

Profile



| <u>Staff FTE</u> | | <u>Budget</u> | |
|------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Custodial | 0.000000 | Salaries | \$2,546,835 86.69% |
| Exempt | 19.000000 | Supplies, Equipment and Services | \$390,960 13.31% |
| Support | 1.000000 | Total | \$2,937,795 100.00% |
| Teacher | 0.000000 | | |
| Maintenance | 0.000000 | | |
| Total | 20.000000 | | |

Vision

Enhancing pathways for student success.

Mission

Our commitment to high-quality public education serves the community and empowers each student to live a life of dignity, fulfilment, empathy and possibility.

Values

Accountability, collaboration, equity and integrity.

Division Priorities 2022-2026

1. Build on outstanding learning opportunities for all students.
2. Advance action towards anti-racism and reconciliation.
3. Promote a comprehensive approach to student and staff well-being and mental health.

Profile

Communications role is to support the Division in its internal and external communications with its stakeholders. This work includes fostering open, honest, two-way communication with crisis communication; media relations; issues management; profile of division programs and key initiatives; management of division special events; and profile for all schools. The department also provides strategic communications counsel and support to the Board of Trustees and Superintendent of Schools.

Results and Implications

Division Priorities 2022-2026

1. Build on outstanding learning opportunities for all students.
2. Advance actions towards anti-racism and reconciliation.
3. Promote a comprehensive approach to student and staff well-being and mental health.

Based on the SMART goals that were established for 2022-2023, report on the results you achieved (with evidence, including referencing the school's Assurance Measures results, if applicable) and describe how achievement of the goal supports the above Division's Priorities (reference the priority number in your response).

Support the Division's implementation and actions towards the Anti-Racism and Equity Action Plan by keeping families, students, staff and stakeholders informed and engaged. This includes:

1. Actions to support the development of a model to support the collection of extended student demographic data
 1. Provide comprehensive Communications and Project Management support to the student demographic survey project.
 2. Provide comprehensive Communications support in sharing the findings of the student demographic survey.
2. Actions to support a focus on Human Resource practices and the engagement of all staff
 1. Provide Communications support as Human Resources reviews hiring practices (e.g. new diversity statement).
 2. Provide Communications support to the leadership development processes (e.g. new competency).
3. Actions to support schools and enhance capacity
 1. Provide Communications support, in partnership with Central Units, to schools that are experiencing complex or challenging race-related situations or events.
 2. In support of the Division's multi-faith calendar, Communications will work with Central Units to build a content calendar to address significant dates, celebrations and events.

Results Achieved:

a) Communications was a full participant in the project to develop a model to support the collection of extended student demographic data. This included having a team member serve as a co-project manager, as well as a consultant who supported the rollout of the survey in the fall.

The rollout included a comprehensive suite of communications supports for schools, students and families, which included:

- video introducing the survey (translated into 15 languages)
- letter from the Superintendent (translated into 15 languages)
- presentation and supporting materials for staff
- content for Connect and epsb.ca
- news conference with project leads

Communications was also an active participant in the release of the initial findings of the student demographic survey in spring of 2023, which included:

- video thanking participants (translated into 15 languages)
- letter from the Superintendent (translated into 15 languages)
- presentation and supporting materials for staff
- content for Connect and epsb.ca

b) Communications provided support to Human Resources in drafting and posting the new diversity statement to epsb.ca.

Communications also continued its work with Human Resources to support the new Division leadership competency. While the competency has yet-to-launch, Communications will continue to support the project into the 2023-24 school year.

c) Actions to support schools and enhance capacity

- i) Provide Communications support, in partnership with Central Units, to schools that are experiencing complex or challenging race-related situations or events.
- ii) In support of the Division's multi-faith calendar, Communications has been working with Central Units to build a content calendar. This helps us plan and share information about significant dates, celebrations and events—with staff, on Connect, and with families, on epsb.ca and social media. We also post the multifaith calendar on epsb.ca and share it on Connect.

In our work to be a more inclusive and anti-racist organization, Communications will begin the exploratory phase of developing inclusive language guidelines. For the 2022-23 school year, we will embark on the first phase of the project, which will focus on research and include:

- an environmental scan of the Division and other organizations
- researching best practices
- stakeholder engagement

Results and Implications

Results Achieved:

School and central engagement

Communications engaged with school and central staff who came from a variety of roles in the Division including teachers, administrative assistants, educational assistants, library technicians, principals, assistant principals, department heads, counsellors, central leaders and central staff

Engagement activities included:

- Small group discussions with school and central leaders during an Anti-Racism and Equity principal committee meeting—24 leaders participated
- Interview with a central staff member from Specialized Learning Supports
- Interviews and small group discussions with 38 school staff from eight schools (four K-6; one K-9; two Grades 7-9; and one Grades 10-12 school)

Key feedback from staff included:

- In general, staff feel it's important for the Division to communicate in an inclusive way
- In general, staff overwhelmingly believe they need more guidance and would benefit from an inclusive language guideline
- Staff believe a language guide is one piece of a bigger shift in the Division
- Currently, staff seek guidance from trusted colleagues, the Division's community partners, online research and by asking students
- Mostly commonly, staff suggested the guide include practical examples of language to avoid, suggestions for rephrasing and background information on why

This feedback along with the environmental scan and best practices has been compiled into a report, which informs our next steps for Phase II of the project.

Research and best practices

Communications completed an environmental scan of the Division and other organizations that have made their inclusive language guidelines publicly available. The (internal) Division scan focused on what resources or supports are already in place to help staff understand and learn more about inclusive language. The (external) scan included school jurisdictions and other organizations, such as municipalities and post-secondary institutions, as well as notable organizations that are using and sharing inclusive guidelines.

The external scan was done online. Any school divisions that do not share their inclusive language guidelines or policy publicly were not part of the research.

Based on this research, the team put together a list of common practices and elements that were present in inclusive language guidelines and practices at other organizations.

Strategic Plan Goal 2: Advance action towards anti-racism and reconciliation

Strategic Plan Goal 3: Promote a comprehensive approach to student and staff well-being and mental health

In our work to be a more inclusive and anti-racist organization, Communications will begin the exploratory phase of researching how we can make epsb.ca more accessible for all visitors, including individuals who have impairments or limitations. For the 2022-23 school year, the first phase of the project, we will focus on completing:

- an environmental scan of the Division and other organizations
- researching best practices
- stakeholder engagement

Results Achieved:

Research and best practices

- Communications researched best practices for website accessibility by:

- doing online research,
- taking professional development courses on this complex topic
- gathering information about what other organizations are doing to improve their website accessibility; this included the City of Edmonton, the City of Calgary, the City of Waterloo, Edmonton Catholic Schools, Calgary Board of Education, Calgary Catholic School Division, the Alberta government and the federal government.

- Our consultants already had some expertise around making content accessible for people with vision loss, hearing loss, mobility issues, neurodiversity and those with English as an additional language. Our professional learning and research have given us a much more comprehensive understanding of website accessibility and of international standards that have been developed in this area—called Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

- Results from our research revealed some concrete actions we can take immediately to improve accessibility on epsb.ca. We have started:

- using some free tools (e.g. colour blindness simulators) and assistive technologies (e.g. screen readers) to review the accessibility of some of our most visited web pages
- exploring if Technology and Information Management can help us improve contrast on our website by updating fonts and colours
- working with Technology and Information Management to add Google Translate to the Division website
- working with a vendor to set up Google tags so we can track translation analytics; this will show us how often readers translate content on our web pages and including languages of choice, helping us better understand what supports families need

Results and Implications

- drafting website guidelines for writing effective alternative text (which helps screen-reading tools describe images to those with vision loss) and other best practices that support accessible content
- planning a website survey for 2023-24 to gather some baseline data about whether visitors to epsb.ca are able to easily find the information they are looking for or complete the action they wanted to take
- exploring external tools that can help us prioritize changes by identifying other pages users struggle with
- continuing to minimize the use of PDF files and graphics on epsb.ca, which are often not accessible for people using assistive technologies such as screen readers and translation tools

Stakeholder engagement

- Our Phase 1 research has shown us we need to take further steps before we conduct user testing. To properly prepare for the testing phase, we will first:
 - implement some of the best practices that can be put in place right away on epsb.ca
 - gather baseline data about accessibility/usability issues on epsb.ca
 - determine what budget is required for usability/accessibility testing
 - create a detailed plan to guide accessibility testing on epsb.ca
 - determine our criteria for testers and develop a screener so we can ensure testers are people that use, or would be likely to use our site
 - recruit participants who have a wide range of abilities and lived experiences, so we can gather quality data about the site's usability

What were the biggest challenges encountered in 2022-2023?

Requests for Communications support from schools and other departments continues to remain high. Whether it's letters for schools, posts to epsb.ca/Connect, design requests, media inquiries, issues management support, videos or photos, demand for Communications assistance continues to trend upwards. Prioritizing and supporting all requests continues to have implications for our base/regular work.

What are the opportunities for improvement from 2022-2023 that will inform your plan for 2023-2024?

By creating an inclusive language guideline document and improving accessibility to the Division's website, this will help reduce some of the unanticipated requests for support Communications receives, which has continual implications for our base/regular work.

Division Priorities 2022-2026

1. Build on outstanding learning opportunities for all students.
2. Advance actions towards anti-racism and reconciliation.
3. Promote a comprehensive approach to student and staff well-being and mental health.

In reflecting on our work towards continuous improvement as a Division, five reflective questions have been included in the Budget Planning Guide as a resource to help inform goal setting: Goals must align with 2022-2026 Division Priorities. All schools are to set two goals with one being in support of Priority 1. Schools also have the flexibility of setting an optional third goal. All Central DU's are to set two or three goals and indicate the priority area each goal supports.

Division Priority 2

In our work to be a more inclusive and anti-racist organization, Communications will continue its work to develop inclusive language guidelines. By August 2024, the inclusive language guidelines will be created with input from focus groups.

Partners told us key elements they needed from the guidelines:

- be very clear about the intent of the guidelines
- acknowledge that people make mistakes and provide guidance on how to move forward after making a mistake
- include practical examples of language to avoid, suggestions for rephrasing and background information on why

What Key Performance Indicators are you using to track continuous improvement?

Guided by findings from the 2022-23 research engagement, when we re-engage partners in 2024 with a prototype of the guidelines, we want the majority of participants (minimum 70 per cent) to tell us they feel these three elements are adequately present in the guidelines.

Division Priority 2**and Division Priority 3**

In our work to be a more inclusive and anti-racist organization, Communications will continue its work to make epsb.ca more accessible for all visitors, including individuals who have impairments or limitations. Guided by findings gathered in the 2022-23 school year (environmental scan, research and stakeholder engagement), Communications will:

- begin implementing features that increase accessibility to epsb.ca
- start planning for future user testing
- build a comprehensive communications plan to share improved accessibility features

Communications will work with Technology and Information Management to launch Google Translate on [epsb.ca](https://www.epsb.ca) by February 1, 2024

What Key Performance Indicators are you using to track continuous improvement?

When we release Communications materials to let families and staff know about this new tool, we aim to meet the following targets within two months of the launch: 800 clicks through to a news story on epsb.ca, at least 100 total engagements (e.g. likes, shares, comments) on Facebook, and at least 100 total engagements on Instagram.

Budget Summary Report

| | 2023-24 Spring Proposed | | 2023-24 Fall Revised | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Resources | | 2,906,609 | | 2,937,795 |
| Internal Revenue | | 0 | | 0 |
| REVENUE TOTAL | | 2,906,609 | | 2,937,795 |
| Exempt | 18.916700 | 2,449,176 | 19.000000 | 2,458,720 |
| Exempt (Hourly/OT) | .000000 | 15,000 | .000000 | 15,000 |
| Support | 1.000000 | 71,615 | 1.000000 | 71,615 |
| Support (Supply/OT) | .000000 | 1,500 | .000000 | 1,500 |
| TOTAL NON-TEACHER | 19.916700 | 2,537,291 | 20.000000 | 2,546,835 |
| (% of Budget) | | 87.29% | | 86.69% |
| TOTAL STAFF | 19.916700 | 2,537,291 | 20.000000 | 2,546,835 |
| (% of Budget) | | 87.29% | | 86.69% |
| SUPPLIES, EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES | | 358,118 | | 380,260 |
| INTERNAL SERVICES | | 11,200 | | 10,700 |
| TOTAL SES | | 369,318 | | 390,960 |
| (% of Budget) | | 12.71% | | 13.31% |
| TOTAL AMOUNT BUDGETED | | 2,906,609 | | 2,937,795 |
| Carry Forward Included | | 0 | | 0 |
| Carry Forward to Future | | 0 | | 0 |