will not adopt a "wait and see" approach but rather intervene early is a reassurance and a priority for families.
- **Specialized Staff & Resources:** Parents often notice when classrooms have educational assistants or when specialists come in – and they value it. They feel more confident that their child (or any child with extra needs) will be okay if additional adults are in the room. One parent group explicitly said, "*we need more boots on the ground to support our students*," reflecting a desire for more staff in classrooms with high needs. They also mentioned things like mental health therapists and others being important. Essentially, parents recognize that today's classrooms have a wide range of learners, and they do *not* want the teacher to be the sole support if there are several kids with serious challenges. They advocate for hiring more aides and specialists, and providing tools (e.g., assistive tech, sensory rooms) to help manage complexity. This theme from parents aligns with what staff say: it's vital to have adequate support in place. Parents' "most important" often boils down to resourcing – because they know resources determine how well their own child gets attention in a busy classroom.
- **Balanced Inclusion & Class Composition:** Parents generally support inclusion, but some voiced concern about class composition – specifically, that if too many high-needs children are in one class without enough support, *everyone* could suffer. In the data, one parent group plainly said "*there needs to be a limit on how many kids with complex needs [are] in a class so that learning can take place... so that inclusion can happen without detriment to the rest of the class.*". This captures a common parental concern: they want an inclusive system, but not at the expense of overall classroom learning or their own child not getting attention. Hence, parents value when schools thoughtfully distribute students or provide extra help to balance things. They also appreciate appropriate placements – for instance, if a child would do better

in a smaller specialized setting for part of the day, parents often support that if it means better outcomes. In short, the principle of “inclusion with necessary supports and common sense” is something parents find important.

- **Teacher Support & Class Size:** Some parent feedback focused on ensuring teachers are not overwhelmed, because that directly affects students. Parents notice large class sizes and are concerned that in a class of 30+ with multiple needs, even the best teacher will struggle. A top priority for those parents is smaller class sizes or at least not overloading one teacher with too many challenges. Quotes like “*we need to decrease classroom sizes*” and “*ensure average students don't fall through the cracks*” came up. They want their child to get attention – so if they’re one of 25 rather than one of 35, it’s easier. Furthermore, parents show empathy for teachers’ capacity: they know initiatives are “fantastic” but wonder “*is it too much for teachers... given the complexities of the regular classroom?*”. Therefore, many parents find it most important that plans to address complexity include real support for classroom teachers – through aides (as above), training, and keeping class sizes reasonable. They recognize that a supported teacher can better support each student, including their own.

Examples:

- *Language Supports (Parent view):* “As a parent knowing that all newcomer students with little or no English will be supported and have access to learning is very important. They will not feel isolated.”
- *Early Intervention:* “Early intervention is key... He has confidence and is succeeding in his academics. All children need to feel confident in their ability to speak, read, write and understand in order to succeed at school.” (Parent testimony on early speech/EAL support)
- *Specialized Staff:* “We need more boots on the ground to support our students.” (Parent urging for more support staff in class); “FSLW should be funded directly from the Division... ALL schools should have one.”
- *Balanced Inclusion:* “The one size fits all approach of putting numerous complexities into one room is not a recipe for success as it is not possible to address all the needs.”
- *Class Size & Teacher Support:* “We need smaller classes so that teachers can be most effective in creating optimal learning conditions.”; “If there are 30+ kids in a class, we can’t support the teacher to put this into place... There needs to be a limit... and more support in the classroom.”

Appendix: Responses Outside the Key Themes

(These are comments from the feedback that were not categorized under the main themes above, but offer additional insight or unique points raised by participants.)

Catholic Identity – Question A (School Perspective):

- "Students will achieve academic success; every student will achieve to their full potential."
- "Students will become principled and caring adults; students will receive a well-rounded education that allows them to be their best selves in all domains."
- "Strong training for teachers."

Catholic Identity – Question B (Parent Perspective):

- "Wanting their children to make their own decisions about faith."

Optimal Learning – Question A (School Perspective):

- "Schools should be teaching students how to utilize the different platforms that are used (e.g. Google Classroom)."
- "Collaboration is hard because there are no methods of communication for younger kids outside of school."

Student Well-Being – Question A (School Perspective):

- "Multi-disciplinary teams help students solve real world problems so that students can come to school and learn. This may take the form of hampers, funding, bus passes or winter clothing." (*Addressing basic needs was noted as a method to support well-being and readiness to learn.*)
- "Positive recognition of student success." (*Celebrating students' achievements as a way to boost confidence and well-being.*)

Student Well-Being – Question B (Parent Perspective):

- "Parent education for early years development."

Classroom Complexity – Question A (School Perspective):

- "Ensuring unity in methodology across the Division."
- "Assessment and providing feedback to both students and parents."
- "There needs to be a limit on how many kids with complex needs are in a class... so that inclusion can take place without detriment to the rest of the class."
- "We need to decrease class sizes so teachers can provide more personalized support."

Reference List

1. COSC School Feedback – November 18, 2025

COSC School Feedback – November 18, 2025.xlsx

Source: Edmonton Catholic Schools, Board of Trustees, Community of School Councils (COSC) Meeting, November 18, 2025.

- Contains all raw responses from school principals, assistant principals, and school council representatives across 89 schools.
- Data analyzed for thematic frequencies, key ideas, and illustrative examples in the areas of Catholic Identity, Optimal Learning, Student Well-Being, and Classroom Complexity.
- Used for all tables, synthesized insights, and verbatim examples in the report.

2. Division Plan for Continuous Growth 2023–2026

Edmonton Catholic Schools.

- Referenced for strategic context and alignment of focus areas.
- <https://www.ecsd.net/division-plan-for-continuous-growth>

3. Appendix: Unclassified Responses

- All responses not placed in a main theme are listed in the appendix, sourced directly from COSC School Feedback – November 18, 2025.xlsx.

Note:

All analysis, tables, and examples in the thematic report are based exclusively on the above sources. No external or third-party data was used.



EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMO

January 28, 2026 Public Board Meeting **3.1**

Date: January 28, 2026

To: The Board of Trustees

From: Lynnette Anderson, Chief Superintendent

Originator: Terri Peterson, Superintendent of Learning Services

Resource Staff: Nicole Lafreniere, Director, Curriculum and Assessment
Sandra Talarico, Manager, Religious Education Services

Re: Artificial Intelligence (AI) Steering Committee in Edmonton Catholic Schools

Background:

The use of Artificial Intelligence in education prompts significant questions, such as what should be taught, how teaching methods might change, the evolving role of teachers, and the social and ethical implications of AI. Additionally, there are challenges to address, including concerns about educational equity and access. It is increasingly recognized that Artificial Intelligence could fundamentally transform the foundations of teaching and learning. For our students to be prepared to enter the workforce upon graduation, we are responsible to ensure that we teach ethical use of Artificial Intelligence throughout the course of their learning journey.

Over the past three years, Edmonton Catholic Schools has been studying the use of Artificial Intelligence and its impact on teaching and learning. The establishment of a steering committee consisting of leaders from Human Resources, Legal Counsel, Technology Services, Educational Planning, Division Monitoring, Electronic Services, Learning Services, Religious Education Services as well as administrators has been collaborating to establish guidelines and criteria for integrating AI in education, supporting optimal teaching and learning.

Recommendation:

That 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 5.3 Fosters high standards of instruction and professional improvement (Teaching Quality Standard).*
- QI 5.4 Provides for the 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 6.1 Keeps administrative procedures current and uses appropriate engagement in their development and revision.*
- QI 8.3 Develops short- and long-range plans to meet the needs of the Division and provide for continuous improvement.*

Attachments:

- Artificial Intelligence Steering Committee Update 2025-2026

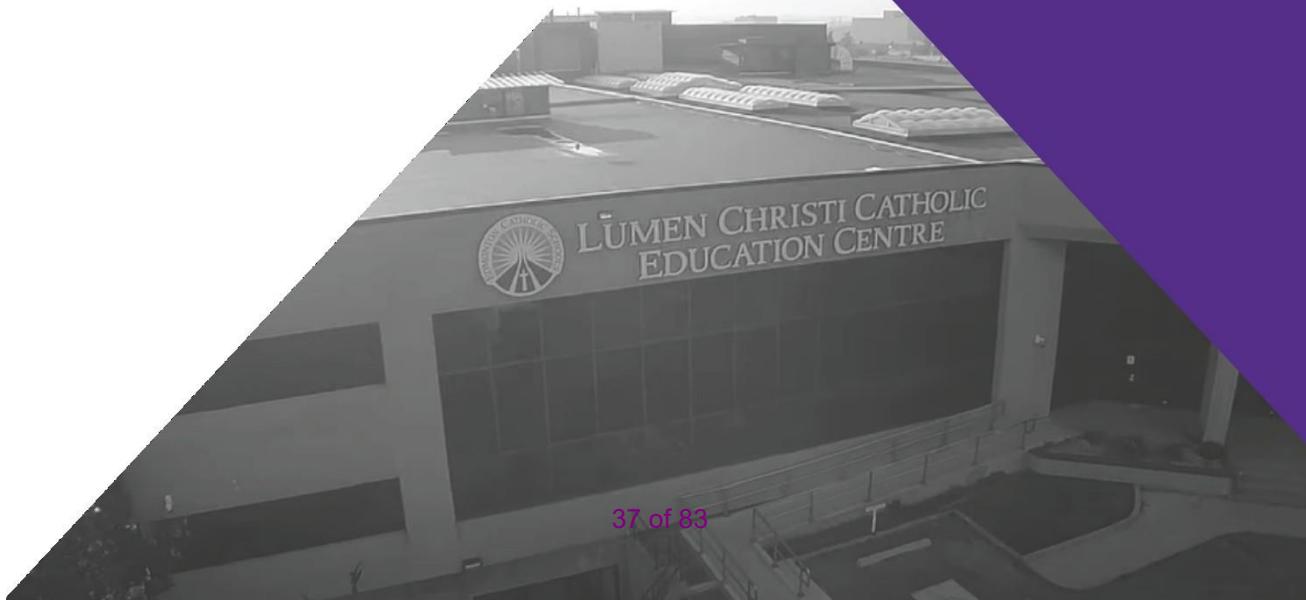




Artificial Intelligence

Steering Committee Update

2025-2026



Artificial Intelligence in Edmonton Catholic Schools

Introduction

Artificial intelligence presents both opportunity and responsibility for Catholic education and Edmonton Catholic Schools. Grounded in the Church's teaching that all technology must serve the dignity and flourishing of the human person, Edmonton Catholic Schools approaches AI with careful moral and ethical discernment. This report will provide an overview of our approach to Artificial Intelligence, demonstrating a commitment to providing clear, faith-informed guidance to ensure AI use supports learning, protects privacy, upholds equity, and strengthens the relational mission of Catholic education.

Artificial Intelligence: A Catholic Perspective

The Church consistently teaches that all technological development must remain ordered toward the flourishing of the human person created in the image and likeness of God (cf. Genesis 1:27). The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that human ingenuity is part of God's creative plan: "Humanity's dominion over inanimate and other living beings ... requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation" (CCC 2415), and that the gifts of human creativity must always be exercised with moral responsibility: "Freedom ... is perfected when directed toward God, the sovereign Good" (CCC 1731). It is on this foundation that the Church invites us to examine emerging technologies through a moral lens.

Artificial intelligence, one such technology, demands thoughtful ethical reflection. We realize that AI is not a neutral tool; it reflects the values of those who design and use it, and calls for an ethical approach rooted in justice, solidarity, and subsidiarity. In our schools, this means honoring each student's dignity and resisting any tendency to reduce education to data or algorithms. In the spirit of Proverbs 4:7, "The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight," we commit to cultivating the "wisdom of the heart" so that AI supports, rather than replaces, the relational and spiritual dimensions of teaching: empathy, critical thinking, and Christian discipleship.

These ethical considerations become especially urgent when we consider AI's potential risks. We recognize that responsible AI use offers wide and transformative opportunities in Catholic education. If left unchecked, AI can reinforce bias, invade privacy, or weaken human agency, threatening the trust between teachers and students. The Catechism

cautions that science and technology “must be ordered to the integral good of the human person” (CCC 2293–2294). At Edmonton Catholic Schools, this means thoroughly reviewing AI tools to prevent discrimination, protect vulnerable groups, and guide students to use technology in ways that uphold truth, justice, and community.

At the same time, in the context of today’s ever-changing educational landscape, artificial intelligence has become an invaluable tool for strengthening learning and supporting the formation of students in Catholic schools. Rooted in the Church’s mission to nurture the mind, heart, and spirit, AI can help customize instruction, ease administrative work, and make learning more accessible for students with diverse needs.

Guided by these opportunities and cautions, the administrative procedure will serve as a framework to incorporate AI responsibly and morally into our schools, empowering students, and staff to wield this technology as instruments of God’s providence. Committed to the dignity of each person, and to the care of our common home, we will foster an AI-literate community that discerns its use through prayerful reflection and ecclesial wisdom. As we navigate this digital epoch, we echo the psalmist’s prayer: “So teach us to count our days, that we may gain a wise heart” (Psalm 90:12). With this spirit of discernment and hope, may our schools remain beacons of hope, “where AI illuminates the path to holiness and service, ever attuned to the Creator’s design for intelligent, relational humanity” (Builders AI Forum, 2025, November).

AI Steering Committee: Purpose and Work

The AI Steering Committee was established in 2023. The purpose of the committee was to establish an Administrative Procedure for the use of Artificial Intelligence in Edmonton Catholic Schools.

The AI Steering Committee comprised the following people, representing a cross-section of ECSD:

- Nicole Lafreniere, Chair, Director of Curriculum & Assessment
- Roseanne Boutin, Principal, Blessed John Paul I
- Nicole Cunningham, Consultant, Emerging Technology
- Orysia Huk, Manager, Alternative Education
- Sean Lakusta, Manager, Cloud Services
- Shannon Loutitt, Consultant, Indigenous Learning Services
- Ian Macielek, Director of Technology Services
- Christopher Mandercheid, Consultant, Social Studies
- Tina Monaco, Manager, Employee Relations

- Rob Pearce, Manager, Electronic Services
- Tom Rees, Principal, St. Dominic
- Johanne Renaud, Assistant Principal, J.H. Picard
- Santo Saporito, Director, Student Services
- Val Schosser-Legere, Director of Division Monitoring
- Sandy Talarico, Manager, Religious Education Services

Work in the Steering Committee first comprised of professional learning. There were several elements that guided this work, including the [UNESCO document AI and Education: Guidance for Policy Makers, published in 2021](#). The committee further examined the [Artificial Intelligence Policy Guidance provided through ASBA](#). These two documents, in concert, helped frame much of our discussion around what needed to be included within our AI procedure. By ensuring that our committee had representation of departments throughout the Division, we captured a variety of perspectives and expertise.

The Committee began a fulsome review of policy documents that were being published in Alberta. These included policies published by Northern Gateway School Division, Parkland School Division, and Elk Island Public Schools. The Committee was further guided by the AI Framework developed in Calgary Catholic School Board. In examining these documents, the Committee determined priorities for the content of ECSD's Administrative Procedure.

Further work was done in examining existing Administrative Procedures and looking for connections or gaps that exist with the advent of this new technology. The Administrative Procedure on AI looks to close these gaps. For instance, AP 351 Student Code of Conduct does not currently reference AI directly; however, there are implications to the use of this technology. The Steering Committee looked to address any potential areas that required additional guidance in this area.

Key themes emerged from this work. The Steering Committee determined that ECSD needed to address the following considerations:

- **Catholic worldview:** Background our faith impacts the interaction of staff and students with Artificial Intelligence
- **Ethical considerations**, including academic integrity, the use of AI tools during the assessment process, and the potential for harm (creation of materials for the purpose of bullying and harassment)
- **Privacy**, including the use of student and staff data and how it is used with Artificial Intelligence tools

- **Equity and Inclusivity**, including consideration of whose knowledge is being privileged in the use of AI
- **Data security and protection**, including the selection of AI tools for staff and student use

Work concluded with the AI Steering Committee with the creation of a draft procedure which was then brought to the Executive Leadership Team. Following their feedback, further revision was carried out with the advice of Legal Counsel.

Administrative Procedure Overview

The Administrative Procedure on AI establishes clear boundaries for the welcoming, caring, and respectful use of artificial intelligence within Edmonton Catholic Schools. Grounded in Catholic teaching and the inherent dignity of the human person, it affirms that AI must support but never replace human judgment, conscience, and relationships. The procedure sets explicit expectations for ethical conduct, academic integrity, respectful behaviour, and the prevention of harm, including clear prohibitions related to bullying, harassment, plagiarism, and misuse of data. In doing so, it safeguards trust, inclusivity, and moral responsibility across all learning and work environments.

The procedure reinforces high standards of instruction and professional practice by affirming teachers' primary responsibility for instruction, assessment, and student formation. AI is positioned as a supportive tool that may enhance teaching and learning, while professional judgment, pedagogical expertise, and relational engagement remain central. Clear guidance is provided to ensure that AI use aligns with curricular outcomes, supports critical thinking, and does not compromise the validity or integrity of assessment. There is further alignment with the Teacher Quality Standard, ensuring that the role of the teacher is not devalued through the use of AI. Expectations around transparency, citation, and limitations on automated evaluation further strengthen instructional rigor and accountability.

Leadership capacity and administrative responsibility are strengthened through clearly defined roles for principals and the Division. Principals are tasked with ensuring ethical implementation, equitable access, alignment with Division priorities, and consistent communication of expectations to students, staff, and families. This is clearly aligned with the Leadership Quality Standard, further emphasizing the importance of AI literacy for school-based leaders. The Division, in turn, assumes responsibility for governance, oversight, and system coherence, ensuring that AI use aligns with legislation, Catholic

values, and administrative procedures, and that tools are carefully evaluated before adoption.

The procedure ensures that all staff have access to appropriate professional learning and training related to artificial intelligence. Ongoing learning is identified as a shared responsibility, with expectations that staff engage in professional development to build competence, discernment, and ethical awareness. Principals and the Division are explicitly responsible for facilitating and resourcing this learning, supporting staff to use emerging technologies responsibly within their professional roles.

Finally, the Administrative Procedure contributes to keeping Division practices current and responsive in a rapidly evolving technological landscape. By addressing emerging gaps, aligning with existing administrative procedures, and establishing mechanisms for evaluation, training, and tool selection, it provides a flexible yet principled framework. This ensures Edmonton Catholic Schools remains proactive, compliant, and mission-driven as artificial intelligence continues to shape educational and operational contexts.

Professional Learning Roadmap

A document entitled “LEAP in ECSD” (attached) outlines a pathway to integrating AI in education, aligning cutting-edge technology with faith-based values for transformative, ethical learning experiences. This document is inclusive of all staff, students, and families within the Division.

As professional learning opportunities are created throughout the Division, this document serves as a grounding for leaders, teachers, and staff as they consider how to integrate AI into their learning.

Next Steps in AI

Edmonton Catholic Schools recognizes the potential of artificial intelligence to support faith formation when used intentionally, ethically, and in alignment with Catholic teaching. As an example, Magisterium AI offers a unique opportunity to deepen theological literacy, support inquiry into Scripture and Church teaching, and enhance Religious Education instruction, while ensuring that human judgment, pastoral accompaniment, and the relational dimensions of Catholic education remain central. The Division will provide clear boundaries for its use, emphasizing that AI is a tool for exploration, reflection, and permeation of our faith within an instructional context.

Providing professional learning for teachers, administrators, and chaplains so they may more authentically permeate Catholicity throughout students' educational experiences will be a key goal in the expansion of AI use throughout the Division.

Further exploration is being done in the design of custom agents, purpose-built artificial intelligence tools designed to perform specific, well-defined tasks in alignment with Division guidelines, to reduce workload and improve efficiencies throughout the Division. As one example, we are exploring the creation of a custom agent that can support teachers in the evaluation of EAL student benchmarks. This is not intended to replace teacher professional judgement but allow them the opportunity to spend more time engaging with student writing and providing feedback, rather than attending to administrative tasks involved in Benchmarking.

As we explore new uses for AI, we commit to ongoing review and revision of our Administrative Procedure to ensure that it continues to guide the use of artificial intelligence within the division.

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LEAP IN ECSD

A GUIDEBOOK DESIGNED FOR
EDUCATORS, STUDENTS,
FAMILIES AND MULTI-
DISCIPLINARY STAFF

This guidebook offers a pathway to integrating Artificial Intelligence in education, aligning cutting-edge technology with faith-based values for transformative, ethical learning experiences.



Updated September 8th, 2025

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Alignment with ECSD Mission Statement

At Edmonton Catholic Schools, our mission is to provide a Catholic education that inspires students to learn and prepares them to live fully in and to serve God in one another. Our goal as we journey forward in an AI Era is to harness the transformative power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in harmony with our Catholic values, inspiring our students to learn, innovate, and serve with an unwavering commitment to God and one another. Division staff are committed to the responsible and ethical use of AI. Through the integration of AI, we aim to enrich our Christ-centered educational landscape by fostering a spirit of community and collaboration, emphasizing the role of collective effort in learning and service. This approach nurtures students' holistic development—intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual—empowering them to navigate the complexities of the modern world while deepening their connection to God, each other, and the broader community.

Guided by the love of the Father, the teachings of Jesus Christ, and the hope instilled by the Holy Spirit, we support the use of AI as a tool to:

- Enhance the dignity and worth of every individual, acknowledging each person's creation in the image and likeness of God;
- Support our students in their lifelong journey of learning, enabling them to develop their God-given gifts to their fullest potential;
- Foster inclusive, Christ-centered communities where technology serves humanity and the common good, promoting service to one another in the spirit of the Gospel;
- Embed a Catholic worldview into our curricula, where faith and reason unite to illuminate the path of wisdom and truth; and
- Provide a Catholic Education that inspires students to learn with all division staff.

In this era of rapid digital transformation, our vision is to be a beacon of faith-driven educational excellence. By weaving AI within the fabric of our Catholic education, we commit ourselves to nurturing not just the intellect but also the heart and soul of every learner, preparing them for a faith-filled life of innovation, service, and ethical and responsible use of AI.

What is LEAP?

LEAP IS:

LEARNING & UNDERSTANDING

Fostering a deep understanding of AI's role in enhancing learning experiences and outcomes for our students will positively impact our school communities.

ETHICAL IMPLEMENTATION

Ensuring the ethical and responsible use of AI tools in both teaching and learning will align with and support the core values and educational goals of ECSD.

ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

Leveraging AI tools will enrich the curriculum, school environment and teaching and learning to promote academic success for all students.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Incorporating AI into our education system will equip our students with the necessary skills and knowledge for success in higher education and future careers.



LEARNING AND UNDERSTANDING



ETHICAL IMPLEMENTATION



ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT



PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

LEAP stands for Learning and Understanding, Ethical Implementation, Academic Enrichment, Preparing for the Future.

The guideline book, based on the LEAP framework, serves as a practical tool for integrating Artificial Intelligence in education within our school division. It provides educators with essential knowledge and strategies for using AI in teaching and learning, focusing on ethical use, academic enrichment, and future preparedness. By identifying specific interest parties—including educators, administrators, multi-disciplinary staff, division staff, students and families—the guide promotes a collaborative approach to responsibly leveraging AI tools. This guide aims to enhance educational experiences by leveraging AI to make learning more engaging and personalized, while also preparing students for a technology-driven world. It ensures that our division and community adopts innovation, aligns with our core values, and supports the moral and ethical development of learners, transforming our school division into a model for future-ready education.

Appropriate Uses of AI

AI within Edmonton Catholic Schools should be viewed as a set of tools that enhances the educational process, supports critical and creative thinking, and augments problem-solving abilities for both students and staff. This aligns with our mission to provide a Catholic education that inspires all members of our community to learn and prepare to live fully and serve God in one another, while preparing our students for the future.

It's essential that AI is used responsibly, serving as an aid in tasks, but not replacing the intellectual efforts required for true understanding and growth. This careful application maintains academic integrity and ensures that AI tools are used to supplement learning and teaching.

By establishing clear guidelines on the ethical use of AI, we support not only academic success but also the ongoing development of all learners and educators as they prepare to navigate future challenges with integrity and faith.

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE APPROPRIATE USE OF AI IN ECSD'S LEAP



LEARNING & UNDERSTANDING

Does using AI enhance, broaden, or deepen understanding while still permitting individuals to actively participate in the critical thinking process?



ETHICAL IMPLEMENTATION

What AI tools am I currently using? How am I integrating AI into collaborative learning and promoting Digital Citizenship? Is the AI tool authorized for use in ECSD?



ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

When implementing AI as a tool, does it conform to established standards in content, technology, and pedagogy? Have any biases inherent within the content and pedagogy been considered? Does this tool add to the depth, breadth, or variety of learning experiences?



PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Will using this tool help develop learners in ECSD and prepare them for future opportunities in life?

RESOURCES

[ECSD Mission Statement](#)

[Leaders' Guide to Artificial Intelligence](#)

[ISTE Artificial Intelligence in Education](#)

[AI Guidance for Schools Toolkit - TeachAI](#)

[ECSD Division Plan for Continuous Growth](#)

LEAP for Educators



LEARNING & UNDERSTANDING

What is AI and how does it work?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) enables machines to perform some tasks requiring human intelligence, such as understanding language, recognizing patterns, solving problems, and making decisions. AI functions through data collection, learning patterns (machine learning), making decisions based on these patterns, and adapting over time with more data and feedback. AI systems are trained using large datasets of recorded public information, enabling neural networks to learn from this data and apply their learning to solve new problems effectively.

How can AI impact education?

AI holds transformative potential for education, offering a range of benefits from enhancing teaching effectiveness to improving learning outcomes. It can serve as a "think partner" for educators, assisting in the backward design planning process and the creation of educational resources. AI can significantly reduce the time educators spend on programming, planning and administrative tasks, allowing them to focus more on teaching. By personalizing learning experiences, AI also supports individual student needs, leading to better educational experiences. At the same time, educators must approach AI outputs critically, ensuring accuracy, avoiding bias, and aligning with curriculum goals. Ultimately, AI is a supportive tool, not a replacement for the expertise, relationships, and judgment that educators bring to the classroom.



ETHICAL IMPLEMENTATION

How can AI be used safely and effectively to support teaching & learning?

AI processes data to make informed decisions, but issues such as bias and misinformation and privacy concerns can arise.

- **Tool review:** Only use AI tools that have been verified through the ECSD Cybersecurity Team. If in doubt, contact the Emerging Technology consultants for guidance.
- **Professional integrity:** Use AI strategically to enhance teaching practices that align with ECSD's instructional goals, mission, and professional learning priorities, as well as provincial, federal, and ISTE frameworks. AI contributions should always be cited.
- **Human-centered practice:** AI must never replace the professional expertise, judgment, and relationships that educators bring to the classroom.
- **Respect for Indigenous knowledge:** The use of AI should not replace respectful, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous people and land. Educators and AI users must respect Indigenous cultural and spiritual protocols when accessing and sharing Indigenous knowledge, histories, perspectives, and contexts.
- **Respect for Catholic identity:** AI should be used in ways that reflect and uphold Catholic values, affirm human dignity, and foster a spirit of compassion, justice, and care for creation. Any use of AI must align with the Gospel message and the division's faith-based mission.



ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

How can AI be leveraged to transform teaching practices and enhance student learning?

AI tools offer significant opportunities to transform education by easing teacher workload, while enriching the curriculum and empowering learners. When used thoughtfully, AI can be used to support programming, personalized learning, backward design planning, lesson idea generation, and assessment. It can act as a collaborative partner teacher preparation. AI can support evidence-based teaching practices in line with the Alberta Curriculum and support teachers in creating engaging activities to support their diverse classrooms, while promoting academic success.

The most effective teachers use technology as a tool to deepen learning and create meaningful educational experience to strengthen the wholistic development of students.



PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

What strategies can educators use to prepare students for a future with AI?

Educators can prepare students for a future with AI by integrating AI literacy into the curriculum, promoting digital citizenship, encouraging problem-solving, critical and creative thinking, fostering empathy, facilitating collaboration, supporting personalized learning, and participating in ongoing professional development. These strategies ensure students are equipped with essential skills while upholding ECSD's core values.

It is important for educators to stay informed by continually updating their knowledge about AI through professional learning opportunities. This ensures their teaching stays accurate, relevant and responsive to the changing landscape of technology and education.

LEAP for Multi-Disciplinary Staff



LEARNING & UNDERSTANDING

What is AI and how does it work?

Artificial Intelligence, or AI, refers to computer systems that can perform tasks that require human intelligence, such as understanding language, spotting patterns and making decisions. Developers train these systems using large sets of examples, helping them recognize patterns and solve problems. Once trained, AI can adapt to new situations and make choices based on what it has learned. By understanding and leveraging AI, multidisciplinary staff can provide more personalized and responsive support for students. AI has already been present in many tools used in schools for years, such as speech-to-text, spelling and grammar checks, word prediction, and translation services. Chatbots and assistive technologies are also common in everyday life.

What is the impact in education?

AI can help remove barriers to learning, offering accessibility supports for students with diverse needs and freeing staff from repetitive tasks so they can focus more on student well-being, inclusion, and equity. However, it is important to use AI critically, recognizing that outputs may contain errors or reflect bias and to ensure that professional expertise, relationships, and ethical judgment remain at the center of decision-making. AI should be seen as a tool that enhances, not replaces, the vital human support multidisciplinary staff provide.



ETHICAL IMPLEMENTATION

How can AI be used safely and effectively to support student learning?

- **Follow ECSD guidelines:** Only use AI tools that comply with division policies and have been reviewed for privacy, safety, and security.
- **Check accuracy and bias:** AI outputs may contain errors or reflect bias. Always review information critically before applying it in student support.
- **Professional integrity:** Use AI to enhance, not replace, the professional expertise, judgment, and care you bring to your role.
- **Collaborative practice:** Integrate AI thoughtfully within educational and therapeutic strategies, working alongside educators, families, and other staff to ensure alignment with ECSD's instructional goals, mission, and the provincial, federal, and ISTE frameworks.
- **Respect for Indigenous knowledge:** The use of AI should not replace respectful, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous people and land. Staff must honor cultural and spiritual protocols when accessing and sharing Indigenous knowledge, histories, perspectives, and contexts.
- **Respect for Catholic identity:** AI should be used in ways that reflect Catholic values, affirm human dignity, and foster compassion, justice, and care for creation. Its use must align with the Gospel message and the division's faith-based mission.



ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

What AI tools can be used to support and enhance learning?

Reactive and predictive AI tools, such as Read & Write for Google Chrome, support the diverse learning needs of students and can be accessed when students are logged in with their ECSD credentials. These accessibility tools can help remove barriers to learning for students, making curriculum more accessible providing every student with the opportunity to succeed.

AI can be used by multi-disciplinary staff as a “think partner” to brainstorm strategies, differentiate information for readability, and facilitate understanding through translation tools. Used thoughtfully, AI enriches the learning environment by supporting personalized approaches to meet the diverse needs of students.



PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

How can multi-disciplinary staff prepare students for the future with AI?

As artificial intelligence continues to evolve, so too will the skills that are necessary for the job market. Multi-disciplinary staff can prepare students for a future with AI by integrating AI literacy into their support strategies, promoting digital citizenship, encouraging problem-solving and critical thinking, fostering empathy, and facilitating collaboration.

They can leverage AI to personalize learning experiences and engage in ongoing professional development to stay informed about AI advancements. These strategies ensure students are equipped with essential skills while upholding ECSD's core values.

LEAP for Students



LEARNING & UNDERSTANDING

What is AI and How Does It Work?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems perform tasks requiring human intelligence, such as understanding words, recognizing patterns, and solving problems.. AI is integrated into many everyday tools, such as speech-to-text features, spelling and grammar checks, and word prediction tools. Students encounter AI in learning apps, digital platforms, and even chatbots that can explain ideas, suggest practice questions, or translate text. These tools are designed to support learning by making information more accessible and personalized.

What is the impact in education?

AI can provide personalized support, real-time feedback, differentiated texts, and translation, helping all students access the curriculum and improve learning outcomes. At the same time, students must use AI responsibly, as a partner in learning, not as a shortcut. while remembering that curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking are still at the heart of learning.



ETHICAL IMPLEMENTATION

How can AI be used safely and ethically in learning?

AI can be a helpful partner in learning, but it must be used responsibly and with integrity. To ensure safe and ethical use:

- **Follow ECSD guidelines:** Always use AI tools that are approved by the division and abide by the ECSD Responsible User Agreement, including age restrictions.
- **Practice positive digital citizenship:** Stay informed, engaged, and vigilant when using AI. Use it in ways that respect yourself, others, and your community.
- **Maintain academic integrity:** Use AI to support your learning, not to replace it. Be transparent, cite sources, and never present AI-generated work as your own.
- **Respect for Indigenous knowledge:** AI should never replace respectful, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous people and land. Students using AI, must honor cultural and spiritual protocols when accessing and sharing Indigenous knowledge, histories, perspectives, and contexts.
- **Respect for Catholic identity:** Use AI in ways that reflect Catholic values, affirming human dignity, honesty, and care for creation. Technology should support your growth as a learner and as a person of faith and character.



ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

What AI tools are available for student use and what guidelines should be adhered to in learning?

When using AI tools for school work, students ensure that these technologies are supporting their growth rather than replacing their effort. Practicing safe and responsible digital citizenship is essential: students should verify the accuracy, perspective, and validity of AI-generated information, just as they would with any other source, and always cite AI when it has contributed to their work. By approaching AI in this way, students uphold academic integrity, which is essential to long-term success as a learner.

AI can enrich the learning journey by helping students create, collaborate, communicate, and think critically. Used as a partner, AI can explain difficult concepts, suggest ideas, and provide feedback to build understanding and skills. This collaborative approach ensures that AI enhances learning rather than substituting for it. When integrated thoughtfully, and in ways that respect Catholic values and Indigenous knowledge, AI becomes a powerful tool in every student's educational toolkit, one that deepens learning and supports integrity.



PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

How does AI prepare students for their future?

AI prepares students for the future by enhancing their ability to learn new skills, deepen their understanding, and apply critical & creative thinking alongside problem-solving strategies. As AI becomes increasingly integral in both higher education and the workplace, students will need to master key competencies to leverage AI effectively in their studies and future careers. AI offers benefits like personalized training, strengthened skillsets, and faster problem-solving across a variety of fields.

As AI technology evolves, it will continue to offer innovative ways to enhance educational experiences and adapt to changes in this rapidly advancing area.

LEAP for Families



LEARNING & UNDERSTANDING

What is AI and how does it work?

Artificial Intelligence, or AI, refers to computer systems that can perform tasks that require human intelligence. These programs can understand words, spot patterns, and make decisions by learning from examples. Once trained, they can handle new situations and apply what they have learned.

AI has been part of everyday life for many years. In education, it shows up in tools like speech-to-text, spelling and grammar checks, translation services, and word prediction. Outside of school, families may also recognize AI in common digital services and chatbots.

What is the impact in education?

AI can help make learning more accessible, personalized, and efficient, freeing teachers to spend more time connecting with students. For families, it's important to know that AI is a support tool, not a replacement for educators or student creativity. Families can play an important role by encouraging balanced, responsible use at home and by having open conversations with their children about honesty, safety, and ethics when using AI.



ETHICAL IMPLEMENTATION

How can AI be used safely and effectively?

AI can be a helpful tool for learning, but families play an important role in guiding children's responsible use. To ensure safe and ethical use:

- **Review terms and policies:** Always check the Terms of Service and Privacy Policy of AI tools to understand how data is used and what rights you have.
- **Confirm accuracy and watch for bias:** AI systems may provide incorrect or biased information. Help children learn to question and verify AI outputs with trusted sources.
- **Support academic integrity:** Encourage children to use AI as a support for learning, not as a shortcut. Remind them to follow the ECSD Responsible User Agreement and be honest about their use of AI.
- **Model ethical use:** Discuss digital citizenship regularly, and demonstrate how technology can be used respectfully and responsibly.
- **Respect for Indigenous knowledge:** AI should not replace respectful, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous people and land. Families and students must honor cultural and spiritual protocols when accessing and sharing Indigenous knowledge, histories, perspectives, and contexts.
- **Respect for Catholic identity:** Encourage children to use AI in ways that reflect Catholic values, upholding human dignity, honesty, compassion, and care for creation.



ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

What AI tools can be used to support and enhance learning?

AI tools, such as the reactive and predictive features built into Read & Write for Google Chrome, have long supported students with accessibility needs and can be accessed with ECSD credentials. These tools help remove barriers to learning and provide personalized support, from generating extra practice questions to offering feedback that improves student work. While AI can support learning in meaningful ways, it must never replace student effort, all use should be transparent, cited appropriately, and approved for each assignment in consultation with teachers.

Families play an important role in ensuring AI is used to enrich rather than diminish learning. This includes encouraging responsible use, monitoring AI interactions, promoting digital citizenship, and engaging in conversations with children about academic integrity. By supporting AI use that aligns with Catholic values and respects Indigenous knowledge, families help ensure that technology serves as a partner in education, fostering creativity, critical thinking, and academic success for all students.



PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

How does AI prepare my child to be ready for their post-secondary studies and their future careers?

As artificial intelligence continues to evolve, so too will the skills that are essential for success in both higher education and the job market. Students will increasingly need to develop critical and creative thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and other key competencies that prepare them for lifelong learning.

AI and automation are the next significant advancements in education and career preparedness. Families can help their children use AI responsibly, ensuring it strengthens both their learning today and their readiness for the future.

LEAP for Division Staff



LEARNING & UNDERSTANDING

What is AI and how does it work?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) involves creating computer systems that can perform tasks requiring human intelligence, such as understanding language, recognizing patterns, and making decisions. These systems learn by analyzing large amounts of examples, improving their ability to solve problems and adapt to new situations. Over time, as more data and feedback are provided, AI systems can refine and improve their performance.

How can AI impact the work that division staff does?

Division staff may encounter AI in tools that streamline operations, support curriculum development, analyze data, or manage communication systems. AI can assist with repetitive tasks, identify trends in student achievement data, or improve accessibility in digital platforms. Each department or operational area can explore how AI best supports its specific responsibilities while aligning with division priorities. Staff must remain mindful of data privacy, security, and ethical implementation when adopting AI solutions.



ETHICAL IMPLEMENTATION

How can AI be used safely and effectively?

AI can improve efficiency and provide valuable insights, but its use must always align with ECSD's mission and values. To ensure safe and ethical implementation:

- **Use division reviewed tools:** Only use AI platforms that have been verified by the ECSD cybersecurity team. Approved tools, such as Microsoft Copilot with corporate protection, provide greater data security and compliance.
- **Protect data and privacy:** Safeguard all student and staff information. Never input sensitive personal data into unverified AI tools.
- **Check accuracy and bias:** AI outputs may contain errors or reflect bias. Review information critically before applying it in decisions or communications.
- **Maintain professional integrity:** Use AI to enhance, not replace, human expertise and judgment. Ensure AI practices align with the division's goals, mission, and professional learning frameworks.
- **Respect for Indigenous knowledge:** The use of AI should not replace respectful, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous people and land. Staff using AI must honor cultural and spiritual protocols when accessing and sharing Indigenous knowledge, histories, perspectives, and contexts.
- **Respect for Catholic identity:** Apply AI in ways that reflect Catholic values, affirming human dignity, fairness, justice, and care for creation. Technology use should always align with the Gospel message and ECSD's faith-based mission.
- **Address risks responsibly:** Be aware of risks such as privacy concerns, misinformation, or algorithmic bias. Mitigate these risks by vetting tools, using transparent practices, and engaging in ongoing professional learning about ethical AI use.



ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

What AI tools can be used to support and enhance the work that division staff does?

The role of Division staff is to provide and support the implementation of a variety of AI tools to support school-based staff in enhancing student engagement and enrichment. Various AI tools can support and enhance the work of division staff by improving efficiency and effectiveness in daily operations.



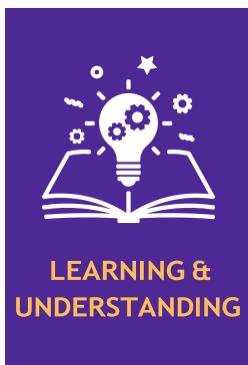
PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

How does AI support the future in ECSD?

AI literacy and staying informed about emerging AI technologies are crucial for division staff. AI provides important tools to improve efficiency, accuracy, and long-term planning. By learning how to leverage AI in their daily work, staff can streamline processes, analyze data more effectively, and make informed decisions that strengthen the entire division. Strategies and resources are available to help staff develop AI literacy and stay updated on relevant AI advancements. With its continuous updates and improvements, Microsoft Copilot ensures that staff are equipped with the latest AI tools and technologies. Staying current with emerging AI technologies through professional development and division-provided resources helps staff build the skills needed to adapt to an evolving workplace. By applying AI responsibly in support services, division staff contribute to a stronger, more resilient education system.

Leadership Considerations

As an instructional leader, here are some guiding questions to consider as questions may arise about artificial intelligence. They can be used to guide conversations as AI evolves in education and in preparing students for the future.



- What essential principles and concepts of AI should educators, multi-disciplinary staff, students, and families be familiar with?
- Which AI tools are currently in use in your school site or division? What is the protocol for determining appropriate tools for use by staff?
- What ethical considerations and potential biases should we be mindful of when implementing AI in education? How can staff learn about AI literacies?
- How do the latest advancements and trends in AI potentially impact decision making at the school and division levels?



- What professional learning can be provided to a school staff to support their journey learning about AI literacies?
- What measures are you implementing to safeguard sensitive student data and privacy when using AI-powered educational tools and systems, and who can you ask for support in learning more about appropriate tools?
- What does responsible and ethical use look like as an educator and as a student? How can the division guidelines (fluid document) and the division AI policy be communicated to the school staff? How might the use of AI affect academic integrity in your school?



- How can AI be leveraged to create personalized learning experiences for students?
- In what ways can AI support ALL students through Universal Design for Learning?
- What resources and infrastructure does ECSD and your school site currently have, and what additional developments are needed, to support AI implementation in division schools?
- How can AI tools be used to enhance academic enrichment and student engagement across different subjects while maintaining academic and professional integrity?
- What training and professional development opportunities can be provided to effectively integrate AI into teaching practices?



- How is AI transforming the job market for students? What is the shift in skills and competencies that they will need to be successful? How can these competencies and skills be taught?
- How can an innovative culture be cultivated in ECSD classrooms to ensure students are future ready while maintaining academic integrity?
- What guidance are we providing with to students in regards to career paths? What opportunities are being provided for them with in their related fields?

Additional Resources



EDUCATOR RESOURCES

[Common Sense Education Resources for Exploration and Use of AI](#)

[ISTE AI in Education](#)

[Lessons and Tools for Teaching About AI with Common Sense Education](#)

[7 Essential Questions About AI for Teachers to Consider](#)

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY STAFF RESOURCES

[ECSD Family Engagement Night Resource](#)

[Helping Kids Navigate the World of Artificial Intelligence](#)

[7 Essential Questions About AI for Teachers to Consider](#)

STUDENT RESOURCES

[Lessons and Tools for Teaching About AI with Common Sense Education](#)

[Helping Students Check for Bias in AI Outputs](#)

[Teaching Students How to Use AI Responsibly](#)

[Guiding Students to Assess the Merits of Artificial Intelligence Tools](#)

[Ctrl Alt Achieve Student Guidelines](#)

FAMILY RESOURCES

[ECSD Family Engagement Night Resource](#)

[Helping Kids Navigate the World of Artificial Intelligence](#)

[ISTE - Artificial Intelligence in Education Resource Hub](#)

LEADERSHIP RESOURCES

[4 Questions to Consider on AI in Education for Professional Learning with George Couros & AJ Juliani](#)

[ISTE Artificial Intelligence in Education](#)

[UNESCO Artificial Intelligence in Education](#)

[Bringing AI to School: Tips for School Leaders](#)

Appendix

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATION

APPROPRIATE USE EXAMPLES:

- EDUCATORS APPENDIX 1
- MULTIDISCIPLINARY STAFF APPENDIX 2
- STUDENTS APPENDIX 3
- DIVISION STAFF APPENDIX 4

Appropriate Use Examples

EDUCATORS

Lesson Planning

- Use AI to support Backward Design Planning to support clarity
- Use AI to develop conversation questions, observational checklists and performance tasks to assess the understanding of the student.
- Use AI to develop lesson plans that support diverse methods of engagement and understanding that fosters Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- Employ AI for differentiation and personalization strategies to meet individual student needs.
- Create lesson activities that align with curriculum outcomes and include multiple entry points for diverse learners.
- Use AI as a brainstorming partner to support idea generation

Supporting Student Learning

- Adapt texts and materials with AI to meet various learning needs, improving accessibility for all learners, especially those with disabilities.
- Use AI to enhance accessibility and inclusivity by modifying resources like scaffolds, sentence frames, alternate formats, or translated materials.
- Leverage AI to develop personalized learning paths or differentiated instructions to cater to diverse learning styles.

Administrative Tasks

- Create clear, inclusive communication and assessment templates with AI for newsletters, emails, lists, and rubrics.
- Streamline repetitive tasks such as drafting emails to families or summarizing meeting notes.

Professional Growth

- Access AI-driven platforms for self-paced learning to support teacher growth while still adhering to solid digital/information/media literacy guidelines.
- Use AI to reflect on teaching practices by analyzing trends in anonymized classroom data.

Ethical Usage

- Always double-check AI-generated content for accuracy, bias and appropriateness.
- Ensure all AI use aligns with division policies and respects privacy laws (e.g., anonymizing student data before inputting into AI tools).
- Ensure transparency for the use of AI in the creation of materials and resources
- Ensure that “humanity” is at the core of all output from an educator
- Participate in regular training sessions to understand ethical AI use, including its capabilities and limitations, to effectively support learning growth while adhering to division guidelines.

Resources:

[UNESCO Teacher AI Competency Framework](#)



Appropriate Use Examples

MULTIDISCIPLINARY STAFF

Supporting Student Development

- Use AI to generate therapy session plans, including conversation prompts, motor skill activities, or behaviour strategies aligned with individual student goals.
- Adapt texts, visuals, and learning materials into alternate formats (simplified text, symbol-supported communication, translated text) to improve accessibility for all learners.
- Develop individualized supports such as social stories, scripts, or step-by-step task analyses for students with specific needs.
- Brainstorm strategies for supporting regulation, executive functioning, or sensory integration challenges using AI as a “thinking partner.”
- Create checklists, observation tools, and progress trackers tailored to each student’s IEP goals.

Collaboration and Planning

- Use AI to draft reports, progress summaries, or communication logs that are clear and accessible for families and staff (always reviewing and editing before sharing).
- Generate ideas for classroom accommodations and modifications that align with Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- Support collaboration with teachers by producing differentiated activity suggestions that can be embedded into classroom routines.

Administrative Tasks

- Streamline documentation by using AI to draft case notes, meeting agendas, or follow-up summaries (ensuring all personal identifiers are removed before input).
- Develop communication templates for consistent messaging to families and colleagues.
- Organize scheduling and reminders for therapy sessions, team meetings, or student reviews.

Professional Growth

- Access AI-driven platforms for professional learning in areas like speech development, sensory processing, behaviour intervention, and inclusive practices.
- Use AI to stay current with emerging research by generating literature summaries or resource lists.
- Reflect on practices by analyzing anonymized trends in service delivery or intervention effectiveness.

Ethical Usage

- Always double-check AI-generated content for accuracy, cultural sensitivity, and appropriateness.
- Anonymize student data before inputting into AI tools to protect privacy.
- Ensure transparency in the use of AI when creating materials, reports, or resources.
- Keep human relationships at the core of practice: AI can support, but not replace, professional expertise, empathy, and trust.
- Participate in regular professional development focused on ethical AI use, staying informed of both its potential and its limitations.

Resources:

[UNESCO Teacher AI Competency Framework](#)



Appropriate Use Examples

STUDENTS

Research and Inquiry

- Collaborate with AI to brainstorm ideas for learning tasks, then use those ideas to inspire original student work.
- Use AI to simplify and clarify complex concepts by generating explanations or examples.
- Ensure students critically evaluate AI-generated research content and verify its credibility.

Creative Projects

- Work with AI to develop new materials that reflect and build upon student creativity, such as multimedia presentations or artwork when AI use is permitted.
- Collaborate with AI tools for brainstorming and refining ideas in writing, music composition, or digital art projects.

Academic Support

- Use AI to provide detailed feedback on student work, such as identifying grammatical errors or improving writing transitions, assisting the student in making their own edits and changes.
- Use AI to get explanations of concepts in different ways when something feels confusing.
- Ask AI to generate practice questions, quizzes, or study prompts to prepare for tests.
- Use AI to brainstorm ideas for writing, projects, or presentations, while always adding your own voice and perspective.
- Translate text or simplify reading passages with AI to better understand complex material.
- Use AI as a “study buddy” to review notes, summarize readings, or check your understanding.

Collaboration and Communication

- Enhance group projects by using AI to summarize discussions or generate collaborative ideas.
- Use AI-powered translation tools to facilitate multilingual communication among peers.

Ethical Usage

- Maintain academic integrity through the appropriate use of AI tools and proper crediting of AI assistance in work.
- Adhere to strict data security and confidentiality standards when using AI tools to ensure all student information is handled securely.
- Participate in regular training sessions to understand ethical AI use, including its capabilities and limitations, to effectively support learning growth.

Resources:

[UNESCO AI Competency Framework for Students](#)

[ECSD Student Guidelines for Generative AI Acceptable Use](#)



Appropriate Use Examples

DIVISION STAFF

AI can be a powerful tool to automate various tasks across different departments. Here are some ways AI can be used to automate tasks, along with examples:

- **Automating Financial Reporting:** AI can generate financial reports by analyzing data from various sources, reducing the time and effort required for manual reporting.
- **Fraud Detection:** AI can monitor transactions in real time to detect and flag suspicious activities, helping to prevent fraud.
- **Engagement:** AI can predict employee satisfaction and potential turnover, career planning and growth, survey development, monitor and promote employee wellness by analyzing data related to work habits and suggesting improvements for better work-life harmony
- **Predictive Analytics:** AI can analyze historical data to forecast future trends; for example, budgeting, financial planning, enrollment, procurement.
- **Streamlining Recruitment:** AI can screen resumes, schedule interviews, and even conduct initial interviews using chatbots, making the recruitment process more efficient.
- **Employee Management:** AI can manage employee records, track performance, and provide insights into employee engagement and retention.
- **Workforce Analytics:** AI can analyze workforce data to identify trends and provide recommendations for improving employee satisfaction and productivity.
- **Administrative Support:** AI can automate routine administrative tasks such as attendance tracking, scheduling, and report generation.
- **Resource Optimization:** AI can help optimize the allocation of resources such as classrooms, equipment, and supplies.
- **Communication Enhancement:** AI can improve communication with parents and students by automating responses to common queries and providing timely updates.
- **Data Entry and Report Generation:** AI can automate data entry tasks and generate reports, freeing up time for staff to focus on more strategic activities.
- **Predictive Maintenance:** AI can monitor equipment and predict when maintenance is needed, reducing downtime and ensuring systems run optimally.
- **Workflow Automation:** AI can automate workflows by integrating various software tools, streamlining processes, and improving efficiency.

To automate tasks using AI, you can either use existing AI tools or develop custom solutions.

- **Conversational AI:** Tools like chatbots can automate service and support tasks. For example, conversational chatbots can understand the context of questions and provide customized support.
- **AI-Powered Automation Solutions:** These tools can help accelerate innovation and improve organizational efficiency by automating end-to-end processes. Examples include AI tools for financial analysis, fraud detection, predictive analytics, recruitment, employee management, and administrative management as outlined above.



EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMO

January 28, 2026 Public Board Meeting **3.2**

Date: January 28, 2026

To: The Board of Trustees

From: Lynnette Anderson, Chief Superintendent

Originator: Ryan Feehan, Superintendent of Leadership Services

Resource Staff: Sandra Talarico, Manager of Religious Education Services
Fr. Julian Bilyj, Division Chaplain

Re: **Faith Formation for Students and Staff Report**

Background:

Religious Education remains central to the mission of Catholic schooling because it directly shapes the spiritual, moral, and intellectual vitality of a Catholic School Division. Its strength depends not only on curriculum and programming but also on the commitment and witness of the people who lead and participate in the work. The mission of the Division is to provide a Catholic education that inspires students to learn and prepares them to live fully and to serve God in one another with integrity and purpose. With the support of proper faith formation, students and staff help us actively live out this mission. Their growth, leadership, and daily example continually strengthen the Catholic identity of the Division and renew our shared capacity to live that mission in meaningful ways. Through the work of faith-formed staff, students engage with the teachings of the Catholic Church and are guided to express these values through their daily actions. This ongoing formation is also shaped by our vision of calling students to learn together, work together, and pray together in answering the call to a faith-filled life of service, which promotes a spirit of community, compassion, and justice, enabling students to recognize their place within God's plan and their responsibility to the broader community.

Through the work of Division Chaplains, Lay Chaplains, Religious Education Consultants, and other faith-formed staff, the Division support the formation of learners who are academically capable, spiritually grounded, and confident in their Catholic identity. The overarching aim is to form young people who participate meaningfully in the life of the Church and contribute generously to the wider world. Faith Formation of students and staff are at the heart of this work, since their formation, leadership, and daily commitment allow the division to live its mission with clarity, authenticity, and hope. Through their efforts, the division continues to form graduates who understand what it means to live a faith that is transformative, deeply rooted in Catholic tradition, and responsive to the needs of society.

Recommendation:

That based on the evidence provided in Faith Formation for Students and Staff 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 5.3 Fosters high standards of instruction and professional improvement (Teaching Quality Standard).*
- QI 5.4 Provides for the training of administrators and the development of leadership capacity within the Division.*

Attachments:

- Faith Formation for Students and Staff Report 2025-2026



| Edmonton Catholic Schools |

FAITH FORMATION IN STUDENTS AND STAFF 2025-2026

| January2026 |



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INTRODUCTION

Religious Education remains central to the mission of Catholic schooling because it directly shapes the spiritual, moral, and intellectual vitality of a Catholic School Division. Its strength depends not only on curriculum and programming but also on the commitment and witness of the people who lead and participate in the work. The mission of the Division is to provide a Catholic education that inspires students to learn and prepares them to live fully and to serve God in one another with integrity and purpose. With the support of proper faith formation, students and staff help us actively live out this mission. Their growth, leadership, and daily example continually strengthen the Catholic identity of the Division and renew our shared capacity to live that mission in meaningful ways. Through the work of faith-formed staff, students engage with the teachings of the Catholic Church and are guided to express these values through their daily actions. This ongoing formation is also shaped by our vision of calling students to learn together, work together, and pray together in answering the call to a faith-filled life of service, which promotes a spirit of community, compassion, and justice, enabling students to recognize their place within God's plan and their responsibility to the broader community.

Anchored in the Five Marks of Catholic Identity, faith formation is offered through a balanced and inclusive approach that combines structured academic learning with liturgical life, communal prayer, and opportunities for service. Formed teachers and leaders serve as vital partners in this work because their example models what it means to live a life shaped by the Gospel. Their ability to teach, witness, and form relationships strengthens The Division's overall faith culture. Students are also encouraged to engage in inquiry and dialogue that lead to deeper understanding, reinforced in their participation in Masses, liturgies, retreats, and acts of service that help them recognize the significance of living their faith through concrete action.

A key element of faith formation is a personal encounter with God. Through prayer, guided reflection, and quiet contemplation, students are invited to develop a deeper awareness of God's presence in their lives. By emphasizing respect for human dignity, empathy, and solidarity with those who are most vulnerable, students and staff are encouraged to become compassionate contributors to society. This also reinforces the essential role that faith formation programs play in the overall health of a Catholic School Division, since they ensure that Catholic identity is not merely preserved but actively strengthened.

Through the work of Division Chaplains, Lay Chaplains, Religious Education Consultants, other faith-formed staff, and supported by documents like the Five Marks of Catholic School Identity Faith Formation Plan, the Division supports the formation of learners who are academically capable, spiritually grounded, and confident in their Catholic identity. The overarching aim is to form young people who participate meaningfully in the life of the Church and contribute generously to the wider world. faith formation of students and staff are at the heart of this work, since their formation,

leadership, and daily commitment allow The Division to live its mission with clarity, authenticity, and hope. Through their efforts, The Division continues to form graduates who understand what it means to live a faith that is transformative, deeply rooted in Catholic tradition, and responsive to the needs of society.

OUR APPROACH TO FAITH FORMATION

Faith formation includes a comprehensive and integrated 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 meeting Christ and deepening one's relationship with Him.

At the same time, faith formation involves evangelization and catechesis, which provides systematic instruction in the teachings of the Church, including doctrine, morality, prayer, and social justice. While this instruction is reflected through the religious education programs, parish-based ministries, and spiritual retreats, faith formation can also be expressed in the community via fellowship, service, and mutual support within the Church and the broader community. 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.

OPENING SCHOOL MASS

The Eucharist stands at the center of faith formation, shaping the spiritual life of a Catholic school division and grounding all formation in an encounter with Christ. When staff gather to celebrate the Eucharist, they participate in the source and summit of the Church's life, renewing their own spiritual journeys.

All staff, both baptized Catholics and those of alternate faith backgrounds, attend Opening School Mass. The attendance at Mass itself supports the faith formation of all staff, as everyone is invited to participate in the Mass to the extent to which they are comfortable. Everyone in attendance benefits from spiritual nourishment through participation in the liturgy and grows in appreciation for Catholic sacramental worship. Members of alternate faiths are invited to participate in a spiritual communion or receive a blessing during the Communion rite, since this participation nourishes the soul and draws attendees into deeper union with God and with one another, regardless of sacramental reception.

This shared celebration strengthens the foundation upon which all faith formation rests, reminding staff that their work flows from the grace, unity, and mission they receive from Christ in the Eucharist. Together, the following elements form a compelling narrative on the importance of the Eucharist. The Celebration of Mass:

- Reaffirms the vocation of Catholic educators
- Spiritually renews for mission
- Builds a faith-based professional community
- Models faith leadership
- Aligns with Catholic values
- Prayerfully reflects solidarity
- Strengthens Christ-centered leadership

The Eucharist reaffirms the vocation of Catholic educators, reminds staff that their work extends far beyond instruction, and invites staff to remember the sacred responsibility they carry in forming young people. It also provides a vital moment of spiritual renewal for mission. In the busyness of school life, the Eucharist offers staff an opportunity to pause, reflect, and reconnect with Christ as their source of strength, wisdom, and inspiration. This renewal equips them to return to their roles with clarity, purpose, and a deeper sense of commitment.

Celebrating the Eucharist as a division strengthens a faith-based professional community. When staff from diverse schools come together in worship, they are united in their shared mission and identity as Catholic educators. This gathering fosters a sense of belonging and reinforces the communal dimension of Catholic education, reminding staff that they do not carry their mission alone.

In addition, the celebration models faith leadership. By gathering in worship, staff demonstrate that faith is not only taught but lived, which is essential for those called to witness Christ's teachings to students and the broader school community. Their participation communicates that faith remains central to both personal and professional life.

The Eucharist also grounds staff in core Catholic values. Sharing in this central act of worship calls educators to embody love, service, compassion, and community in their daily work. It deepens their understanding that these values are not abstract concepts but practical guides for their interactions, decisions, and responsibilities.

Coming together in prayer further expresses solidarity. The Eucharist allows staff to pray collectively for students, families, colleagues, and communities, especially during challenging times. This shared prayer reinforces their unity of purpose and their collective hope rooted in Christ.

Finally, the celebration of the Eucharist strengthens Christ-centered leadership across The Division. It is a moment to intentionally place Christ at the center of decision-making, relationships, and educational practices. Staff are reminded that their work is not solely a profession but a vocation grounded in faith, service, and the example of Christ. Through the Eucharist, the spiritual foundation of the Edmonton Catholic School Division is renewed, and staff are equipped to fulfill their roles with integrity, compassion, and a deep sense of mission.



THE FIVE MARKS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL IDENTITY

The Five Marks of Catholic School Identity continue to serve as the guiding post for any Professional Development and faith formation in The Division. The Department of Religious Education Services delivers three sessions on the Five Marks of Catholic School Identity every year to New Principals, New Assistant Principals, and Leadership.

Here, the Marks of an Excellent Catholic Leader begin with the premise that superb Catholic school leaders are also master Catholic teachers. The presentations discuss the essence of teaching excellence, address the roles and responsibilities of both Catholic school and Catholic division leaders, and share concrete and measurable ways in which the Marks can be realized in a typical school setting. The focus of these sessions include:

Mark One: An Excellent Catholic Leader Embraces the Dignity of All as Created in the Image of God - Emphasis on the supernatural destiny of students brings with it a profound appreciation of the need to perfect children in all their dimensions as images of God.

Mark Two: An Excellent Catholic Leader Advocates for Catholic Education Within and Beyond the School Community and Makes Decisions Rooted in Gospel Teachings - The Church sees education as a process that, considering our transcendent destiny, forms the whole child and seeks to fix their eyes on heaven.

Mark Three: An Excellent Catholic Leader Intentionally Directs and Fosters the Development of Catholic Education through Faith Permeation - A third distinctive characteristic of Catholic schools is that the spirit of Catholicism should permeate the entire curriculum. Catholic education is intentionally directed to the growth of the whole person.

Mark Four: An Excellent Catholic Leader is Called to be a Witness and an Agent of Hope, Proclaiming the Gospel Message to all People, everywhere and at All Times - A fourth indicator of a

school's authentic Catholicity is the vital witness of its teachers and administrators. With them lies the primary responsibility for creating a Christian school climate, as individuals and as a community.

Mark Five: An Excellent Catholic Leader Ensures a Communal Vision; Recognizing that God will be Found with and in Each Other - A final mark of Catholicity is the emphasis on the school as a community of persons and, even more to the point, a genuine community of faith.

On Thursday, January the 8th, the Department of Religious Education together with the Board of Trustees participated in a morning retreat and presentation from Archbishop Michael Miller, recognized as the Founding Father of the Five Marks of Catholic Identity. Archbishop Michael Miller is a Canadian Basilian priest who has served the Church as a pastor, theologian, and educator, including his work at the Vatican in the Congregation for Catholic Education.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT DAY

Faith Development Day is an important component of staff faith formation because it provides intentional time for educators to deepen their understanding of Catholic teaching, strengthen their personal relationship with Christ, and reconnect with the mission that guides their work. By gathering as a community for prayer, learning, and celebration of the Eucharist, staff experience renewal that supports their vocation as witnesses of faith and equips them to better accompany students on their own faith journeys.

Each February, Edmonton Catholic Schools supports a full day of faith formation for all staff. This activity sees staff gathering in select locations across the city to listen to Catholic speakers or theologians and to celebrate the Eucharist as a larger community.

- This year, the planning and implementation of the day returned to a broader committee format to include a principal from each level, as well as the Department of Religious Education, allowing for the voices of many colleagues.
- Faith Development Day, scheduled for Wednesday, February 25th, will be celebrated in eight churches: St. Thomas More, Annunciation, Corpus Christi, St. Charles, St. John Bosco, Santa Maria Goretti, Resurrection, and St. Josaphat's Cathedral.
- The Eucharistic Mass and Liturgy at each parish will be followed by staff returning to their own schools and sites for coffee and fellowship, and participation in two virtual presentations and table discussions facilitated by David Wells and Terry Hershey.

The theme for this school year is Hope, as it is rooted both in the Division Theme of "People of Hope" and the Jubilee Theme of "Pilgrims of Hope". The theme of Faith Development Day will reflect this same theme of Hope. From a faith perspective, hope anchors people in God's promises and

faithfulness. It invites us to look beyond present circumstances, to trust in God's presence, and to live with confidence that love, compassion, and goodness can prevail, even in times of hardship.

FATHER MICHAEL "CATFISH" MIREAU YOUTH FAITH DAY

Youth Faith Day plays a vital role in the faith formation of students by offering them a meaningful encounter with Christ through the Eucharist and the dynamic, engaging proclamation of the Gospel. By gathering grade eight students from across The Division, the event creates a shared experience that strengthens Catholic identity, builds community, and invites young people to see themselves as active participants in the life of the Church. This dedicated time for worship, learning, and joyful celebration helps students grow in faith.

From March 18-25, 2026, the school division will host its annual Father Michael Mireau Youth Faith Day.

- Gathering at St. Charles Church, every Grade Eight student in the school division will attend a morning session during the six-day period.
- Over three hours, students will participate in a Eucharistic Celebration as well as engage in a lively and enthusiastic presentation by internationally acclaimed Catholic youth speaker Jesse Manibusan.

Father Michael Mireau Youth Faith Day Theme this year is "Serve Like A Superhero", a focus which was created originally by Father Michael Mireau himself. Serve like a Superhero encourages Grade Eight students to identify their own gifts and talents as their "superpowers" and to use them in the service of others. It helps them understand that everyday acts, standing up for someone who is excluded, helping a peer, showing kindness, or working for justice, are meaningful expressions of leadership and faith.

SCHOOL-HOME-PARISH PARTNERSHIP

A strong partnership between school, home, and parish is foundational to faith formation because it ensures that students experience the Catholic faith as a consistent and living reality across all areas of their lives. When families, educators, and parish communities work together, students receive unified support that strengthens their Catholic identity and helps them integrate faith into decisions, relationships, and daily experiences.

The relationship between the school, home, and parish, as described in *Mark Five: Shaped By A Spirituality Of Communion*, forms a vital foundation of Catholic education. This relationship creates a supportive and unified environment that nurtures the spiritual, moral, and academic growth of students. When educators, families, and parish leaders work together, they help ensure that faith is not only taught in the classroom but also lived and experienced within the home and the parish community. This shared commitment strengthens students' Catholic identity and helps them carry their learning into daily life through meaningful faith experiences.

The connection between school, home, and parish continues to be an important part of our school division. Last year, we hosted a gathering with parish priests, principals, and division leaders to deepen this partnership. Because the Archdiocese was without an Archbishop, we postponed this year's gathering.

As for the relationship between schools and their parish communities, the St. Theresa Family of Schools continues to be a strong example. St. Theresa's Church hosts two faith formation sessions each year for staff, giving them an opportunity to deepen their understanding of Catholicism. The parish priests in that family also make regular visits to the schools and support students in their preparation for the sacraments. Participation in parish Masses, engagement in sacramental preparation, and involvement in ministries and activities provide students with meaningful opportunities to encounter God, celebrate their faith, practice Catholic values in real-world contexts, nurtures a sense of belonging to the local and global Church, deepens student engagement in faith formation, and supports the ongoing mission of Catholic education to develop compassionate, faith-filled individuals.

EXTERNAL PARTNERS

Collaboration with external partners enriches faith formation by providing students and staff with broader access to spiritual guidance, theological expertise, and experiences that connect them to the wider Church. These partnerships strengthen The Division's capacity to offer authentic Catholic education, deepen understanding of the faith, and support the cultural and spiritual diversity present within the local Church.

Partnerships with organizations such as the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton, the Ukrainian Eparchy, the Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta, and GrACE continue to play an essential role in supporting the mission of Edmonton Catholic Schools. Like *Mark Five: Shaped By A Spirituality Of Communion*, these collaborative relationships strengthen connections to the wider faith community and contribute meaningfully to the holistic formation of students and staff. Through access to spiritual leadership, theological expertise, and opportunities for cultural engagement, these partners support the integration of Catholic teachings within educational practice, enabling students and staff to grow academically, spiritually, and morally while developing a strong sense of identity and belonging within the Catholic tradition and the global Church.

One meaningful example of how our partnerships strengthen the formation of students and staff is the work currently underway with the Ukrainian Eparchy. The Ukrainian Eparchy and Edmonton Catholic Schools have been dedicated partners for many years. Under the leadership of Bishop David, our division has supported the development of new Ukrainian Religious Education curricular resources for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve. This work has involved the commitment of many of our Ukrainian teachers who have piloted the new lessons in their classrooms and offered thoughtful consultation throughout the development process.

A second example is the ongoing Bishop's Assurance work with the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton. In collaboration with Catholic education partners, the Bishops have developed a guidance document that outlines ways for the Church to engage with Catholic education across each diocese. The Bishop's Assurance provides suggested actions and flexible approaches that are adapted to the ECSD context.

This process invites participation from school communities, incorporates direction from the local Bishop, integrates the Five Marks, and highlights the vital contributions of our Division Chaplains, Fr. Glenn and Fr. Julian. It also reinforces the central relationship among home, school, and parish in the life of Catholic education.

To support the implementation of this joint work over the next three years, the Religious Education department will provide guidance through the leadership of our Catholicity Consultant and with the support of the Division Chaplains. Their work will help schools interpret and reflect the Bishop's Assurance in meaningful and practical ways. This support will also inform our faith formation processes as we move forward.

FAITH FORMATION THROUGH CURRICULUM SUPPORT

A strong foundation in faith formation depends not only on the witness and leadership in our schools but also on the quality of the curriculum and resources that support teachers in their daily practice. Ensuring that staff have access to well-designed, theologically sound, and pedagogically applicable Education programs is essential in helping students grow in their understanding of the Catholic faith in ways that are meaningful, coherent, and developmentally appropriate. It is within this context that Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ, the Religious Education program approved by The Catholic Bishops of Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the Northwest Territories and developed in collaboration with Catholic educators from across Canada, actively promotes education in a Catholic setting.

The program, based on the Catholic Elementary Curriculum Policy Document for Religious Education for Kindergarten to Grade 8, exemplifies discipline and rigor, reflects the content of faith expressed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and follows the rationale and method of the General Directory for Catechesis. Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ presents the Catholic faith as a distinctive discipline with a unique set of beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes that informs and influences all other learning. The program, rooted in Scripture, relies on explicit teaching of the basic beliefs of the Catholic faith and explores the traditions of the Catholic faith, connecting prayer and a personal relationship with God to all learning. An example from the Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ religion program that shows how teachers are formed in their faith, can be seen in the teacher background sections and faith reflections that accompany each unit. For instance, many units in the program begins with "Teacher Faith

Formation” or “Theological Background” notes. These sections invite teachers to engage personally with Scripture, Church teaching, and the central theme of the unit before teaching it to students.

While the current Grade Nine Religious Education Program, Be With Me, complements the Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ resources, we look forward to introducing the new Grade 9 Pearson Program in the fall of 2026 and remain committed to the High School Religion Programs of Studies - RS 15, 25, 35, and Religions of the World 35, which were revised in 2023; with each course studied from a thematic perspective.

To complement the Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ Religion Program, Blessed and Beloved, a new Family Life Education resource supported by both the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta, will be introduced to Edmonton Catholic Schools’ audiences in Grade One beginning the fall of 2026.

FORMATION THROUGH CONSULTANT SUPPORT

The Elementary and Secondary Religious Education Consultants continue to offer regularly scheduled Professional Development sessions in-person and on TEAMS to support teachers with the implementation of the Religious Education Programs of Studies for all grades.

By its explicit alignment with Mark Three: “Animated by a Faith-Infused Curriculum,” the Religious Education (RE) Curriculum ensures that faith is not treated as an isolated subject, but as a lens through which students engage with knowledge, meaning, and life. Through intentional design, delivery, and reflection, the Religious Education Curriculum integrates Catholic faith, Scripture, and tradition with contemporary student experiences, promoting deep understanding and lived discipleship.

Teaching and learning in Religious Education are shaped by pedagogies that promote engagement, dialogue, and reflection, creating opportunities for students to explore faith in ways that are thoughtful and personally meaningful. Teachers receive ongoing support from the Religious Education Consultants to incorporate strategies that invite students to encounter faith with curiosity, critical thinking, and personal insight. This approach includes the use of reflective practices such as journaling, prayerful silence, and guided discussion that help students integrate faith with learning. It also encourages inquiry-based learning, where students ask questions about belief, purpose, and morality in a safe and respectful environment. The RE Department and Learning Services developed a permeated lesson for Religion and Math, which was shared with many elementary teachers last year. We created a Secondary Religion and Science lesson that was posted on SharePoint as a video and shared with teachers during Thursday afternoon staff meetings last year. Currently, RE and PEW are working together to create a presentation that will be shared with Elementary teachers during the next Learning Services Teacher session. In addition to this, differentiated learning experiences are also developed to help recognize the diverse faith backgrounds and stages of belief present within the classroom while remaining faithful to Catholic teaching.

While a faith-infused curriculum extends beyond the classroom, the RE Curriculum Consultants help staff understand the theological and ethical foundations that inform interdisciplinary learning and whole-school practices by:

- Collaborating between Religious Education teachers and Lay Chaplains to align curriculum themes with liturgical seasons, social justice initiatives, and pastoral programs.
- Providing cross-curricular links where Catholic values and ethical perspectives are explored in Humanities, Science, and Health and Wellness, reinforcing the Catholic worldview.
- Integrating whole-school learning experiences, such as liturgies, retreats, and Christian service, to RE curriculum outcomes.

The effectiveness of a faith-infused curriculum is strengthened through the formation and support of educators, ensuring that teachers feel confident and capable in delivering Religious Education with both theological depth and strong pedagogical practice. Ongoing professional learning plays an essential role in this work, offering opportunities focused on theological understanding and curriculum interpretation. Teachers also benefit from collaborative planning of RE units that promote consistency, quality, and fidelity to Catholic teaching across classrooms. In addition, reflective review processes help educators evaluate how well the curriculum supports student faith development and engagement, contributing to continuous improvement in both teaching and learning.

FAITH FORMATION THROUGH CHAPLAINCY

Father Glenn McDonald and Father Julian Bilyj, our Division Chaplains, offer staff a strong foundation in the theological teachings of the Catholic Church and an inspiring spiritual presence throughout our school communities. They continue to serve as trusted and accessible resources, helping to strengthen the relationship between our schools and local parishes. Their presence contributes meaningfully to evangelization within The Division and in the broader community.

Both chaplains provide clear guidance and faith formation for students and staff in areas that shape the Catholic life of our schools, including liturgy, prayer, moral development, Catholic identity, and missionary outreach. Their work reflects a spirit of partnership that honors the varied gifts and expertise of staff, and they collaborate closely with school teams to support a vibrant and authentic Catholic culture.

FORMATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Along with their regular visits to schools, classroom involvement, and support of Eucharistic celebrations and Liturgies of the Word, Father Glenn and Father Julian continue to create digital resources for The Division. These include virtual liturgies, short prayer experiences, mini homilies, reflections, and faith-based videos that offer ongoing formation and encouragement for students and staff. All digital offerings align with both the Liturgical Calendar and the Religious Education curriculum, strengthen faith learning across all grade levels, and ensure that spiritual formation remains accessible and engaging for the entire Edmonton Catholic Schools community.

The Division also supports this work through the Faith Alive page on its public website. This page provides families and students with a collection of digital faith resources that invite users to explore the beauty of the Catholic faith through prayer, worship, and study. The page features resources such as Little Liturgies with Father Glenn, which offer short online liturgies that follow the liturgical year and other key feasts and celebrations, and as most viewed videos from Edmonton Catholic Schools, are widely used by staff and families to support classroom learning and at-home conversations about faith. The Faith Alive page also connects users to Reflections with Father Julian, social justice resources, the Division Prayer, the Five Marks of Catholic Identity, and Parent Newsletters that guide families through the liturgical seasons. It is also important to note that in addition to this work, the Division celebrates the recent achievement of The Take and Eat video series, created by Father Glenn and filmed and edited by Patrick Kelly, which received the Coup de Coeur Award at the 2025 BRAVO! Awards, presented by the Canadian Association of Communicators in Education (CACE). This recognition highlights the important role digital platforms can play in supporting the shared work of home and school in nurturing faith formation, offering tools that encourage families to grow as active witnesses to the love of Christ.

LAY CHAPLAIN FORMATION THROUGH THE FIVE MARKS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL IDENTITY

Father Glenn and Father Julian also remain committed to supporting the formation and ongoing development of Lay Chaplains for ministry within The Division. Through regular Chaplain Meetings, Lay Chaplains from each school site are equipped with the guidance, shared resources, and collaborative support needed to respond effectively to the spiritual and pastoral needs of their students. These gatherings, reflected by the Five Marks of Catholic School Identity, provide a valuable forum for sharing best practices, reflecting on student experiences, and developing consistent yet flexible approaches to ministry that respect the unique context of each school community.

Beginning with “Grounded In A Christian Anthropology,” this Mark reflects the intentional Christ-centered emphasis of chaplaincy formation and ministry. Each Chaplain Meeting begins with a Eucharistic celebration, Scripture, and theological reflection, modeling a prayerful approach that Lay Chaplains replicate within their school communities. Father Glenn and Father Julian guide the Lay

Chaplains in reflecting on Jesus' ministry of accompaniment, compassion, and healing, supporting chaplains to build authentic, trusting relationships with students and inviting them to intentionally prioritize presence and listening, particularly with students experiencing grief, anxiety, or disconnection.

Building on this foundation, the second mark, "Imbued With A Catholic Worldview," equips Lay Chaplains to witness to faith in ways that are invitational, age-appropriate, and grounded in lived experience. Shared resources support Lay Chaplains in planning and leading Masses, liturgies, prayer, and retreats that engage students meaningfully and encourage participation. They create opportunities for students to explore faith through service, reflection, and dialogue, rather than instruction alone. Student leadership in liturgy, social justice initiatives, and prayer is encouraged, enabling students to experience faith as active and relevant.

Continuing through the framework, the third mark, "Animated By A Faith-Infused Curriculum," considers the high standards of formation, reflection, and professional practice within chaplaincy ministry. Regular Chaplain Meetings provide structured professional learning in the RE Curriculum, pastoral care, adolescent development, and faith formation. Here, Lay Chaplains engage in reflective practice by sharing case studies, discussing challenges, and evaluating the effectiveness of pastoral responses. Consistent expectations and shared approaches across The Division ensure quality and coherence, while still allowing flexibility for individual school contexts.

Deepening this work, the fourth mark, "Sustained By Gospel Witness," expresses the dignity, wellbeing, and inclusion of every student. Chaplains are supported to respond to issues such as mental health, social isolation, family hardship, and grief with compassion and pastoral care. Discussions during Chaplain Meetings focus on promoting inclusive practices and advocating for vulnerable students. Chaplains collaborate with school leadership and Health and Wellness teams to support initiatives that promote respect, empathy, and social responsibility.

Finally, the fifth mark, "Shaped By A Spirituality Of Communion," articulates the integration of faith into the everyday experiences of students and school life. Lay Chaplains help students make connections between faith, life experiences, and decision-making through guided reflection and prayer. Liturgical seasons and celebrations are intentionally integrated into the rhythm of school life and pastoral programming, ensuring Catholic identity is lived authentically rather than presented as abstract or disconnected.

THE LAY CHAPLAIN

For us at Edmonton Catholic Schools, the Lay Chaplains are designated to provide leadership in promoting the spiritual needs of the school under the supervision of its Principal and in alignment with The Division Plan for Continuous Growth and the Five Marks Faith Formation Plan. In collaboration with the Department of Religious Education, Father Glenn and Father Julian meet with the Lay

Chaplains, four afternoons a year. The agenda is constructed to consider the needs of the schools, the liturgical seasons, and the life of the Church, and each year, one field experience is selected to provide the Chaplains with an opportunity to integrate their learning in more concrete and meaningful ways.

Over the years, the Lay Chaplains have visited:

- Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples to consider ways in which Catholicity and Indigenous spirituality intersect in their shared emphasis on the sacredness of creation, the communal nature of faith, and the presence of the divine in everyday life.
- St. George's Ukrainian Catholic Church, where Lay Chaplains celebrated Divine Liturgy and reflected how one faith – Latin and Byzantine - can be authentically lived through different rites, languages, and cultural expressions, particularly highlighting the significance of the iconography in the church.
- Mount Carmel Spirituality Centre in Parkland County, where Lay Chaplains were offered the opportunity for prayer and personal renewal.

The Lay Chaplains in our schools play a vital role in sustaining the faith life of their communities. Their work supports students, staff, and families by ensuring that Catholic identity is lived meaningfully and consistently throughout the school year. Their primary responsibilities include:

- Nurturing and cultivating a Catholic culture that fully permeates faith and learning.
- Ensuring that the Catholic display at the front of the school is changed following the liturgical seasons and providing guidance and support to teachers regarding their own classroom prayer tables and displays.
- Coordinating and enhancing the school-home-parish partnership by meeting with the local parish priest, once in the fall and once in the spring, to discuss concrete ways of enhancing the school-home-parish partnership.
- Connecting students from the school with the Sacramental preparation classes offered by the local Catholic church.
- Guiding the prayer life of the school community.
- Facilitating the liturgical life of the school by supporting the staff and students in the development of liturgically correct celebrations.
- Supporting the school social justice initiatives.
- Providing leadership in the development and implementation of the Catholic Identity Goal, explicitly in relation to the Five Marks of Catholic School Identity.
- Providing direction on theological/moral issues according to Church teaching.
- Attending the mandatory division Chaplain meetings.

Through their daily presence, guidance, and collaboration with school communities, the Lay Chaplains play an important role in nurturing the faith formation of both students and staff. Their leadership in prayer, liturgy, Catholic identity, and spiritual development ensures that each school remains a place where the Gospel is lived, learned, and deepened in meaningful and lasting ways.

CONCLUSION

Religious Education is central to the mission of Catholic schools, supporting the spiritual and intellectual formation of students within a distinctly Catholic context. Through the intentional integration of faith and learning, school leaders and educators actively promote Catholic education, inviting students to encounter God, deepen their understanding of belief, and live out the values of compassion, justice, and service. This shared commitment is expressed through meaningful religious celebrations and social justice initiatives organized across schools and departments, nurturing vibrant, faith-filled communities that reflect the teachings of Christ and serve as living witnesses to Catholic faith in action.

A sustained commitment to faith formation continues to guide the work of Religious Education Services. Ongoing curriculum development, coupled with programs that support both personal faith growth and professional learning for staff, ensures high-quality fully permeated instruction. These efforts are strengthened through cooperative partnerships between school, home, and parish, as well as opportunities for students and staff to engage in Catholic social teaching and service. Together, these initiatives support the formation of learners who are academically capable, spiritually grounded, and confident in their Catholic identity.

Looking ahead, The Division remains committed to strengthening faith formation and advancing Catholic education through intentional leadership development and capacity building. By investing in the formation of current and future leaders, we ensure the continued vitality of our schools and the sustainability of our Catholic mission. With hope and purpose, we will continue to grow together in faith, support one another, and witness to the transformative power of Catholic education for the benefit of students, families, and the wider community for generations to come.





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BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMO

January 28, 2026 Public Board Meeting **4.1**

Date: January 28, 2026

To: The Board of Trustees

From: Sandra Palazzo, Board Chair

Re: **January Board Chair Report on #ECSDfaithinspires**

As we begin a new calendar year, the Board of Trustees enters January with a renewed sense of purpose and gratitude. This time of year invites reflection on the months behind us and hope for the work that lies ahead as we move through the second half of the school year together.

January is a natural season of renewal within our school communities. As students and staff return from the Christmas break, there is a renewed energy in our classrooms and schools as learning resumes and routines are re-established. Our Division theme, *People of Hope*, continues to guide our work, reminding us that Catholic education is rooted not only in academic excellence but in the formation of the whole child, mind, body, and spirit. This month has offered our Board an opportunity to recognize the leadership and engagement of our students. Through school councils, faith initiatives, service projects, and classroom leadership, students continue to demonstrate how hope is lived out in practical and meaningful ways within our school communities.

This month also marks the beginning of Open House season across Edmonton Catholic Schools. Our schools welcome families as they explore Christ-centred learning environments and the diverse programming available to support students at every stage of their educational journey. Whether families are considering Kindergarten, transitioning to Junior High or High School, or exploring specialized programs, Open Houses provide an opportunity to see how faith, learning, and community come together in our schools. A directory of Open Houses is available at ecsd.net/openhouse. We look forward to welcoming families as they take this step in their child's educational journey.

The Board continues to advocate for the needs of our growing Division, with a focus on ensuring students have access to safe, welcoming, and modern learning spaces. As enrolment continues to rise, Trustees remain committed to thoughtful planning and ongoing advocacy with government partners to support sustainable growth. We also recognize the importance of attracting and retaining dedicated teachers and support staff who play a vital role in the academic and well-being needs of our students. During this time of year, the Board is also engaged in its ongoing governance work, including monitoring Division progress, participating in professional learning, and ensuring policies and priorities continue to support student success.

We are grateful for the trust placed in Edmonton Catholic Schools by our families and communities. As we look ahead to the months to come, the Board remains steadfast in its responsibility to govern with care, integrity, and faith, always keeping students at the heart of our decisions. Together, we continue our mission to nurture hope and provide a Christ-centred learning environment where every student is supported to flourish.

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 **January Board Chair Report on #ECSDfaithinspires** for information purposes.

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

- Attended ECSD Reads
- Attended St. Timothy Catholic Elementary School's 50th anniversary Liturgy
- Attended the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce Chamber Ball 2026 with Chief Superintendent and Board of Trustees
- Attended meeting with the Minister of Education's Chief of Staff with Chief Superintendent
- Attended Grand Opening Celebration for St. Josephine Bakhita with Chief Superintendent and Board of Trustees
- Attended the Installation of Archbishop Hero with Chief Superintendent
- Attended the Solemn Vespers with Archbishop-designate Stephen Hero with Chief Superintendent and Board of Trustees
- Attended "Meet and Greet" with City of Edmonton Councillors
- Attended Student Voice with Chief Superintendent and Board of Trustees
- Attended Meeting with the Ministry on Classroom Complexity with Chief Superintendent
- Attended Archbishop Joseph MacNeil Leadership Academy with Chief Superintendent and Board of Trustees
- Attended TEBA Monthly Engagement Session with Board of Trustees
- Attended Community Engagement Committee Meeting with Board of Trustees Representatives
- Attended Ukrainian Bilingual Opening Liturgy with Board of Trustees
- Attended Archbishop Michael Miller Retreat and Lecture 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:

- Addressed numerous media requests
- Attended to correspondence and emails





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BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMO

January 28, 2026 Public Board Meeting **4.2**

Date: January 28, 2026
To: Board of Trustees
From: Lynnette Anderson, Chief Superintendent
Re: **Chief Superintendent's Report on #ECSDfaithinspires – January 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. The month of January 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

- As the Jubilee Year of Hope came to an end with the closing of the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica, schools were provided with a liturgy to mark the end of this special journey.
- Senior Division leaders, Principals, and chaplains had the great fortune to participate in a workshop with Archbishop Miller, the author of the Five Marks of Catholic School Identity Framework. It was a tremendous opportunity to explore the nuances of how we can further enhance the distinctive nature of our Division.
- I was honored to attend the installation of Archbishop Stephen Hero with Chair Palazzo on behalf of the Division.
- We will celebrate the opening of St. Josephine Bakhita Catholic Elementary/Junior High School with a Liturgy on January 29th.

Learning Excellence

- I was pleased to join our Principal Training group to discuss visionary leadership.
- Our Catholic Educational Leadership group attended our annual Archbishop Joseph MacNeil Leadership Academy. These were two days filled with prayer, reflection and deep learning about our Division focus on Optimal Learning.
- Learning Services hosted an information meeting for Junior High Principals on the upcoming new curriculum implementation.

Organizational Excellence

- We completed our ECSD Annual Survey this month. The results of this survey play an important role in our Division and school level planning. Division Monitoring will now process the survey, and we will bring the results forward to the Board in the Spring.
- As families begin to contemplate transitions into kindergarten or between levels, our schools are now busy hosting Open Houses to support families in making choices to best meet their child's needs.
- The Superintendents and I continue to visit schools to review their School Plans for Continuous Growth and to experience the wonderful things that sites are doing to bring their plans to life.
- Our Student Voice team gathered for their second meeting of the year. This collaboration which allows leadership to gain student perspective is greatly valued.

Embracing Diversity

- Our Ukrainian Bilingual Program Schools attended their annual Liturgy in celebration of the gift of Ukrainian Bilingual education and our partnership with the Eparchy of Edmonton.
- The Division is hosting a Winter Storytelling evening with Ekti Margaret Cardinal on January 28. Storytelling in the winter months has always been a special time of year for our Indigenous communities. Storytelling brings people together, it strengthens community ties, fosters intergenerational connections, and can be a source of healing, laughter, and resilience during the long winter days.

Recommendation:

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

