



# AGENDA

The Board of Trustees of Edmonton School Division  
One Kingsway  
Edmonton, Alberta

CFE McCauley Chambers  
Tuesday, December 12, 2023  
2 p.m.

## Board Meeting

- A. O Canada
- B. Roll Call
- C. Approval of the Agenda
- D. Communications from the Board Chair
- E. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools
- F. Approval of the Minutes
  - 1. DRAFT – Board Minutes – November 28, 2023
- G. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives  
*(NOTE: Pre-registration with the Board Office [780-429-8443] is required by 12 p.m. on Monday, December 11, 2023, to speak under this item.)*
- H. Reports
  - 2. Establishment of Business and Innovation Alternative Program (Recommendation)
  - 3. Student Accommodation Plan 2023-2024 (Information)
  - 4. Student Transportation Update (Information)
- I. Other Committee, Board Representative and Trustee Reports
- J. Trustees and Board Requests for Information
- K. Notices of Motion
- L. Meeting Dates
- M. Adjournment

BOARD OF  
TRUSTEES

Julie Kusiek  
Board Chair

Jan Sawyer  
Board Vice-Chair

Trisha Estabrooks  
Dawn Hancock  
Marcia Hole  
Marsha Nelson  
Sherri O'Keefe  
Saadiq Sumar

**MINUTE BOOK****Board Meeting**

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of Edmonton School Division of Alberta held in the Centre for Education McCauley Chambers on Tuesday, November 28, 2023, at 2 p.m.

**Present:****Trustees**

Trisha Estabrooks  
Dawn Hancock  
Marcia Hole

Julie Kusiek  
Marsha Nelson

Sherri O'Keefe  
Jan Sawyer  
Saadiq Sumar

**Officials**

Angela Anderson  
Todd Burnstad  
Grace Cooke  
Andrea Cooper

Karen Mills  
Kathy Muhlethaler  
Kent Pharis  
Nancy Petersen  
Cliff Richard

Darrel Robertson  
Carrie Rosa  
Ron Thompson  
Liz Yule

**Board Chair:** Julie Kusiek

**Recording Secretary:** Catherine Angeles

The Board Chair called the meeting to order. She reflected on the promise of Treaty, to honour and acknowledge the footsteps of the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit who have called these lands home since time immemorial. She feels hope and encouragement when listening to principals share stories about the work their schools are doing to embrace and respect the teachings of many diverse Indigenous peoples and to connect students with the land. Teachings like the Thirteen Moons, where students go outside on each full moon to observe changes to the land throughout the year. Or the Seven Sacred Teachings, including the new mural unveiled at the Earl Buxton School yesterday. She hopes that students within Edmonton Public Schools will learn to respect Indigenous peoples and the knowledge they share with those who make their home on Treaty 6. To be given the opportunity to reflect on and learn from those teachings is a gift.

**A. O Canada**

**B. Roll Call: 2:00 p.m.**

The Superintendent advised that all Trustees were present.

**MINUTE BOOK****C. Approval of the Agenda****MOVED BY Vice-Chair Sawyer:**

**“That the agenda for the November 28, 2023, Board meeting be approved as printed.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**D. Communications from the Board Chair**

The Board Chair acknowledged Minister Nicolaides’ announcement regarding an additional \$30 million for school divisions across the province. She said the Division is looking forward to seeing the impact of this change and continuing the dialogue with the provincial government about improvements to the funding formula.

The Board Chair thanked Diversity Magazine for the invitation to attend the Afro-Canadian Awards. She also thanked Trustees Hole, Sumar and Estabrooks for attending with the event with her. The event was a celebration of African entrepreneurs and the contributions they make to our community. They also learned about an exciting new grant available through the Africa Centre - the Black Youth Leadership Program. Successful applicants, aged 15 to 30, will receive up to \$5,000 towards their community enriching project ideas.

The Board Chair shared that at the recent Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) conference and fall general meeting, valuable connections between school boards were made. Krysta Florence, a Division teacher, was recognized with the Edwin Parr Award. The Board Chair expressed appreciation for the Premier and Minister of Education, who provided greetings and answered questions, and to all MLAs who took the time to attend the MLA breakfast. Their presence at events for elected school boards was important and appreciated.

The Board Chair stated that the Board recently completed Results Review with principals and central leaders from across the Division. Results review is an important part of the accountability process for the Board in ensuring that they are delivering high-quality public education. She thanked all principals, staff members and community members who attended those sessions.

The Board Chair said that McKay Avenue School Archives and Museum Old Time Christmas Gathering was this past weekend. The historic McKay Avenue School Archives and Museum is truly a special place that stores so much of Edmonton’s history and the history of Edmonton Public Schools. She thanked The Friends of Historic McKay Avenue and 1881 Schoolhouse Society for hosting this fun event and for the support they provide year-round to this important resource for all Edmontonians.

The Board Chair expressed that it was a joy to witness and bring greetings to the new teacher induction ceremony hosted by the Edmonton Public Teachers Local 37. She thanked Trustees Hole and Sumar who also attended the event. She said, “Our success as a Division, and the success of the students we serve, is due to the incredible contributions of the people who choose to work at Edmonton Public Schools.”. She thanked each and every new teacher inductee for choosing this calling of teaching and for choosing Edmonton Public Schools.

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The Board Chair shared that she attended a couple of school council meetings last week. She thanked all school councils who continue to invite Trustees to their meetings. She expressed appreciation, on behalf of the Board, for connecting with the school community at their school council meetings and events.

**E. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools**

The Superintendent expressed a belated welcome back to staff from a well-deserved fall break and hoped staff, students and families had an opportunity to rest and recharge.

The Superintendent welcomed all of the staff attending the meeting today to support the Annual Education Results Report, including central leaders and principals, and those who were tuning in online. He also extended a welcome to the SCOPE principals who have joined the meeting in person.

The Superintendent shared his appreciation, on behalf of all of the staff in the Division, for the time and thought everyone put into Results Review, both in schools and with the Central units. He also thanked principals and central DU administrators for all of the time they spent preparing for and participating in Results Review. The Superintendent is proud to serve a Division that continues to put students first in everything they do and work as one team to support student success.

The Superintendent provided an update on the illness and staffing rates for Division schools. The Division continues to publish information about illness rates on [epsb.ca](https://epsb.ca) every day. As of November 27, 5.8 per cent of Division students were away due to illness. Presently, several schools have respiratory outbreaks: Abbott, Millwoods Christian, Sweet Grass, York, Horse Hills, Mill Creek, Avonmore, Parkallen and Jackson Heights schools. In all of these cases, information from Alberta Health Services has been shared with families.

**TEACHER data:**

Friday: 73 unfilled positions, 385 sick  
Monday: 62 unfilled positions, 383 sick  
Tuesday: 65 unfilled, 397 sick

**EA data:**

Friday: 199 unfilled, 151 sick  
Monday: 200 unfilled, 153 sick  
Tuesday: 172 unfilled, 147 sick

**MINUTE BOOK****F. Approval of the Minutes**

1. Board Meeting – November 7, 2023

**MOVED BY Trustee Estabrooks:**

**“That the minutes of the Board meeting held November 7, 2023, be approved as printed.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**G. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives**

The Board of Trustees heard from one registered speaker for this item.

**H. Reports**

2. Report #02 of the Caucus Committee (From the meeting held November 7, 2023)

Information was provided regarding actions taken at the November 7, 2023, Caucus Committee meeting.

3. 2022-2023 Audited Financial Statements

**MOVED BY Trustee Hancock:**

**“That the 2022-2023 audited financial statements, notes to the financial statements and unaudited schedules be approved.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

There was a short break in the meeting.

4. Annual Education Results Report (2022-2023)

**MOVED BY Trustee Hole:**

**“That the Edmonton Public Schools’ 2022-2023 Annual Education Results Report be approved.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

There was a short break in the meeting.

5. Funds for the 2024-2025 Professional Improvement Program –  
Teacher Certificated Staff

**MOVED BY Trustee Nelson:**

**“That an allocation of \$1,300,000 from the 2024-2025 operating budget be approved for the Professional Improvement Program – Teacher Certificated Staff for the purpose of granting professional improvement leaves and tuition support to teachers for the 2024-2025 school year.”  
(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**MINUTE BOOK**6. Funds for the 2024-2025 Professional Improvement Program – Exempt Staff**MOVED BY Trustee O'Keefe:**

**“That an allocation of \$140,000 from the 2024-2025 operating budget be approved for the Exempt Staff Professional Improvement Program for the purpose of granting professional improvement leaves and tuition support to exempt staff for the 2024-2025 school year.”**  
**(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

7. Policy Review Committee 2023-2024 Work Plan**MOVED BY Trustee Estabrooks:**

**“That the Board meeting be extended beyond 6 p.m.”**  
**(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**MOVED BY Trustee Sumar:**

**“1. That the Policy Review Committee 2023-2024 work plan be approved.”**  
**(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**“2. That the Board approve the expenditure of up to \$15,000 from the Board Initiative Fund for the production of a school calendar video.”**  
**(UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED)**

**I. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives – 5 p.m.**

There were no registered speakers for this item.

**J. Other Committee, Board Representatives and Trustee Reports**

Trustee Nelson shared that the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta (PSBAA) had its fall conference and general meeting on November 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. The meetings provided an opportunity to listen and learn from Assistant Deputy Ministers (ADMs) from Alberta Education. The ADMs spoke on the Assurance Framework and planning/reporting requirements. They also spoke on the *Child and Youth Well-Being Review* and action plans. PSBAA representatives shared their concerns and they heard about what was going on in other divisions.

Trustee Nelson said that one of the exciting initiatives of PSBAA is the Professional Learning opportunity for Trustees. The Board of Trustees will all participate, together, to complete 21 modules. The modules will focus on their roles as Trustees in terms of governance, fiduciary and generative responsibilities. She thanked PSBAA for providing the Board this opportunity.

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Trustee Hole shared an Edmonton Public Schools Foundation (Foundation) update:

- Wrap and Roll is back at Kingsway Mall for the month of December. This year, the Foundation will be located by Entrance 6, on the upper level beside LUSH. The Foundation invites everyone to bring their presents. For a donation to the Foundation, volunteers will wrap your presents and get them ready for gifting. The Foundation thanked Kingsway Mall for donating the space and supplies and thanked the many Division staff who have signed up to volunteer.
- Through the Chromebooks for Kids program, the Foundation's goal is to improve technology-based equity amongst the Division's most vulnerable students and families. Technology can be expensive and for some families in our community, is simply not something they can afford. Technological literacy is both an essential educational tool for students and a critical life skill. By referring students who are at risk of falling behind because they lack access to technology at home, principals are identifying those who are most in need of support. During the 2022–23 school year, the Foundation distributed nearly 500 devices to 50 Division schools through the Chromebooks for Kids program. Over 300 devices have already been distributed this year. Principals are encouraged to learn more about the program on Connect.
- Giving Tuesday is November 28 and is the world's largest generosity movement. Whether folks choose to support the Foundation, one of the other incredible Edmonton charities, or simply spread some kindness in your own way, everyone has something to give and every act of generosity counts.

Trustee Hancock shared that the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) held their Fall General Meeting on Monday, November 20<sup>th</sup>. Trustee Hancock thanked Board Chair Kusiek, Vice-Chair Sawyer and Trustee Estabrooks for attending the meeting with her. During the business portion of the meeting, one emergent position statement and nine regular position statements were presented to members for discussion and to vote on. ASBA will submit those that were passed as advocacy to the provincial government on behalf of the members.

Trustee Hancock reported results for the election of ASBA president and vice-president and the voting of the submitted position statements including how the Trustees attending on behalf of Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB), voted on each statement, and where appropriate, the discussion.

### ASBA Election

Marilyn Dennis was re-elected as president for a second two-year term.

Shali Baziuk was re-elected as vice-president for a second two-year term.

### ASBA Position Statements

#### **1. Emergent Position Statement**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Minister of Education allow school divisions the flexibility to implement the new transportation requirements over a 2 year period. Year 1: Implementation of the 2 km guideline for all grades; Year 2: Implementation of the 1 km guideline for Kindergarten to grade 6 students.

- Discussion on the floor was around whether this position statement is considered emergent and to be added to the agenda.
- EPSB voted in favour.

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- The motion was defeated.

### **2. Access to New Funds for Fully Funded Full-Time Kindergarten**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the assembly adopt the position that Alberta Education provide the opportunity for every school division to access new funds for fully funded, full-time (950 hours) Kindergarten to ensure students develop the important language, social, motor, literacy, and numeracy skills that create a foundation of success for future learning.

- Discussion on the floor focused on whether this resolution would replace the existing Resolution 15.6 Investment in Early Education.
- An amendment was made to have this new resolution replace the existing one.
- Resolution 15.6 is consistent with EPSB's current approach to offering full-day and half-day Kindergarten.
- EPSB voted against both the proposed amendment and this position statement.
- The motion was defeated.

### **3. Recognition of Valid Teaching Certificates**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the assembly adopt the position that the Alberta School Boards Association support and advocate to the Minister of Education that individual Alberta school authorities be given the latitude to temporarily recognize the scope of practice as authorized by a valid teaching certificate from either an Alberta or other Canadian jurisdiction until such a time that an Interim Professional Certificate can be issued.

- EPSB voted in favour.
- The motion was carried.

### **4. Removal of the Reserve Cap**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Alberta School Board Association advocate for the Government of Alberta to remove the requirement of the maximum limit for operating reserves for school boards, thereby respecting school boards' local decision-making autonomy.

- EPSB voted in favour.
- The motion was carried.

### **5. Revision to Capital Planning Process**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the ASBA advocate to the Provincial government for school boards to submit a disaggregated Three-Year Capital Plan, with one list for modernization/replacements and one for new construction projects.

- This position statement was submitted by EPSB.
- Thank you to Chair Kusiek for presenting our resolution and responding to questions.
- Discussion on the floor included concern this could lead to potentially further loss of autonomy and the desire was to focus on elevating existing position statements on capital funding.
- The motion was defeated.

### **6. Review of Diploma Exams**

WHEREAS the priority of Alberta's education system is the success of every student;  
WHEREAS Alberta school boards are responsible for providing assurance to their local stakeholders that students are successful; and



## **MINUTE BOOK**

WHEREAS Alberta's education system supports accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the assembly adopt the position that the Ministry of Education review the practice of administering provincial high school diploma examinations to ensure the efficacy of this tool as an indicator of both system and student success.

- EPSB voted in favor.
- The motion was carried.

### **7. Remove Barrier to Dual Credit and Off-Campus Education**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, The Alberta School Board Association advocate for the Government of Alberta to remove barriers to Dual Credit and Off-Campus Education as recommended by the Career Education Task Force, including:

- Maintain start-up and enhancement grants for Dual Credit and increase flexibility of grants to support operational costs related to Dual Credit projects and programming.
- Provide top up funding that includes sufficient, sustainable and equitable funding structure for Dual Credit and Off-campus credits awarded at all times of the year.
- Reduce red tape and barriers by
  - Moving to provincial MOUs
  - Simplifying PSI code creation and transferability
  - Sharing off-campus site inspections and reviewing supervision requirements
  - Providing WCB coverage to all off-campus students
- The motion was amended on the floor to include the reference to the Career Education Task Force.
- EPSB voted against the amendment as we felt it was too prescriptive in nature, but in favor of the amended motion.
- With the amendment, the motion was carried.

### **8. EAL Student Funding**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Minister of Education ensures funding is available for EAL students throughout their pre-Kindergarten and K-12 school years as needed to achieve language proficiency, up to seven years.

- EPSB submitted an amendment to this resolution to replace the previous wording "and not be limited to a 5 year maximum" to "up to seven years". This was the maximum prior to March 2013 and also in alignment with the data provided in the position statement's background information on Stages of Second Language Acquisition for Advance Fluency.
- EPSB voted in favor.
- With the amendment, the motion was carried.

### **9. Cross-Ministerial Support**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, ASBA advocates to the Government of Alberta to enhance funding for and access to community-based service agencies that schools collaborate with to effectively address the needs of all students.

- EPSB did not support this motion as the intent of the resolution was to advocate for funding for external agencies.

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- We do not see this as a role of ASBA who advocates for funding and issues on behalf of school boards.
- In addition, there are existing ASBA position statements that support the intent: 23.5 Wrap Around Services and 23.6 Mental Health Funding.
- The motion was defeated.

**10. Collaboration on School Site Allocations**

This position statement was divided into two separate resolutions.

**First resolution:**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, Government of Alberta collaborate with school boards to resolve challenges around the lack of properly sized and available reserve land for school site allocations through the *Municipal Government Act*.

- EPSB voted in favour.
- The motion was carried.

**Second resolution:**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Government of Alberta collaborate with school boards and municipalities to ensure distinct provincial allocations of capital funding for school site servicing and school construction to cover all costs of construction with the required Infrastructure.

- Discussions on the floor suggested some unintended consequences and the need for more clarity, specifically the managing of the funding and selection of sites.
- EPSB voted against this second resolution.
- The motion was defeated.

**K. Trustees and Board Requests for Information - None****L. Notices of Motions - None****M. Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, December 12, 2023, at 2 p.m.****N. Adjournment: 6:26 p.m.**

**The Board Chair adjourned the meeting.**

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Julie Kusiek, Board Chair

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Karen Mills, Director Board and  
Superintendent Relations

**DATE:** December 12, 2023

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT** Establishment of Business and Innovation Alternative Program

**ORIGINATOR:** Kathy Muhlethaler, Assistant Superintendent

**RESOURCE STAFF:** Marnie Beaudoin, Tom Gillard, Geoff Holmes, Trish Kolotyluk, Ann Parker, Carrie Rosa, Sunita Sas

**REFERENCE:** [GA.BP Student Programs of Study](#)  
[GAA.BP Delivery of Student Programs of Study](#)

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## ISSUE

Demonstrated student interest and demand warrants the establishment of a Business and Innovation Division alternative program.

## BACKGROUND

Initiated in 2015, Career Pathways embodies the 2022-2026 [Strategic Plan](#) and the vision of enhancing pathways for student success. Career Pathways fosters growth and success for every student by supporting their journey from early learning through high school completion and beyond, and enhances public education through communication, engagement and partnerships.

The Business and Innovation alternative program will support the Division's [Career Pathways model](#). The goal of Career Pathways is to provide students with a broad range of learning opportunities that prepare them for their next steps in life—whether that be post-secondary, the world of work or involvement in their community, so they are able to transition from high school to a life of dignity and fulfillment. Students develop a curiosity about the world around them, and grow skills and competencies through rigorous and relevant projects, activities and experiences connected to curricular outcomes.

## RELATED FACTS

- Business, Information and Technologies (BIT) courses are available as part of Career and Technology Studies (CTS) provincial curriculum.
- Based on student interest and a school wide focus on career pathways, McNally School offers a Business and Innovation pathway for students. Students take part in cross curricular learning opportunities that blend business and entrepreneurship CTS courses with a focus on innovation. Through entrepreneurial thinking, students focus on building competencies that will serve them in life beyond high school.
- Demonstrated student interest and demand warrants the establishment of a Division Business and Innovation alternative program.

## RECOMMENDATION

**That the Business and Innovation alternative program be approved as a Division alternative program from Grade 10 to Grade 12, effective September 2024.**

## CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

### Student Interest and Demand

1. Business and Innovation at McNally School
  - For the 2023-2024 school year, 118 students are enrolled in a Business and Innovation pathway.
  
2. Introduction to Sustainable Business 201
  - For the 2022-2023 school year, 23 students at Strathcona School enrolled in this dual credit course offered in partnership with MacEwan University.
  
3. In the fall of 2021, Career Pathways invited students from Grade 7 to Grade 12 to participate in a student interest survey to gauge student interest in a variety of potential learning opportunities across all five career pathways:
  - Art, Design and Communication
  - Business and Information Technology
  - Construction, Manufacturing and Transportation
  - Health, Education and Human Services
  - Natural Resources and Environmental Science

### **2021 Student Interest Survey**

The information received through this survey is used to support Division planning related to Career Pathways learning opportunities for students. Students could select their first, second and third choices from a list of 26 areas of interest. The number and percentage of responses indicates 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices for each area of interest.

### Student Responses

18,849 total responses                      37.75% of Division population (Grades 7–12)

**The Career Pathways 2021 Student Interest survey data supports a strong student interest in Business and Entrepreneurship.**

Area of Interest	Number/Percentage of Responses	Ranking out of 26
<p><b>Health Science</b> Studying, researching, and gaining knowledge to improve health, cure diseases, and understand how humans and animals function.</p> <p>Related Careers: Dietician, Medical Technologist, Dentist, Pharmacist, Doctor, Nurse, etc.</p>	4,492/7.94%	1st
<p><b>Business and Entrepreneurship</b> Focusing on financial institutions, commerce, retail operations and entrepreneurial endeavors.</p>	4,267/7.55%	2nd

Area of Interest	Number/Percentage of Responses	Ranking out of 26
Related Careers: Entrepreneur, Accountant, Bookkeeper, Administrative Assistant, Economist, Marketer, Sales Manager, etc.		
<b>Computing</b> Developing computer hardware and/or software.  Related Careers: Software Developer, Software Test Engineer, Programmer Analyst, Web Developer, Information Technology Specialist, Video Game Developer, etc.	3,888/6.88%	3rd
<b>STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math)</b> Using Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math to tackle challenges and develop solutions.  Related Careers: Architect, Engineer, Mathematician, App Developer, Product Designer, etc.	3,813/6.74%	4th

Response rates and definitions for all 26 areas of interest are available in the [student interest survey](#). (Attachment I).

### Program Description

The Business and Innovation alternative program will deliver the Alberta Program of Studies, and be informed by the Career Pathways guiding principles:

- Programming - Innovative learning approaches that are embedded across curricula.
- Authentic Experiences - Engaging students through meaningful and relevant experiences that connect learning to career pathways.
- Community Connections - Building relationships with parents, community and businesses that intentionally connect students to experiences and potential career pathways.
- Future Focused - Adapting to ever-changing environments and realities.

Students will engage in learning through CTS Business, Information and Technologies courses across a variety of pathways such as (but not limited to):

- Management and Marketing
- Enterprise and Innovation
- Financial Management
- Analyzing, Financing and Marketing the Venture

In Grade 10, students will be exposed to CTS courses across a variety of business pathways. As they advance through to Grade 12, a specific area of focus may be selected. Throughout their high school experience, students will engage in cross curricular learning through instructional approaches such as project based learning, design thinking and inquiry. Students tackle and solve real world problems in innovative ways while developing competencies such as communication, critical thinking, creativity and problem solving (for example). Students will connect their learning to the real world through the

planning and implementation of a business venture. Collaboration with post-secondary institutions, business and industry will provide students with authentic learning opportunities and experiences. Students will demonstrate an entrepreneurial spirit transforming ideas into actions through real-world learning experiences.

### Registration

Registrations will follow [HC.AR Student Admission and Enrolment](#). There is no entrance criteria for the Business and Innovation alternative program.

### Facilities and Resources

No facility modifications are required to accommodate the Business and Innovation alternative program. No additional Division funds will be required.

### Human Resources

Human Resources was consulted and has confirmed they are able to support any staffing requirements for this program.

### Fees

There will not be a Business and Innovation program fee. Standard schools fees may apply (such as field trips fees, lunch supervision fees, or fees for consumable student course materials, for example).

### Transportation

Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) is the preferred method of transportation for senior high students.

## **NEXT STEPS**

### **Upon approval of the recommendation:**

- A recommendation will be provided to the Superintendent confirming the school that will accommodate the Business and Innovation alternative program, effective September 2024.
- The Division will update epsb.ca and the annual High School Guide to reflect information about the Business and Innovation alternative program.
- Once a school location has been confirmed, the school will provide information about the new alternative program to parents and school communities through a range of methods including SchoolZone, school website, social media, school council meetings and open house materials. Division Communications will support the school with messaging.
- Curriculum and Learning Supports (CLS) will support the identification of curriculum and resources including Career and Technology Studies (CTS) courses, Locally Developed Courses and dual credit courses that will support the Business and Innovation alternative program.
- Career Pathways (CLS) will support the exploration of potential post secondary, business and industry partnership opportunities.
- Distribution of future Business and Innovation program sites will be coordinated through Programs and Student Accommodation.

## **ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES**

ATTACHMENT I [Student Interest Survey](#)

AP:kd



### Participating Students

18849

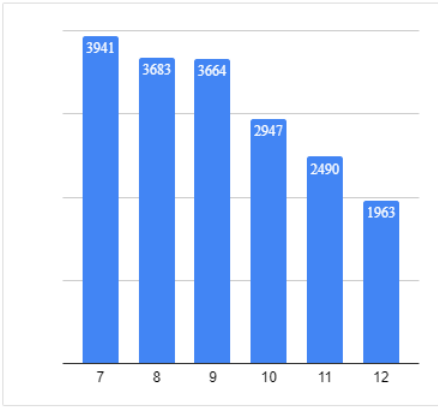
37.75%

### Participating Schools

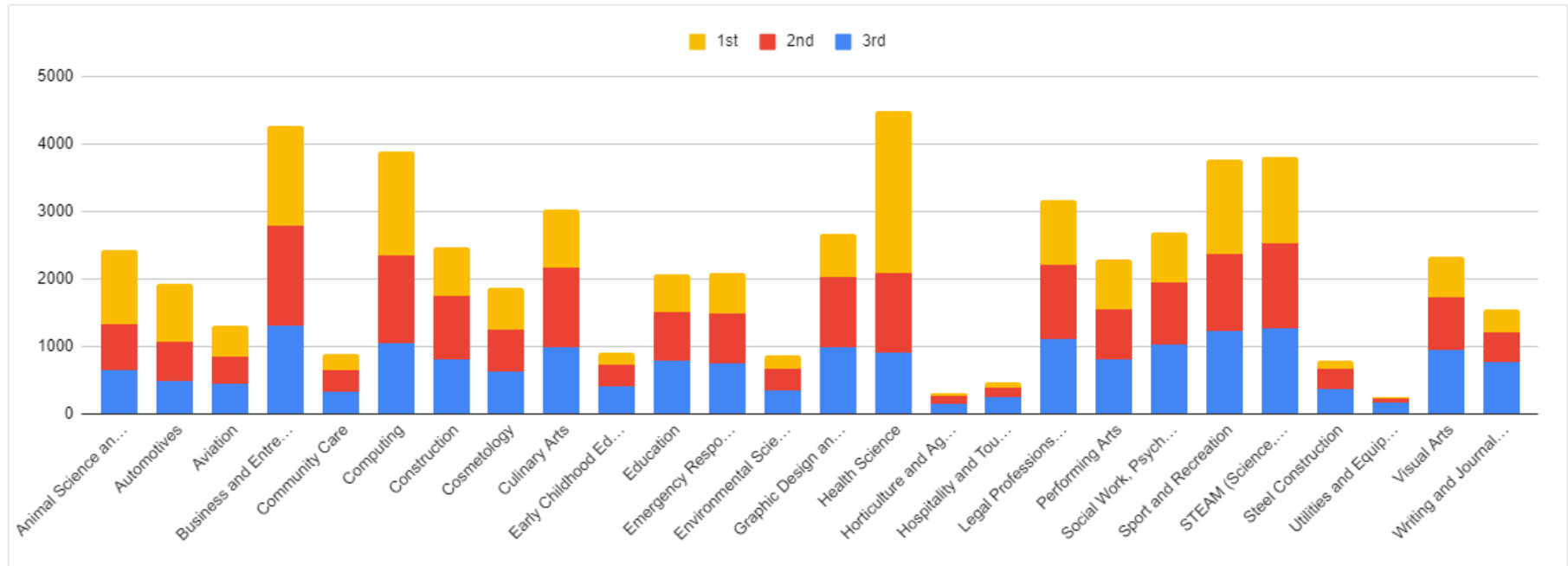
82

83.67%

### Grade Responses

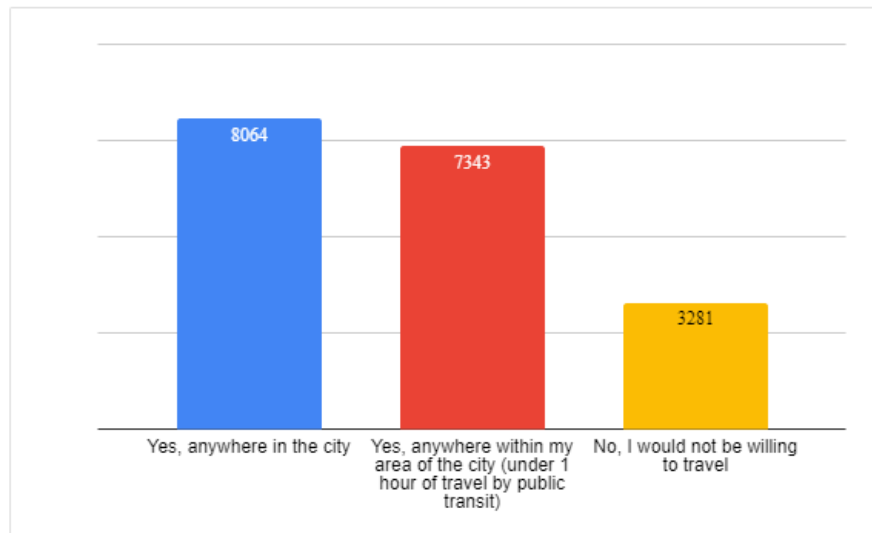
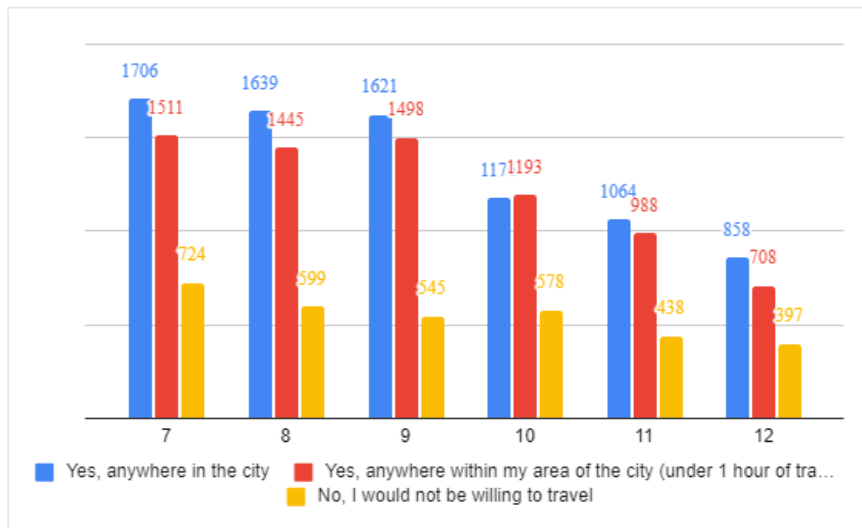


## Areas of Student Interest



2

## Willingness to Travel





## Descriptions of Fields of Interest Provided on the Survey

### 1. Animal Science/Veterinary

Protecting, caring for and conducting research regarding the health and well-being of animals.

Related Careers: Veterinarian, Farmer, Animal Trainer, Animal Scientist, Zoologist, Animal Control Worker, etc.

### 2. Automotives

Performing preventative maintenance, diagnosing problems and repairing many types of vehicles.

Related Careers: Auto Body Technician, Automotive Painter, Automotive Repair, Mechanic, Truck and Transport Mechanic, Railcar Repair, etc.

### 3. Aviation

Operating and maintaining aircraft and working in the airline industry.

Related Careers: Aerospace Engineer, Air Traffic Controller, Aircraft Mechanic, Flight Attendant, Pilot, etc.

### 4. Business and Entrepreneurship

Focusing on financial institutions, commerce, retail operations and entrepreneurial endeavours.

Related Careers: Entrepreneur, Accountant, Bookkeeper, Administrative Assistant, Economist, Marketer, Sales Manager, etc.

### 5. Community Care

Providing basic health services for clients who have medical conditions.

Related Careers: Caregiver, Client Care Attendant, Geriatric Health Aide, Home Support Worker, Nursing Assistant, etc.

### 6. Computing

Developing computer hardware and/or software.

Related Careers: Software Developer, Software Test Engineer, Programmer Analyst, Web Developer, Information Technology Specialist, Video Game Developer, etc.

### 7. Construction

Design, planning, creation and maintenance of residential, commercial and industrial buildings. (Indeed.com)

Related Careers: Construction Trades, Concrete Finisher, Drywall Installer, Glazier, Roofer, etc.

### 8. Cosmetology

Improving the appearance of a customer's face, hair, or skin using make-up and beauty treatments.

Related Careers: Hair Stylist, Nail Technician, Salon or Spa Manager, Wedding and Event Stylist, Makeup Artist, Esthetician, etc.

### 9. Culinary Arts

Preparing meals, managing food inventory and eating establishments.

Related Careers: Chef, Food and Beverage Manager, Cook, Caterer, etc.

### 10. Early Childhood Education and Childcare

Working with young children and families in child care centres, school based programs, home settings or other educational settings.

Related Careers: Daycare worker, Daycare supervisor, Early Childhood Educator, Preschool helper, etc.

### 11. Education

Working to support learning at various stages in people's lives.

Related Careers: Classroom Teacher, Educational Assistant, Post-secondary Instructor, Professor, Principal, etc.

## 12. Emergency Response

Responding to unexpected or dangerous occurrences and reducing the impact of the event on people and the environment.

Related Careers: Emergency Medical Responder, Firefighter, Police Officer, etc.

## 13. Environmental Science and Alternative Energy

Gathering data and monitoring environmental conditions. Analyzing environmental problems and developing solutions.

Related Careers: Environmental Scientist, Geological Engineer, Hydrologist, Climate Change Researcher, Energy Broker, etc.

## 14. Graphic Design and Media

Combining art and technology to communicate ideas through images and layout.

Related Careers: Graphic Designer, Animator, Web Developer, Creative Director, etc.

## 15. Health Science

Studying, researching, and gaining knowledge to improve health, cure diseases, and understand how humans and animals function.

Related Careers: Dietician, Medical Technologist, Dentist, Pharmacist, Doctor, Nurse, etc.

## 16. Horticulture and Agriculture

Working with garden cultivation and management, learning to grow crops and studying how to raise animals.

Related Careers: Landscaper, Farm Worker, Agricultural Engineer, Botanist, Food Scientist, etc.

## 17. Hospitality and Tourism

Accommodating guests with lodging, food and drink service, event planning, transportation, and travel.

Related Careers: Guest Services, Event Planner, Tour Guide, Banquet Services Staff, etc.

## 18. Legal Professions and Criminology

Researching laws, analyzing data, reviewing evidence and making judicial decisions.

Related Careers: Lawyer, Criminologist, Crime Scene Investigator, Court Clerk, etc.

## 19. Performing Arts

Conveying artistic messages using voice, body or objects.

Related Careers: Actor, Director, Makeup Artist, Music Director, Set Designer, Producer, Dancer, Choreographer, Singer, Costume Designer, etc.

## 20. Social Work, Psychology and Psychiatry

Understanding problems at home, at the workplace, or in the community and identifying strengths, or resources that can help.

Related Careers: Social Worker, Psychologist, Psychiatrist, Mediator, Community Health Worker, etc.

## 21. Sport and Recreation

Planning, organizing, directing, controlling and evaluating the operations of recreational, sports and fitness programs and services.

Related Careers: Exercise Physiologist, Athlete, Health Educator, Coach, Personal Trainer, Referee, etc.

## 22. STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math)

Using Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math to tackle challenges and develop solutions.

Related Careers: Architect, Engineer, Mathematician, App Developer, Product Designer, etc.

## 23. Steel Construction

Using tools, machines and your hands to make engines, computers, toys, electronic devices, control panels and more.

Related Careers: Welder, Metal Fabricator, Boilermaker, Millwright, etc.

## 24. Utilities and Equipment Operation

Operating maintenance equipment and vehicles, such as excavators and loading machines for electricity, gas, water, or sewage.

Related Careers: Equipment technician, Construction Equipment Operator, Operating Engineer, etc.

## 25. Visual Arts

Using creative abilities to convey messages through various types of media.

Related Careers: Painter, Sculptor, Art Consultant, Art Historian, Curator, Cartoonist, Fashion Designer, etc.

## 26. Writing and Journalism

Conveying a message through various types of written media.

Related Careers: Author, Journalist, Broadcaster, Cartoonist, Podcaster, Social Media Influencer, etc.

**DATE:** December 12, 2023

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Darrel Robertson, Superintendent

**SUBJECT:** Student Accommodation Plan 2023–2024

**ORIGINATOR:** Cliff Richard, Chief Infrastructure and Technology Officer

**RESOURCE STAFF:** Jenifer Elliott, Valerie Leclair, Allison Sylvester, Jennifer Thompson, Christopher Wright

**REFERENCE** [HC.AR Student Admission and Enrolment](#)

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### ISSUE

The Student Accommodation Plan is updated annually. The plan is informed by:

- residential growth and development
- changes to attendance areas
- new school openings
- current school enrolment and residency patterns

### BACKGROUND

Planning for student accommodation is an ongoing process as we adapt to the evolving needs of the communities and students we serve. Actions and decisions consider feedback obtained from community engagement to ensure accommodation challenges are addressed in a transparent manner. These challenges include:

- schools and programs being too full
- schools and programs with declining enrolment
- shifts in student demographics

The Division's [Ten-Year Facilities Plan 2023–2032](#) highlights the many challenges we face in terms of student accommodation. As outlined in the plan, further increases in utilization across the Division may lead to the following:

- reduced choice for families
- fewer options for families to access Division centre or alternative programming
- reduced access to other schools through open boundaries
- increased demand for Student Transportation services to further designated schools
- reclamation of specialized spaces (e.g., Career and Technology Studies (CTS), Music, Art, Library, leased space) for regular instruction

The Student Accommodation Plan highlights actions taken to address enrolment demands on Division schools. In the absence of new construction, the Division must implement growth accommodation measures, as per the [Growth Control Model](#), to manage enrolment within existing capacity. All Division schools are at one of three levels (Attachment I). Enrolment fluctuations that trigger a school to move

between levels are specific to regular programming only. Enrolment limits and the random selection process can control capacity challenges within alternative programs.

1. Level One – Division schools have the capacity to accept new students. These schools have open boundaries and, in some cases, may also have a secondary attendance area. Resident students who live within the attendance area and siblings of current students who are returning to the school the following year are guaranteed a space.
2. Level Two – Division schools move from Level One to Level Two when they near capacity. Many Level Two schools, but not all, have closed boundaries.
3. Level Three – When Division schools have reached capacity and can no longer accommodate additional attendance area resident students, the school moves from Level Two to Level Three. In Level Three, further measures must be taken to restrict access to a school beyond those taken in Level Two. In response to researching best practices from other jurisdictions and in respecting feedback received from community members in previous growth accommodation engagements, the Division uses a lottery process. This process employs a standardized course of actions to manage enrolment and ensure equitable access to a school that is at or overcapacity with its attendance area resident students.

### **CURRENT SITUATION**

Currently, the overall average utilization rate of the Division is 82 per cent and is projected to be at 90 per cent utilization by 2025. In 2022–2023, 78 schools were at or above 85 per cent utilization and 27 schools at or above 100 per cent utilization. When schools hit the 85 per cent utilization rate, they feel full and retain little flexibility to organize students for instruction.

When utilization is too high, the Division faces many challenges including:

- a limited ability to accommodate resident students in schools closest to where they reside
- well-distributed alternative programming is not possible
- expanding Division centre programming to keep up with demand becomes challenging
- students in new neighbourhoods are unable to access a designated receiving school close to home and are transported the furthest (this strains the transportation system as ride times and the number of routes increase)

Fundamentally, choice for students and families will shrink due to these space and infrastructure limitations.

### Division Centres

The Division offers a wide range of specialized programming for students who have emotional, behavioural, cognitive, learning, speech, hearing, vision, physical or medical needs. The number of students choosing a Division centre program has increased substantially over the past few years. As such, a growing number of classes have been established to keep up with demand:

	2023–24	2022–23	2021–22	2020–21	2019–20	2018–19	2017–18	2016–17	2015–16
<b>Connections</b>	71	71	74	73	69	64	61	61	61
<b>Connections /OPP</b>	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	3	3
<b>CLS</b>	17	17	17	17	17	16	16	15	13
<b>CLS/ Connections</b>	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
<b>Extensions</b>	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
<b>ISP</b>	15	14	14	14	13	12	12	12	11
<b>INT</b>	163	131	109	91	78	64	59	52	47
<b>Literacy</b>	8	16	19	21	22	21	20	20	22
<b>OPP</b>	41	40	41	39	42	40	42	43	44
<b>Strategies</b>	33	33	34	36	39	38	38	40	41
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>248</b>

Across the Division, as enrolment grows across all programs while available space declines, establishing Division centre classes near where students reside becomes increasingly challenging. As the Division’s utilization rate increases, it becomes difficult to find space to establish or expand Division centre programming.

New Construction:

New schools take a minimum of three years to build and open for students. If no further new infrastructure is funded, including the three new school construction/design projects underway, the Division will be at 100 per cent capacity by 2030. There are currently three new construction projects underway:

- Elder Dr. Francis Whiskeyjack High School: opening September 2024 (Capacity: 2,400).
- Edgemont K–9 school: tentatively opening September 2027 (Capacity: 950).
- Glenriding Heights Grades 7–12 school: tentatively opening September 2028 (Capacity: 2,410). This project is approved for design funding only.

The lack of new construction funding results in increased demand for student transportation with further designated schools as well as more pressure on the capacity of existing schools. This leads to an increase in the number of schools managing enrolment with closed boundaries or using the lottery process.

### Level One – Open Access

The majority of Division schools are at Level One on the Growth Control Model. At this level, schools are required to accommodate resident attendance area students first and if there is space remaining, may accommodate other students. Schools will accommodate as many students as possible up to their enrolment limit. Many schools nearing (or beyond) their enrolment limit will primarily accommodate students from within their attendance area. When nearing or beyond their enrolment limit, based on either current or projected enrolment patterns, the school will then move to Level Two on the Growth Control Model.

### *Low Enrolment Model:*

It is equally challenging to organize and deliver programming in schools or programs with low enrolment. This is evident with both regular and alternative programs. In some Division schools, although they may have a healthy overall enrolment due to other programs, the regular program has not been viable over several years. The opposite is also true; some alternative programs do not have enough students enrolled to make the program viable at a site.

To address programs experiencing low enrolment, Edmonton Public Schools created the Low Enrolment Model in 2021. This process helps the Division identify programs with low enrolment at schools. Schools work together with families in the program and the school community to develop a community-driven plan to increase enrolment before deciding the next steps for the program. The model uses a two-phase approach over two years. This provides an appropriate amount of time to consult and support communities, ensuring all programs in the Division are viable and sustainable. Each year, Administration will evaluate program enrolment across all Division schools after the September count date.

In 2022–2023, three schools were in Phase I of the Low Enrolment Model—Belmont (Logos Christian program), Britannia (Logos Christian program) and Kildare (regular program). In Phase I, school administration and the school community collaborate to increase enrolment in their low enrolment program. Rosslyn School (Chinese Mandarin Bilingual program) was in Phase II in 2022–2023 with the program being phased out starting with Grade 7 for the 2023–2024 school year. This program will be entirely phased out at Rosslyn School by the end of the 2025–2026 school year. Continuity of programming for students in elementary Chinese (Mandarin) Bilingual programs in North Edmonton will be offered at one of the other junior high schools offering this program.

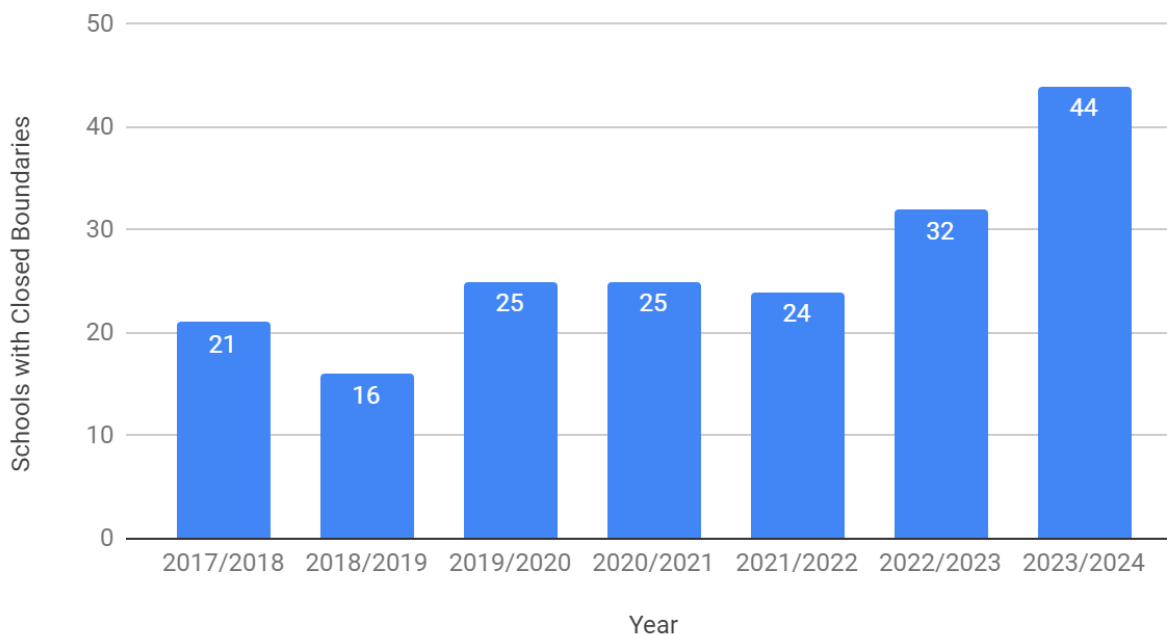
### Level Two – Limit Access

As per the Growth Control Model, some schools are experiencing such high demand for space that measures must be taken to limit enrolment to resident attendance area students only. Adding modular classrooms, reclaiming leased space, facility modifications and closing attendance area boundaries are measures the Division can take to ensure schools are able to accommodate resident attendance area students. An additional 12 schools have moved from Level One to Level Two for the 2023–2024 school year.

While before and after school care programs are not operated by the Division, several licensed service providers work with Property Management to lease space in Division schools to provide service to families and the community. As enrolment growth begins to outpace capacity in a school, the availability of space for leased groups becomes increasingly limited. As utilization rates increase overall, lease space in available schools is reduced and current leased space may be removed to accommodate enrolment growth. For the upcoming school year, 14 classroom spaces (from 11 schools) were reclaimed due to enrolment growth. Aleda Patterson, Athlone, Donnan, Dovercourt, Duggan, Garth Worthington, Inglewood, King Edward, LaPerle, McKee and Soraya Hafez schools reclaimed classroom spaces to accommodate additional students for the 2023–2024 school year.

The amount of space available to accommodate Division students is declining making it difficult to offer choice for students, including the ability to maintain open attendance area boundaries. The number of closed boundary schools continues to grow each year. Up from 32 schools during the 2022–2023 school year, there are 44 schools with closed boundaries for 2023–2024.

### Number of Closed Boundary Schools



Pressure for new school construction in developing areas is expected to continue, as most projected new students reside in developing areas where schools are at or nearing capacity. Further increases in utilization rates reduce choice for families through greater travel distances for students, fewer seats for Division centre and alternative programming, elimination of open boundaries for schools and reclamation of spaces used for CTS, music, library and art programming.

In scenarios where continued enrolment growth is putting pressure on existing capacity, the Division can request modular classrooms from the Province. Since 2010–2011, the Division has installed (or relocated) 475 modular classrooms in place of receiving funding for new school construction. Annually, the Division submits a request to Alberta Infrastructure for new modular classrooms or funding to relocate existing units. Over the past few years, the Division has not received funding for all requested modular classrooms and has been required to use Capital Reserve funds to acquire and install unfunded



requests. Last year, the Division received only five of the 30 requested portables for the 2023–2024 school year. This is an unsustainable practice moving forward. Where it is not possible to add modular classrooms, facility modifications may be completed to create additional capacity in non-traditional learning spaces such as learning commons or even staff lunch rooms.

As long as enrolment growth continues to outpace provincial funding for new construction projects, the amount of available space, and ultimately the amount of choice in public education, will continue to decrease. In response to growth in enrolment and decreasing space in the Division, an increasing number of schools may move to Levels Two and Three on the Growth Control Model.

### Level Three – Restrict Access (Lottery Process)

The lottery process allows schools at (or reaching) capacity to stabilize enrolment while maximizing the capacity of a school by limiting the intake of students. It determines which attendance area resident students can access their designated school when there are too many resident students compared to spaces. The lottery process only impacts resident students who are new to a school. Non-resident students are not able to attend a Level Three school. For those resident students not selected to attend the school through the lottery process, Administration has provided an overflow designated school.

This process is transparent and provides a straightforward answer to both staff and families, concerning the order in which a school accepts resident students when the school does not have enough space for all resident students from the attendance area. A benefit to this process is that it can be applied to individual grade levels and be turned on and off yearly, as needed.

During pre-enrolment for 2023–2024, two more schools used the lottery process for the first time. There are now seven Division schools at Level Three on the Growth Control Model and a total of 12 overflow designated schools. Jan Reimer and Shauna May Seneca schools moved to Level Three as a result of enrolment pressure within their attendance areas. The lottery process did not impact students currently attending these schools but did impact resident students new to the school. Resident students not selected to attend these schools through the lottery process were provided with an overflow designated school or could choose to attend another Division school with space.

### Student Accommodation Plan

The annual Student Accommodation Plan provides consistent and ongoing communication with Trustees, Administration, parents and community stakeholders. It outlines the Growth Control Model level assigned to the school for the 2023–2024 school year.

Initiatives to manage growth challenges may include:

- closing boundaries
- reclaiming leased spaces
- addition of modular classrooms
- facility modifications
- new neighbourhood designations
- suspending the sibling rule
- reconfiguring grades (including the removal of grades)
- school or program consolidations
- new school construction
- program establishments

**KEY POINTS**

- The Student Accommodation Plan is updated annually to provide timely and transparent information to stakeholders and to build an awareness of the intricacies of student accommodation. It provides consistent and ongoing communication with Trustees, Administration, parents and community stakeholders.
- The Province determines new school funding. The Board of Trustees has been tireless in their advocacy for new school funding.
- The Growth Control Model was developed, as per feedback received following stakeholder engagement, to help manage enrolment at schools as our Division continues to grow.
- The Growth Control Model toolkit was developed to support school administration when having conversations with their school community about the levels within the model and the level for their school.
- A Communication Plan with updated information will be developed to keep communities and families informed and ensure transparency is reflected through ongoing student accommodation work. Updated information will be added online to school profiles to allow parents easy access to this information.

**ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES**

ATTACHMENT I      Growth Control Model: List of Schools by Level and Closed Boundary List  
(2023–2024)

JE:ks

## Growth Control Model: List of Schools by Level and Closed Boundary List

### Level One (2023–2024)

Abbott	Gold Bar	McNally
Academy at King Edward	Grace Martin	Michael A. Kostek
Alberta School for the Deaf	Greenfield	Millwoods Christian
Aldergrove	Greenview	Mount Pleasant
Aleda Patterson	Grovenor	Northmount
amiskwaciy Academy	Hardisty	Old Scona
Argyll	Harry Ainlay	Oliver
Athlone	Hazeldean	Ormsby
Avalon	Highlands	Ottewell
Avonmore	Hillcrest	Parkallen
Balwin	Hillview	Parkview
Bannerman	Holyrood	Prince Charles
Beacon Heights	Homesteader	Princeton
Belgravia	Horse Hill	Queen Alexandra
Belmead	Inglewood	Queen Elizabeth
Belmont	J. Percy Page	Richard Secord
Belvedere	J. A. Fife	Rideau Park
Bisset	James Gibbons	Rio Terrace
Braemar	Jasper Place	Riverdale
Brander Gardens	John A. McDougall	Ross Sheppard
Brightview	Johnny Bright	Rosslyn
Britannia	Kameyosek	Rutherford
Brookside	Kate Chegwin	S. Bruce Smith
Calder	Keheewin	Sakaw
Callingwood	Kenilworth	Satoo
Clara Tyner	Kensington	Scott Robertson
Coronation	Kildare	Sifton
Crawford Plains	Killarney	Spruce Avenue
D. S. Mackenzie	King Edward	Steele Heights
Daly Grove	Kirkness	Steinhauer
Delton	kisêwâtisiwin	Stratford
Delwood	L. Y. Cairns	Strathcona
Dickinsfield	Lansdowne	Sweet Grass
Donnan	Lauderdale	T. D. Baker
Dovercourt	Laurier Heights	Talmud Torah
Dr. Anne Anderson	Lee Ridge	Thelma Chalifoux
Duggan	Lendrum	Thornccliffe
Dunluce	Londonderry	Tipaskan
Earl Buxton	Lymburn	Vernon Barford
Eastglen	Lynnwood	Victoria
Edith Rogers	M. E. LaZerte	Vimy Ridge
Edmonton Christian High	Malmo	Virginia Park
Edmonton Christian Northeast	Mary Butterworth	W. P. Wagner

### Growth Control Model: List of Schools by Level and Closed Boundary List

#### Level One (2023–2024) (continued)

Edmonton Christian West Ekota Elizabeth Finch Elmwood Esther Starkman Evansdale Forest Heights Fraser Garneau George P. Nicholson Glengarry	Mayfield McArthur McKee McKernan Meadowlark Meadowlark Christian Mee-Yah-Noh Menisa Michael Phair Mill Creek Millwoods Christian Minchau	Waverley Westbrook Westglen Westminster Westmount Windsor Park York Youngstown
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#### Level Two (2023–2024)

A. Blair McPherson Alex Janvier Allendale Baturyn Bessie Nichols Caernarvon Centennial Constable Daniel Woodall Crestwood Donald R. Getty Dr. Donald Massey Ellerslie Florence Hallock Garth Worthington George H. Luck Glenora Grandview Heights Hilwie Hamdon Ivor Dent Jackson Heights Joey Moss John D. Bracco	John Barnett Julia Kiniski Kim Hung Lago Lindo LaPerle Lorelei Major General Griesbach Malcolm Tweddle McLeod Meyokumin Michael Strembitsky Nellie Carlson Overlanders Patricia Heights Pollard Meadows Riverbend Roberta MacAdams Soraya Hafez Velma E. Baker Weinlos Winterburn
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**Level Three (2023–2024)**

David Thomas King Dr. Lila Fahlman Dr. Margaret Ann-Armour Jan Reimer	Lillian Osborne Shauna May Seneca Svend Hansen
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**Schools with Closed Boundaries 2023–2024**

Alex Janvier Baturyn* Bessie Nichols Caernarvon (Regular Program) Centennial* Constable Daniel Woodall David Thomas King Dr. Donald Massey Dr. Lila Fahlman Dr. Margaret-Ann Armour Donald R. Getty Ellerslie Garth Worthington* George H. Luck* Glenora* Hilwie Hamdon Ivor Dent (Junior High Only) Jackson Heights* Jan Reimer Joey Moss* John Barnett John D. Bracco	Julia Kiniski Kim Hung Lago Lindo* LaPerle* Lillian Osborne Lorelei Major General Griesbach Malcolm Tweddle (Regular Program)* Meyokumin (Regular Program) Michael Strembitsky Nellie Carlson Overlanders* Patricia Heights* Pollard Meadows (Regular Program)* Riverbend Roberta MacAdams Shauna May Seneca Soraya Hafez* Svend Hansen Velma E. Baker Weinlos Winterburn
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*\*indicates new for 2023–2024*

**DATE:** December 12, 2023

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT:** Student Transportation Update

**ORIGINATOR:** Cliff Richard, Chief Infrastructure and Technology Officer

**RESOURCE STAFF:** Alison Cheesbrough, Geoff Holmes, Haydn Sanchez Avery, Christopher Wright

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### **ISSUE**

Over the past few years, Administration has been providing the Board of Trustees with a fall update regarding student transportation. The Student Transportation unit reports on various issues impacting transportation services such as the recent bus driver shortages, industry challenges, ridership changes, and initiatives to improve services for Division families. Administration is currently providing an update on the improvements experienced this school year, continuing issues and initiatives to improve service delivery.

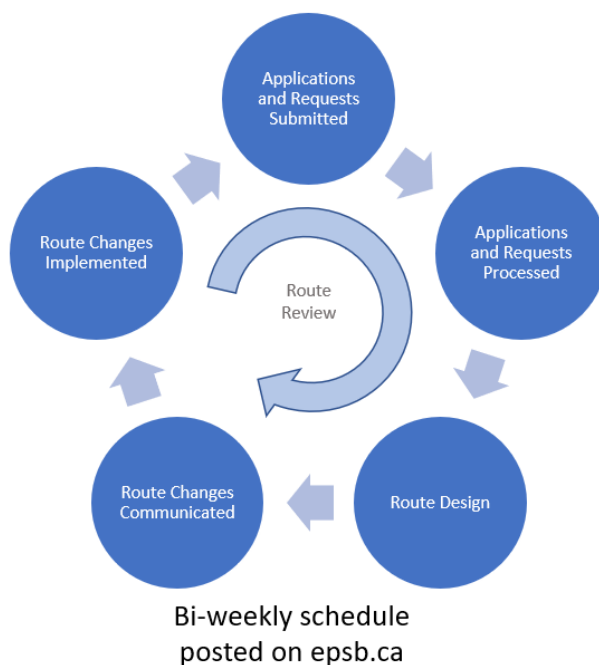
### **BACKGROUND**

Edmonton Public Schools provides daily transportation service to nearly 16,000 students on yellow buses. Student Transportation provides oversight, guidance and support to carriers, parents and schools on issues related to Division student transportation services.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Student Transportation has observed continued increases in yellow bus ridership. In 2022–2023, ridership increased by approximately 2,500 riders. This represented an increase of 21 per cent from peak ridership the previous year and indicates that yellow bus ridership reached pre-pandemic levels. In comparison to the increase of 4.2 per cent in overall Division enrolment, the growth in demand for transportation service leading up to September 2022 outpaced enrolment growth by nearly 5:1.

Student Transportation currently designs and manages approximately 775 yellow bus routes. To effectively keep Division families informed of route changes in a predictable manner as adjustments are made in response to growth, Student Transportation has a two week cycle for implementing route changes. The schedule is published on [epsb.ca](http://epsb.ca) and is communicated to new riders when applying for service. Parents of current riders are notified if there are changes to their route through SchoolZone at least three days in advance. Figure 1, next page, summarizes Student Transportation’s route change cycle.

Figure 1: Simplified Student Transportation route change cycle



Student Transportation has been facing an ongoing shortage of yellow bus drivers since the beginning of the 2020–2021 school year. Administration has reported regularly on the shortage and initiatives to mitigate its impact on Division families, and improvements in carrier staffing levels were observed throughout the last half of the 2022–2023 school year. In April 2023, less than one per cent of routes were without a permanent driver, and carriers were able to provide substitute drivers who could cover those routes. This is a decrease from three per cent in September 2022 and has resulted in a decreased burden on students, parents and school staff. As driver staffing levels stabilized, Student Transportation was able to add approximately 20 yellow bus routes to the system between January and June 2023 to target long rides and overcrowding.

In Spring 2023, the provincial government announced a number of changes to transportation eligibility which must be implemented no later than September 1, 2024. Under these changes, students attending their designated school may be eligible for yellow bus transportation service if they are in Grades K–6 and reside at least one kilometre away, or are in Grades 7–12 and reside at least two kilometres away and Edmonton Transit Service is not available. As a result of the increased market capacity for yellow bus routes that was available at the end of the 2022–2023 school year, the Division was able to fully implement these changes in September 2023.

**CURRENT SITUATION**

As of September 18, 2023, the Division had approximately 15,600 yellow bus riders. This was an increase of approximately 16 per cent (2,100 riders) since the end of August. The previous high in ridership was approximately 14,500 observed in the 2019–2020 school year. As available school space is increasingly distant from where students reside, annual growth in yellow bus ridership continues to outpace overall Division enrolment growth. A summary of yellow bus ridership growth since August 2022 is contained in Table 1.

*Table 1: Growth in yellow bus ridership, 2023 compared to 2022*

				Startup Increase (August to September)		Annual Increase (September to September)	
Year	Month	Total Riders	Ridership	Percentage	Ridership	Percentage	
2022	August	11,900	2,500	21%	1,400	10%	
	September	14,200					
2023	August	13,500	2,100	16%			
	September	15,600					

To accommodate growth in ridership, approximately 25 bus routes have been added to the system since the end of June 2023. In response to the changes in provincial eligibility requirements, approximately 400 newly eligible students have been added to yellow bus routes. This number is expected to increase to approximately 600 riders by June 2024. Of the bus routes added since the end of June, seven were targeted to serve the additional demand from eligibility changes.

Although the system has grown over the past year, Student Transportation experienced fewer delays on an increased number of routes in the early part of the current school year. Yellow bus carriers have indicated that driver staffing levels have improved in comparison to September 2022 and year-over-year route delays in the first part of September 2023 decreased by approximately 50 per cent.

Despite the improvement in overall driver staffing levels this year, carriers have indicated that a key cause of late routes in September 2023 was driver illness and staff turn-over. As carriers continue to be challenged to provide sufficient levels of on-time coverage for emergent absences, many school communities and families continue to experience localized instances of unpredictable coverage and last minute communication regarding delays. As of November 2023, carriers in the Edmonton market are indicating they will not have capacity for additional routes that would improve loads and ride times until they are better staffed for emergent absences. The situation is expected to improve as additional drivers complete training and carriers are able to expand their fleets.

Currently, approximately 93 per cent of one-way ride times are less than 60 minutes compared to 95 per cent in September 2022. A more detailed summary of ride times is contained in Table 2.



*Table 2: Summary of ride times, November 2022 and November 2023*

Program Type	One-Way Ride (Minutes)			
	November 2022		November 2023	
	Average	Maximum	Average	Maximum
Regular	15.9	80.0	17.3	90.0
Division Centre	35.2	100.0	34.6	110.0
Pre-Kindergarten	33.8	93.0	34.1	89.0
Alternative	33.0	90.0	33.6	95.0
Conditional (All Programs)	28.4	97.0	29.3	92.0
Totals	26.3	100.0	27.0	110.0

As of November 2023, there are 23 students who have a one-way ride time that exceeds 90 minutes, which is a slight reduction from the 26 observed at the same time last year. The longest ride times continue to be experienced by students who reside in rural or new and developing areas of Edmonton attending programming which is not available near their home. Student Transportation will continue adding routes to relieve pressure as drivers become available and carriers are able to increase their capacity.

In the upcoming year, Student Transportation will continue to be responsive to the needs of the Division as enrolment and transportation ridership continue to grow:

- Student Transportation continues to collaborate with carriers to identify and implement specific strategies that could improve their growth capacity for the remainder of 2023–2024 and in preparation for September 2024.
- Improving communication to parents, including:
  - Text and phone late bus notifications. In September 2023, Student Transportation started piloting text and phone call notification of late buses. A broader roll-out of the technology is currently underway.
  - Improvements to information available to parents on epsb.ca and SchoolZone, especially for families new to Edmonton or busing who may not be familiar with our system.
- Building on a professional development session offered to contract carrier driver instructors in June 2023, Student Transportation will continue to develop and deliver professional learning opportunities for bus drivers to enhance the quality of bus service and improve driver retention.

#### KEY POINTS

- Yellow bus ridership grew by 16 per cent between the last week of August and September 18, 2023; annual ridership growth continues to outpace Division growth (10 per cent versus five per cent).
- In Spring 2023, the provincial government announced a number of changes to transportation eligibility; Student Transportation fully implemented these changes for September 2023 resulting in approximately 400 additional riders and seven additional routes.
- Forty-five new routes were added to the system between January and September 2023. Although the system has grown, the Division is experiencing fewer route delays.

- Contracted carriers have indicated they will not have capacity for increased work until they can be fully staffed for emergent absences. Student Transportation will strategically add routes as resources become available to address long rides and high bus loads.
- In the year ahead, Student Transportation will focus on improving communication with parents through a broader rollout of text and phone late notifications and improvements to available information on epsb.ca and SchoolZone.
- Student Transportation will continue to develop and deliver professional learning opportunities for bus drivers to enhance the quality of bus service and improve driver retention.

GH:jl