

Calgary Quest School



Three-Year Education Plan
2023-2026

Message From The Board

The Education Plan is a vital document required by Alberta Education. Its purpose is to foster public trust and confidence in the education system by ensuring accountability, engagement, transparency, and reporting. At Calgary Quest Children's Society (CQCS), however, we view this plan as more than just a compliance requirement. We see it as a commitment to continuous quality improvement that supports the delivery of exceptional learning, teaching, and support services to our students and families.

The 2023-2024 school year marks the fifth year of our five-year strategic plan. The organization has made significant gains in achieving the goals outlined in the plan and we will continue to implement our community-based education model and secure the facilities to support this model. The goals outlined in this Education Plan have been collectively set by our staff, parents, and stakeholders. We are pleased to report that these goals continue to guide our efforts in striving towards excellence in education.

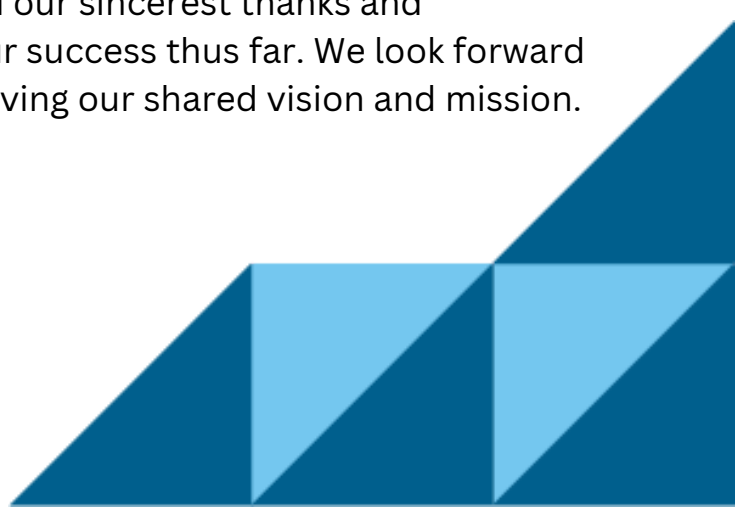
We would like to express our gratitude to our staff, parents, Parents Advisory Council, leadership team, and external stakeholders for their ongoing support in helping us deliver the best possible outcomes for our students. We value your input and appreciate the insights you have provided to help us improve our Education Plan.

Looking ahead, we are committed to supporting each student in achieving their personal goals, promoting excellence in our staff through growth and development, ensuring sustainability through good governance and management, and delivering enhanced programming to more populations across Calgary. We are excited about the journey ahead and the promise it holds.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, we extend our sincerest thanks and appreciation to all who have contributed to our success thus far. We look forward to continuing our work together towards achieving our shared vision and mission.

Best regards,

Barbara Pitts
President and Board Chair,
on behalf of the Board of Directors



Accountability Statement

The Three-Year Education Plan commencing September 1, 2023 for Calgary Quest Children's Society was prepared under the direction of the Board in accordance with its responsibilities under the Education Act, the Private Schools Regulation, Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act and the Education Grants Regulation. This document was developed in the context of the provincial government's business and fiscal plans. The Board has used its results to develop this plan and is committed to implementing the strategies contained within the plan to improve student learning and results.

The Board approved this Three-Year Education Plan for 2023 to 2026 on May 29th, 2023.

Barbara Pitts
President & Board Chair



Engagement

The organization recognizes the importance of stakeholder engagement and aims to understand and respond to their needs to support student growth.

Stakeholders such as parents, students, staff, donors, and community partners will be actively involved in program development, evaluation, and quality improvement efforts. The Parents Advisory Council (PAC) will play a crucial role in providing data, fundraising, and spreading awareness about the organization. Parents will continue to provide valuable feedback through various channels, including townhalls, surveys, and social media. Staff input is prioritized, with lunch and learn sessions, surveys, and the revitalized staff appreciation and social committee. Collaboration with community partners, influencers, elected officials, and First Nations, Inuit, and Metis communities is emphasized. Engaging donors and sponsors remains essential to support program growth and facility development initiatives.



Parent information night

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Consultation with a provincial Low Incidence Team through Renfrew Educational Services
- Consultation with Expanding Capacity and Learning Support (ECLS) Team through Providence
- Practicum placement opportunities for University of Calgary, Bow Valley College, Mount Royal University and East West College students
- Student learning enrichment at Wildflower Art Center
- Student volunteer experience at Cedars Villa Extendicare
- Partnership with MRU massage therapy program for practicum students



Pedagogy

At Calgary Quest School, our pedagogy is guided by our mission, vision, and values. We recognize the importance of individualized instruction and support for each student, and we work to create a positive and inclusive learning environment that addresses each student's unique needs. Our approach is grounded in the following principles:

- 1. Person-Centered Planning:** We use a person-centered planning approach to ensure that the individual goals and needs of each student are at the center of their educational program. We work collaboratively with families, students, and other professionals to develop and implement an individualized program plan (IPP) that reflects the student's strengths, interests, and needs.
- 2. Positive Behavioral Support:** We implement positive behavioral support strategies that promote positive behaviors. We use proactive strategies to teach replacement behaviors and skills that promote independence, communication, and social interaction. All our team members are trained in Non-violent crisis intervention (NVCi) to support this approach and are supported by our on-site behaviour strategist.
- 3. Differentiated Instruction:** We use differentiated instruction to meet the diverse needs of our students. We use a range of teaching strategies and materials to support students with different learning styles and abilities.
- 4. Universal Design for Learning (UDL):** We use UDL to create a flexible and accessible learning environment that supports the diverse learning needs of our students. We use multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement to promote learning and achievement.
- 5. Collaborative Team Approach:** We work collaboratively with families, students, our therapy team, and other professionals to ensure a coordinated and integrated approach to teaching and support. We use regular communication and collaboration to ensure that all team members are informed and involved in decision-making.
- 6. Evidence-Based Instructional Practices:** We use evidence-based instructional practices to promote learning and achievement. We use research-based strategies and interventions that have been shown to be effective for students with moderate to severe disabilities. CQS implements Social Thinking, We Thinkers, The Zones of Regulation, Jump Math, Core Language, Predictable Chart Writing, and University of Florida Literacy Institute's (UFLI) structured literacy program.

In summary, our pedagogical approach for students with moderate to severe disabilities is grounded in evidence-based teaching practices that promote individualized instruction, positive behavior support, differentiated instruction, universal design for learning, collaborative team approach, and evidence-based instructional practices. We are committed to providing a positive and inclusive learning environment that supports the diverse needs of all students.

Our Mission

A committed multi-disciplinary community working together to provide a supportive learning environment for cross-disability students and their families to deliver the best outcomes in their social, emotional, and educational journey



Our Vision

Maximizing student potential through excellence in individual programming.



Our Values

Caring:

Providing a caring and compassionate environment for staff, students and their families.

Inclusive:

Creating an environment that recognizes and values the unique differences across our community, supporting everyone to do their best.

Sustainable:

Enriching our practices to nurture, protect and guide our resources – human financial, and environmental – into the future.

Safe:

Building an environment where student and staff safety is everyone's primary concern.

Respectful:

Treating others, ourselves, and our environment with high regard and value.



2022-2023 HIGHLIGHTS



EVERY
CHILD
MATTERS

The 2022/2023 school year was a remarkable one! The math curriculum expansion, which saw the adoption of the JUMP Math program, was a significant accomplishment. Social Thinking, an evidence-based social skill development curriculum, was also implemented successfully. The numerous assemblies held throughout the year brought students, teachers, and parents together, fostering a sense of community within the school. The school was proud to have secured an Elder to guide the staff and students in their cultural learning, a significant achievement in creating awareness and fostering understanding. The Kairos Blanket Ceremony was a highlight, which focused on Truth and Reconciliation learning for staff. It helped increase awareness and create a sense of community that was essential in achieving the school's objectives.

The school's focus on supporting students was evident in the expanded therapy consultation from Providence's Expanding Capacity and Learning Supports (ECLS) Team and Renfrew Provincial Low Incidence Team. These partnerships helped support the students' individualized goals and provided training for educational staff.

The school was successful in returning to full-time learning after COVID, an accomplishment that was celebrated by everyone. The students and teachers adapted well to the new normal, and the school was proud of the resilience demonstrated during the challenging times. This school year also saw the return of music therapy in the classrooms, which the students were very excited for! Finally, the school raised over \$3,000.00 for the Terry Fox foundation, a testament to their commitment to social responsibility. Overall, the 2022/2023 school year was a resounding success, and the school can look back at these accomplishments with pride.









WHO WE ARE

In 1980, a group of caring parents formed a non-profit society and wrote a philosophy for a school that would bring dignity and respect to the education of students with significant challenges. In 1981 the society achieved charitable status and in 1995 Calgary Quest School (CQS) received designation as a Special Education Private School (DSEPS) from the Government of Alberta. For 42 years Quest has been an inclusive, accessible option for diverse learners in Calgary, known for exceptional student-teacher ratios and individualized programming. Today, Quest is a dynamic centre where parents find community and where kids achieve. Quest is for everyone – regardless of ability or difference.



Highlights of our program

-  Collaboraton between home and school
-  On-site therapy team
-  Individualized programming
-  Low teacher to student ratios
-  Current, evidence-based programming
-  Music therapy



"It's a very caring, warm environment and I feel like the staff genuinely care about the students!"

--Kim (parent)

STRATEGIES, OUTCOMES & MEASURES

EP-Goal #1: CQS students will achieve their individual goals in a safe and caring environment

Outcome:

Students will accomplish their individualized learning goals in a welcoming, caring, respectful, safe, and inclusive learning community.

Strategies to Achieve our Outcomes:

1. Provide authentic learning for FNMI Truth and Reconciliation:
 - Partnership with Tsuut'ina Elder
 - Tsuut'ina Travelling Museum presentation
 - Assemblies with indigenous cultural learning
2. Continue to implement Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NVC) training for positive behavioral support.
3. Support students in developing peer friendships:
 - Student Friendship Club led by our CQS Speech-Language Pathologist.
 - Social Thinking & We Thinkers evidence-based curricula for social skill development.
4. Partner with Calgary Centre for Sexuality for an affirming approach to teaching sexual health.

Measures:

- Alberta Education Accountability:*
- AE Assurance Survey measures.
- Local Measures:*
- Parent and Staff surveys.
 - Parent feedback through ongoing parent-teacher communication.
 - Teacher feedback through ongoing Teacher-Administration meetings.
 - Incident reporting reflects evidence of the use of NVC principles.

EP-Goal #2: CQS is committed to excellence in our teaching staff, our support staff, and our leaders to promote student achievement

Outcome: Teachers and leaders will grow in their professional practice to ensure excellence in teaching through:

- A) Building capacity across all staff members to support student success.**
- B) Continuing to enhance the implementation of evidence-based programs for students with moderate to severe disabilities.**

Strategies to Achieve our Outcomes:

1. Continue to plan strategic professional development activities that focus on building capacity in the areas of:
 - Implementation of evidence-based programs.
 - Assessing student growth.
 - Broadening our professional understanding of cultural perspectives, including Indigenous people through workshops, conferences, and collaboration with an Elder from Tsuut’ina Nation.
2. Continue to enhance the implementation of evidence-based programs for students with moderate to severe disabilities. These programs include Social Thinking, Core Language, JUMP Math, and The Science of Reading for structured literacy.
3. Implement and pilot the Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLSS-R) and Assessment of Functional Living Skills (AFLS) for special education, with accompanying professional development training.
4. Instructional leadership to mentor teachers and align the professional growth plans with the Teacher Quality Standards.

Measures:

- Alberta Education Accountability Pillar:*
- AE Assurance Survey measures
- Local Measures:*
- Parent and Staff surveys
 - School Calendar that allocates time for professional learning days.
 - Collaboration time scheduled for Professional Learning Communities.
 - Implementation of evidence-based programs in all classrooms.
 - Teachers in identified classrooms are using AFLS and ABLSS-R assessments to monitor student progress.

EP-Goal #3: CQCS is dedicated to good governance and management

Outcomes:

- A. Continue to refine and enhance the registration process and financial reporting for the expanded organization.**
 - Diversify revenue streams
 - Online registration and pre-registration process
 - Online re-registration for current parents
- B. Continue to review and modify, as needed, the Policies and Procedures of the organization.**
- C. Expand new progress reporting to two additional classrooms.**

Strategies to Achieve our Outcomes:

1. The Audit & Investment Committee will provide leadership and guidance regarding:

- The complexities of the expanded financial reporting requirements for the new service lines.
- Monitoring of enrollment and registration targets.
- Support the financial reporting for the grant requirements.
- Support the Fund Development Committee to maximize return on funds and comply with financial reporting.

2. Continue with the ongoing review and improvement of the policies and procedures deemed as priority for 2023-2024.

- Secure Board approval and ensure successful dissemination of policies and procedures across the organization.

3. Develop and review online registration and application processes.

- Explore capacities to create a student PORTAL for CQCS.

4. Expand progress reports to an additional two classrooms.

- Review the pilot of 2022-2023 progress reports for Sunshine Room and Aspen Room.
- Implement progress report cards to two (2) additional classrooms by June 2024.

Measures:

Alberta Education Accountability Pillar:

- AE Assurance Survey measures

Local Measures:

- Parent and staff surveys
- Parent Town Halls / Focus Groups
- Number of revised and approved policies & procedures
- Student retention
- Database implemented

EP-Goal #4: CQS providing enhanced and expanded services to more populations across Calgary and Alberta

Outcomes:

- A. The CQS Distance Learning Hub will continue to meet the needs of students who are required to transition to online learning. Parents are educated and supported in advancing the learning and social development needs of their children.**
- B. The Centre for Opportunity will grow its reach and registration beyond its original cohort.**
- C. An increased number of students and participants have access to specialized learning and life skills programs.**
- D. Quest presents and publishes its body of knowledge to share with the larger education and service provider community.**

Strategies to Achieve our Outcomes:

- A. The CQS Distance Learning HUB will:
 - a) Provide educational services as a transition option to students that may require temporary or permanent online/offsite learning due to their behavioral challenges.
 - b) Develop an online hybrid education series for students and their parents.

Measures:

- Alberta Education Accountability Pillar:*
- AE Assurance Survey measures
- Local Measures:*
- Parent and Staff surveys – Hub & CQR
 - Parent Town Halls / Focus Groups – Hub & CQR
 - Teacher & School Feedback Survey on Hub experience
 - PSI partnerships developed
 - Staff feedback

B. Increase community partnerships through a continuation of outreach activities with other DSEP schools and enhanced processes to ensure CQR is the pathway of choice for not only CQCS parents, but other students across Calgary.

C. The facility team will continue developing different partnership models to secure new facility space throughout the city and support satellite communities.

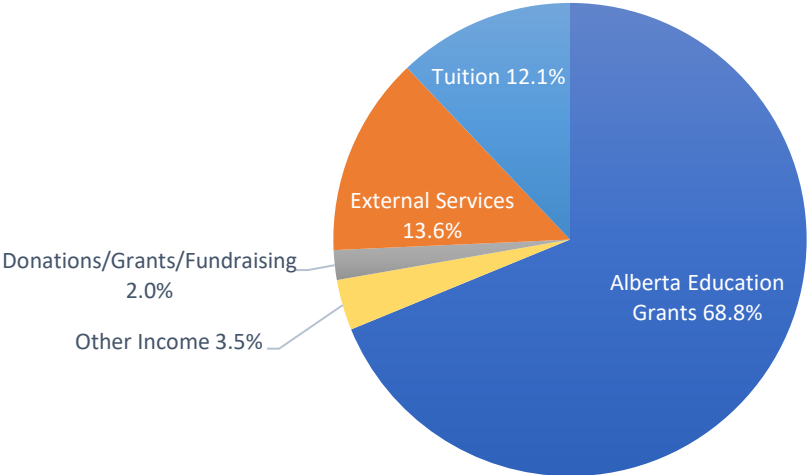
D. Access community-based research opportunities and partnerships with post-secondary institutions. Support staff in presenting their knowledge at various professional development opportunities, community collaborations, and parent education nights.

Implementation Approach

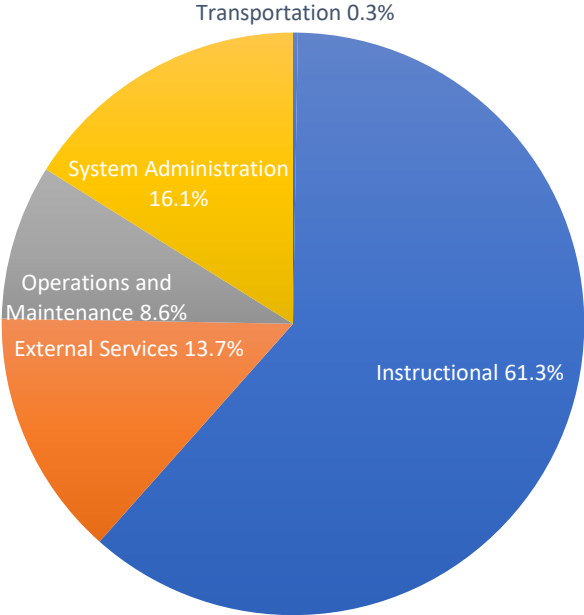
This rolling 3-year Education Plan continues to be ambitious but is critical to our development as the school of choice for students with moderate to severe disabilities. To be successful we will continue to engage and work collaboratively with our key stakeholders to accomplish the strategies as outlined. Each initiative will be resourced and identify a most accountable individual, timeline for completion and key reporting updates in alignment with Board reporting requirements. In addition, achievement will be measured in a variety of ways as part of our ongoing continuous improvement process.

Budget 2023 – 2024

Revenue: \$6,705,000



Expenses: \$6,652,144



Budget Summary 2023 - 2024

2023 – 2024 is a year of significant growth for our organization. We are growing from 155 to 180 students and will have completed the purchase of a new facility to support our growth. Calgary Quest is budgeting for a modest surplus of \$53,000 for the upcoming 2023 – 2024 school year. More specifically, Calgary Quest School is budgeting for a surplus of \$23,000 and our external services are budgeting for a combined surplus of \$30,000. This surplus is a result of progressive school and external services fee increases over the past 5 years and better management of our expenses. Other income includes lease revenue from our new facility, estimated investment revenue, and a revenue allocation from a facility capital contribution.

Expenses include additional staffing and therapy inputs to service our growing number of students and 2 additional classrooms. Expenses related to our ongoing facility search are included, as well as legal fees for collective bargaining. Expenses are higher than in the prior year due to the additional costs associated with owning and operating our own building.

We have 3 external services programs. Quest Adventure Camps are socially, physically, and culturally enriching summer camps designed for campers of all abilities aged 6 – 19. Our Before and After school care program runs year round(including summer camps), and is growing every year. Finally, the Centre for Opportunity launched in September of 2021 is a life skills/community transition program for young adults with disabilities. It was very important to us as a society to provide high school graduates with disabilities the opportunity to experience a transition program like that of a college with similar-aged participants. We created the Centre for Opportunity to help these students transition into employment and volunteer opportunities, as appropriate. We are budgeting for a small surplus across our external services offerings for 2023 – 2024.