

Inner City Youth Development Association
Inner City High School / Inner City Youth Engagement Program



Education Assurance Plan

2023/2026

Draft

Message from the Board Chair and Superintendent

Although COVID-19 has not left us, it feels like a fresh start. Now we can meet in person with many of our education partners. We regularly meet and collaborate with social workers, caseworkers, probation officers, parents, and students. In most cases, social workers and case workers fill the role of parents. Our wrap-around structure contacts youth at the street level and provides for their basic needs.

Students arriving at Inner City High School are interviewed to discover their strengths and immediate needs. Their urgent needs and pressing problems are food, counselling, medical services, mental health, clothing, housing, conflict with the justice system, poverty, and other essential needs. Housing problems and mental health problems are often a companion to our students lacking essential needs. These issues are discovered, discussed, and addressed in our intake meetings.

We respond as best we can to students pressing needs, whether it's a nutritious meal, bus tickets, or someone to talk to. If the need for housing is mentioned, social workers connect with our housing contacts and make referrals. Suppose the need is of a medical or mental health nature. In that case, we address what we can in counselling sessions with one of our social workers. If necessary, we make referrals where appropriate. If conflict with the justice system is a problem and a barrier to self-development, our court worker advocates for the youth and collaborates with court officials and probation officers. His advocacy often results in alternative measures that prevent the young person from being sent to jail and exposed to a more hardened criminal element.

We build a community with students who carry a long-held distrust of schools and other formal institutions. The experience of our community and the bonds formed are a deterrent to their involvement in gangs, sexual exploitation, and other forms of violence, abuse, and desperation. Where possible, mental health issues are mediated through onsite counselling, such as creating suicide safety plans for students expressing suicidal thoughts. As educator Ira Shore commented several years ago, the safe and supportive community of support we build with our students "creates the conditions for pedagogy to take place".

Having a safe and secure building for pedagogy to take place is paramount. This year we applied for and received major funding from the federal government to renovate our school building. The objective of the renovation is to increase the energy efficiency of the building and build a safe, inclusive community space. The project will begin this summer and conclude next summer. Sections of the interior space will be renovated to manage cold air flow, windows will be glazed and replaced where necessary, inclusive barrier-free access will be enhanced, and an array of solar cells will be installed on our roof. This project will significantly improve our carbon foot print, and reduce energy costs while adding long-term sustainability to our wrap-around programming.

We look forward to many years of providing education and opportunities for Edmonton's marginalized urban Indigenous and other youth.

Michael Ho

Joe Cloutier

Assurance Statement

Assurance Statement for the Education Plan

The Education Plan for Inner City High School commencing August 28, 2023 was prepared under the direction of the Board of Directors in accordance with the responsibilities under the *Education Act* and the *Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act*. This plan was developed in the context of the provincial government's business and fiscal plans. The Board has used its performance results to develop the plan and is committed to implementing the strategies contained within the plan to improve student learning and results.

The Board approved the Education Plan for 2023/2026 on June xx, 2023

Michael Ho
Board Chair

Joe Cloutier
Superintendent

PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE (WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION)

BACKGROUND

The ICYDA Board maintains a positive working environment for all Inner City Youth Development Association (ICYDA) employees and a culture characterized by integrity, trust, respect, cooperation, and nonviolence. The ICYDA Board expects all staff to demonstrate high ethical standards in their work. Inner City Youth Development Association will take action in an objective manner to address reports of wrongdoing within Inner City Youth Development Association without retribution to Inner City Youth Development Association employees who report wrongdoing in good faith. The Director of Education is responsible for the administration of this policy.

Introduction

This document builds on the experiences of over 30 years of offering educational programming to Edmonton's marginalized, urban, Indigenous, and other youth. For Inner City High School, "high-risk youth" is synonymous with "marginalized urban youth". It is used here to describe youth at risk of not completing high school, becoming involved in criminal activity, drug and alcohol abuse, and requiring continuous maintenance by society's social system. Our students' background is strikingly similar to the demographics of the inmates of our provincial and federal jails. This document represents our three-year vision for our students' continued improvement and success.

Mission and Goals

Our mission is to provide Edmonton's marginalized urban youth with an education that promotes positive behaviour, creative expression, and collaborative working skills. We provide an academic and arts-based educational program based on our core values of trust, respect, cooperation, and nonviolence. When reinforced with our education program and career counselling, these values provide students with the tools to become active, constructive citizens.

Vision

Our vision is to engage and inspire Edmonton's marginalized urban youth to recognize the intrinsic value of education, overcome their previous trauma-based educational and social difficulties, and pursue post-secondary education and/or full-time employment, fulfilling their potential as contributing, caring community members.

Principles

Inner City Youth Development staff, teachers and support staff:

- Base their daily practice on the values of trust, respect, cooperation, and nonviolence.
- Respect the individuality of all students.
- Recognize the historical, intergenerational trauma and desperate conditions that many of our students struggle to overcome.
- Treat all students equally and respect their inherent dignity and intelligence.
- Believe that every youth in our programs has the right to the resources that provide for their basic necessities.
- Create conditions for the development of a pedagogy that responds to their needs.
- Believe every Inner City High School student has the right to be provided with an education program and a right to be supported in the completion of that program.

School Profile

Inner City Youth Development Association (1990) and Inner City High School (1993) provide Edmonton's marginalized urban youth with opportunities to break the cycle of poverty, desperation, and dependence that colours their lives to become contributing members of society. This journey is a long one for our students and often lurches from one crisis to another.

Wrap-Around Services Provided by Inner City High School

Our onsite social workers provide students with counselling support for anxiety, depression, suicide ideation, neglect, abuse, and other trauma-based problems. Issues such as mental health and addictions, if necessary, are referred by our Social/Youth Engagement workers and youth workers to appropriate agencies. Some of our Social/Youth Engagement workers have addictions training, and most have ASIST suicide intervention and prevention training. We also have a partnership with Alberta Health Services (AHS) for onsite addictions counselling and a regular parenting program in collaboration with (AHS) and Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society. However, the Pandemic made AHS collaboration difficult. Our social/youth engagement workers offered parenting advice and helped students find their way through the social support system.

Legal Services and Support

Our Legal Support Worker helps students negotiate the justice system, attain legal representation, supports youth in court, negotiates Alternative Measures rather than jail, and supervises Community Service Hours as an alternative to incarceration.

Counselling Supports

Our social workers and youth workers provide counselling support. This support is supplemented with onsite counselling from Alberta Health Services, Indigenous Psychological Services, and regular sessions with the school Elder.

Inner City Youth Development Association Food Bank

Our onsite food bank provides Inner City High School students with emergency food when needed.

Housing Referrals

We work cooperatively and collaboratively with several group homes such as Spirit of Our Youth, Chimo Youth Retreat Society, Cunningham Place, Inner City Youth Housing Project, Youth Emergency Shelter, John Howard Society, Crossroads Safe House, and other group homes.

Advancing Futures Bursary Program

This program is a collaborative project that provides monthly financial support to students with a history of long-term care under the Alberta government's authority to enable them to pursue educational goals.

Alberta Learning Supports

Provides students who meet their criteria with financial support to pursue educational goals and enter the workforce.

Inner City Youth Development Association Food Bank

Our onsite food bank provides Inner City High School students with emergency food twice per week.

Assurance Framework

In the assurance framework all education stakeholders accept responsibility for building the capacity of the education system: in classrooms, schools, school authorities, and government. Ensuring continuous improvement throughout the system necessitates a collective approach that recognizes the diversity within Alberta, relies on evidence to make decisions, and is responsive to the needs of students in their local context.

The five domains of Assurance

- Student Growth and Achievement
- Teaching and Leading
- Governance
- Learning Supports
- Local and Social Context

Domain: Student Growth and Achievement

Student Growth and Achievement describes the ongoing process of student learning relative to identifying provincial learning outcomes that enable students to engage intellectually in the learning process, grow continuously as learners, and demonstrate citizenship.

<p>High School Completion within 3-Years and 5 Years falls under this domain. Generally, when students first come to us, they bring a series of unsuccessful school experiences, low literacy skills, and mid-elementary is average. Math is even lower. Our students require significant bridging to complete and succeed in academic courses. Graduation within three years is rarely possible</p>	<p>As a result, we have a very low 3-year and 5-year completion rate that is measured as a consistent concern. The average age of our students at registration is 17.2. Academically, they test at the mid-elementary level and lower in math. Many age out (over 20) before graduation. However, they develop the skills and attitudes necessary to become contributing members of our community.</p> <p>To help address this problem we have introduced optional graduation routes such as a High School Certificate to selective students. The objective is to improve our graduate rate.</p> <p>This past year a total of 11 students graduated from ICHS: nine with full high school diplomas and two students with Alberta Certificates of Achievement.</p> <p>Our objective is to improve our graduate rate while not limiting the opportunities of our students. Finances permitting, we hope to include a graduation coach as part of our learning community.</p>
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Domain: Teaching and Leading

Teachers and leaders apply appropriate knowledge and abilities to make decisions that demonstrate professional practice standards, which result in quality teaching, leading, and optimum learning for all students.

<p>89.0 percent of teachers parents and students satisfied with the overall quality of basic education at Inner City High School</p>	<p>Our Action Research staff meetings enable teachers and leaders to discuss students needs and, as a learning community, learn how best to meet them in a collaborative student centered process. Finances permitting, we will</p>
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	consider adding a graduation coach to help improve our drop out rate
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Domain: Learning Supports

This Domain is focussed on using resources to create optimal learning environments where diversity is embraced, a sense of belonging is emphasized, and all students are welcomed, cared for, respected, and safe; ensuring that our students learn in environments that support their needs.

<p>78.6 percent of teachers, parents, and students agree that the learning environment at ICHS is welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe. <i>In a recent survey, students were asked: “before coming to Inner City did you feel a sense of safety and belonging in your previous school community”?</i> 20% answered yes. <i>Students were asked if they felt safety and belonging at Inner City,</i> 72% answered yes.</p>	<p>87.8 percent is the current average in Alberta Schools. percent of teachers, parents, and students who agree that students have access to the appropriate supports and services at school</p>
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This summer we will begin renovations that will make our school more inclusive, accessible, and energy efficient by increasing accessibility through design, and adding an alternative energy components (an array solar cells on our roof), HVAC, design changes to optimize air flow, increased insulation in areas and window glazing. The outcome will be an optimal learning environment, a living example for students to experience an inclusive and accessible environment and learn about energy efficiency and care for our environment.

Domain: Governance

Describes Processes that determine strategic direction, establish policy and manage fiscal resources.

<p>70.0 percent of parents, students, and teachers agree that the school is well-governed.</p>	<p>59.3 was our previous 3-year average. The measure of 59.0 was surveyed during a period when most schools were completely online. Because ICHS serves a high need population we continued with on-site learning during COVID-19 peaks and through much of the pandemic. It fragmented our community. The sense of community at Inner City High School begins with our daily circles, breakfasts, and daily hot lunches. Circles were not possible and food was served in small cohorts or delivered to people in isolation, or anxiety-ridden. This fragmentation extended to ICHS staff as well as students. Most staff members were impacted by waves of anxiety over the presence of COVID-19 and its possible impact on their families.</p>
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Domain: Local and Societal Context

Wellness

Describes engagement practices that enable the education system to proactively respond to the learning needs and diverse circumstances of all students.

<p>This commitment requires that ICHS staff collaborate to provide our students with programming that</p>	<p>To ensure that our young people are healthy and fed, we provide a daily breakfast and a hot nutritious lunch to all students. We also offer twice-week access to our food bank.</p>
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<p>encompasses Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Our goal is to ensure, as much as possible, that our student's basic needs are met, enabling them to focus on their education. This process creates the conditions for pedagogy to take place.</p>	<p>To ensure students' safety, our social workers completed 51 suicide safety plans with students expressing suicidal thoughts. Next year we will resume our Foods class preparing nutritious and affordable meals. Regular meals and an atmosphere of respect and caring engage youth in the safety of the ICHS community. Self-esteem and self-confidence are also built in our daily circles as students realize that their voice is important, respected and people are listening. This past year students completed 55 plans for Change. When they complete a Plan for Change and it is later reviewed and revised students are able to look at their behaviours and habits and make positive changes in their lives. They move closer to realizing their potential as intelligent contributing human beings.</p>
<p>Our court worker worked with students to vacate (replaced by alternative measures) 20 warrants for their arrest. Preventing them from spending time in jail and being introduced to a more hardened criminal element. He supervised 41 Community Service hours. We partnered with Spirit North to involve students in after school outdoor activities. Indigenous youth with little background in their culture interacted with Elders and Indigenous motivational speakers such as , Former Miss Universe, Ashley Calling Bull and World Champion Hoop Dancer, Dallas Arcand. Some students were introduced to the concept of Two Eyed Seeing through Indigenous programming at TELUS World of Science.</p>	

Stakeholder Engagement

This past year case conferences were held with social workers, case workers, and others involved in the student's life and their progress in school. In total we made 193 interagency contacts over the school year.

Engagement

Engaging with our education stakeholders occurs through regular case conferences with students, teachers, ICHS social workers, guardians, parents, and other caregivers. This information/data is integrated with our database, intake documents, surveys, and other means to form a critical component that governs our local and social context. It guides the development of our learning and supports and informs school staff and school leaders while facilitating student growth and achievement.

Daily action research-based staff meetings keep teaching and social workers informed of youth situations by discussing problems, brainstorming solutions, proposing actions, and evaluating progress. Inclusive education meetings with parents, guardians, involved social agents, appropriate staff, and teachers all help create a continuous improvement cycle for our students.

Community consultations with probation officers, social workers, caseworkers, group homes, and parents help discuss student situations and appropriate learning strategies and keep everyone informed. Analysis of our 2022 Accountability Pillar results below, combined with the above data, informed the creation and focus of this Three Year Plan.

The Inner City Youth Development Association optimizes financial, human, and physical resources to maximize our support for Edmonton’s marginalized Indigenous and other youth. Monthly Budget to actual comparison facilitates this process.

Timelines and Communication

Inner City High School’s 3-Year Education Assurance Plan and budgetary information can be accessed at <https://inner-city-high-school>

The 3-Year Education Plan is also available at the school office.

Budget Summary				
Inner City Youth Development Association Revenue and Expenses	2020/21 Actual	2021/2022 Budget Board Approved	2021/22 Actual	2022/2023 Budget Board Approved
Revenue	Amount	Amount	Amount	Amount
Alberta Education	2,817,317	3,229,854	3,288,094	3,284,903
Federal Government	206,612	93,335	93,335	-
Alberta Government, Human Services Fee for Services (Tuition Fees)	10,008	11,000	15,648	12,500
Other Government of Alberta	98,238	75,278	75,278	91,778
Foundation grants, gifts and donations	238,994	209,907	287,497	137,167
Other Revenue	5,828	4,800	6,994	7,200
Amortization of Capital Asset Contribution	77,680	77,680	77,680	77,680
Total Revenue	3,454,677	3,701,854	3,844,526	3,611,228
Expenses				
Certificated Salaries and benefits	1,270,568	1,325,591	1,391,861	1,373,781
Non Certificated Salaries and Benefits	1,224,960	1,457,104	1,428,171	1,437,846
Service Contract and Supplies	358,087	392,913	464,220	467,024
External Services (Youth Engagement Program)	431,724	395,320	398,206	243,486

Amortization of Capital Assets	90,663	90,926	89,722	89,091
Total Expenses	3,376,002	3,661,854	3,772,180	3,611,228
Surplus (Deficit) of Revenue over Expenses	78,675	40,000	72,346	-

