

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



Education Assurance Plan

2022/2025

Message from the Board Chair and Superintendent

Despite the challenges that two years of COVID-19 brought to Inner City High School (ICHS) students and staff over the past year, our 2022-2025 Three-Year Education Assurance Plan is informed through continuous engagement with our community of education partners.

Through collaboration with social workers, caseworkers, probation officers, parents, students, and staff, ICHS teachers create learning conditions where their students succeed and make continuous improvements. The trajectory of continuous improvement for Inner City High School students is not always linear but characterized by twists and turns. However, we create a safe and caring community at Inner City High School. This community supports our students and keeps them engaged through their difficulties, often the result of multigenerational and intergenerational trauma.

When students first arrive at Inner City High School, they are interviewed to discover their strengths and immediate needs. Their urgent needs are most often food, counselling, medical services, mental health, clothing, housing, conflict with the justice system, poverty, and other essential needs. The interviews are conducted with respect and recognition of the young person's resiliency, despite the multiple barriers they face.

We do our best to provide for the student's 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 a 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, advocacy that most 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 of students who carry a long-held distrust of formal institutions. The experience of our community and the bonds that are 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 the creation of suicide safety plans for students expressing suicidal thoughts. Outside referrals are made when and where possible. The students slowly become part of the Inner City High School community and recognize that it is a safe place, a haven from the violence of the street. The openness and inclusivity of our population and the natural acceptance of two-spirited people have historically made LGBTQ2S people naturally accepted as part of our community.

Our core values of trust, respect, cooperation, and nonviolence are modeled in our interaction with our students and ensure that our wraparound approach best serves their needs. It is collaborative and inclusive, involving students, parents, caregivers, social workers, probation officers, court officials, alternative measures programs, and case conferences. Continuous improvement for our students is the goal of all Inner City High School education partners.

Dan Bilefsky (April 24, 2021) wrote in a *New York Times* article about conditions in Vancouver's Downtown East Side, that marginalized people are at greater risk of catching COVID 19 to others due to unhealthy lifestyles. He further pointed out, that if some marginalized people need to self-isolate,

it can present a huge challenge due to housing conditions, placing them at greater risk of transmitting the COVID-19 virus to others.

Inner City High School serves a population of marginalized youth with unhealthy lifestyles and challenging social conditions, including unstable housing. Our teachers are well aware of these conditions and their impact on the transmission of COVID-19 to themselves and their families. They deserve hero recognition for the front-line service they perform.

Wraparound programming refers to a philosophy of care designed to assist vulnerable children, youth, and families whose needs extend beyond what the school or another service partner alone can provide. It is responsive to the local context in meeting the needs of students. It is a collaborative and definable team-driven planning process that results in creating and implementing an individualized support plan built on child/youth/family strengths. The plan is designed to address identified needs to improve success at home, at school, and in the community.

Daniels, J. (2010) *A School-Based Services Approach for Wrapping Services Around Vulnerable Children*. accessed from, <https://www.ualberta.ca/community-university-partnership/research/policy-development/wrap-around.html>

Assurance Statement

ASSURANCE STATEMENT FOR THE EDUCATION PLAN

The Education Plan for Inner City High School commencing August 28, 2022, 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 2022/2025 on June 15, 2022

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 Superintendent is responsible for the administration of this policy.

Mission and Goals

Introduction

This document builds on the experiences of over 25 years of offering educational programming to Edmonton's marginalized, urban, Indigenous, and other youth. For Inner City High School, the term "high-risk youth" is synonymous with the phrase "marginalized urban youth". It is used here to describe youth who are at risk of not completing high school and 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 the continued improvement and success of our students.

Vision

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

Mission

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 the 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.

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 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 Works (Student Finance)

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 17.5. 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 13 students graduated from ICHS: 11 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</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.

91.3 percent of teachers parents and students satisfied with the overall quality of basic education at Inner City High School

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>89.4 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 school community"? 37.5 answered yes. Students were asked if they felt safety and belonging at Inner City, 75% answered yes.</i></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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Domain: Governance

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

<p>59.0 percent of parents, students, and teachers agree that the school is well-governed.</p>	<p>76.3 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 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 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> <p>To ensure students' safety, our social workers completed 53 suicide safety plans with students expressing suicidal thoughts.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 behaviors and habits and make positive changes in their lives and closer to realizing their potential as intelligent contributing human beings.</p>
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Stakeholder Engagement

This past year, despite the anxiety caused by COVID 19, 12 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 135 interagency contacts over the school year.

We developed a partnership with the Telus World of Science, Indigenous Education. Part of our collaboration includes planning for a garden of perennial and other plants native to our Edmonton area. We will fill the planters surrounding the school. Elder Lyn Lush from Telus is advising on this project

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 supports, informs school staff and school leaders while facilitating student growth and achievement.

Daily action research-based staff meetings keep teaching staff and social workers informed of youth situations, discuss problems, brainstorm solutions, drive actions, and evaluate 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, appropriate learning strategies and keep everyone informed. Analysis of our 2020 Accountability Pillar results below, combined with the above data, informed the creation and focus of this Three Year Plan.

Timelines and Communication

Inner City High School’s 3-Year Education Assurance Plan and budgetary information can be accessed at <https://innercity.ca/important-documents>. The 3-Year Education Plan is also available at the school office.

Inner City Youth Development Association’s Budget Summary				
Revenue and Expenses	2019/20 Actual	2020/2021 Budget Board Approved	2020/21 Actual	2021/2022 Budget Board Approved
Revenue	Amount	Amount	Amount	Amount
Alberta Education	2,820,605	2,863,167	2,817,317	3,229,854
Federal Government (Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples 2019, Family Violence Prevention Program 2020-21, Temporary Wage Subsidy 2021, Critical Worker Benefit--Alberta Education)	105,115	186,552	206,612	93,335
Alberta Government, Human Services Fee for Services (Tuition Fees)	12,119	10,900	10,008	11,000
Other Government of Alberta (Community Initiatives and FCSS, Critical Worker Benefit--FCSS)	91,778	91,778	98,238	75,278
Foundation grants, gifts and donations	449,915	226,837	238,994	209,907
Other Revenue	13,535	4,870	5,828	4,800
Amortization of Capital Assets	-	77,680	77,680	77,680
Total Revenue	3,493,067	3,461,784	3,454,677	3,701,854
Expenses				
Certificated Salaries and benefits	1,398,788	1,308,487	1,270,568	1,325,591

Non Certificated Salaries and Benefits	1,294,748	1,557,171	1,224,960	1,457,104
Service Contract and Supplies	393,677	255,463	358,087	392,913
External Services (Youth Support Program)	287,401	250,000	431,724	395,320
Amortization of Capital Assets	7,824	90,663	90,663	90,926
Total Expenses	3,382,439	3,461,784	3,376,002	3,661,854
Surplus (Deficit) of Revenue over Expenses	110,628	-	78,675	40,000
Donations				
Alberta Education	2,817,317	4020 United Way		3,153.43
External Services	592,104	4035 Donations		41,694.20
Donations	45,256	4038 Fundraising Revenue		103.05
		4036 Donations In Kind excluding EOCF		304.98
	3,454,677			

