

Providence Christian School



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20230525

Education Plan for Providence Christian School 2023 - 2026

Introduction

The 2022/2023 school year was a better year than those that preceded it. The COVID experience seemed largely forgotten, though we still observe problems of learning loss in many of our students, particularly those in the elementary grades.

Under pre-COVID conditions we mostly had complete education Alberta Education Assurance Measures data (AEAM) available to assess our performance. The comparative performance data that was collected in the spring of 2022 gives us limited worthwhile information. The reasons for that, for as much as we can oversee them, were the halo effect of the pandemic, the lack of usual measuring tools such as diploma exams, or the fact that circumstances led to the suppression of much data, that minimized usable final information.

The PCS school community is largely rural and agriculturally or trades based. Few families have a history of academic pursuit and college or university training. Academics and life-long learning were not highly valued in the past. Some things are changing but it remains difficult for many individual students to break through and for the school to convince students of the value of education for their future lives, not merely for their future jobs. School is generally seen as a necessity for reasons of literacy and numeracy acquisition. Appreciation is developing for the school's role as a contributor to general formative growth.

Time Frame

Providence Christian School employs a three-year education plan time frame. This rolling plan maintains a consistent timeframe and 'rolls' forward with a new year added for each one completed. The school board reviews this plans regularly and adjusts it considering the most current results from provincial and local measures and based on what is learned from the implementation of the plan. Updated plans are published annually and reflect any adjustments made to priorities, outcomes, measures, strategies, and plan implementation.

Results Analysis

We aim to consistently use the most recent measure results and analysis in the AERR, to support and provide a rationale for the priorities/goals, outcomes, and strategies. When we review the measurement results in the 2022 AERR we are struck by how little information they really give. They provide limited usable data to indicate how well we have been progressing. A closer look at some of the breakout graphs suggests that comparing the actual numbers is more helpful and encouraging than looking at the colour coded summary statements.

It would be helpful to have data regarding our measurable outcomes, the PATs, and Diploma exams. We will need to wait another two years to have a record of measurable results and consistent standards for credible comparisons. Additionally, our small grade 12 class sizes have historically led to the suppression of Diploma Exam data. With larger classes coming up we look forward to better samples of comparable data.

The benefit of the Alberta Education Assurance Measures Overall Summary graph is similarly limited. There are indeed declining local results that are concerning to us, in particular program of studies, the satisfaction with program access, school improvement, and work preparation. Return to post-pandemic data collection and school operation should restore much of that to previous satisfactory levels.

Regarding the progress on our local goals and priorities, we have anecdotal observations that are positive. Students, particularly in the higher grades, are giving evidence of growing intellectual engagement with the goals that are personally transformative and character forming. Activities by our student council and our political engagement club are connecting learned concepts with initiatives for positive action.

Strategic Priorities

In our analyses of the AERR measurement results we listed some concerns. We feel that our overarching school goals and specific subgoals do address those concerns well.

Overarching school goals:

1. Increasing academic standards and achievement.
2. Developing unique local programming that reflect the mission and vision of the school.
3. Develop and improve the governance and operational structure and practices of the organization.

Sub goals¹:

Goal 1 components:

1. Increasing academic standards and achievement
 - 1.1. *Set and maintain strict standards for the streaming of high school students into courses in which they have high opportunity for success,*
 - 1.2. *maintain a school wide sequential and hierarchical program for teaching and improving proficient writing,*
 - 1.3. maintain strategies and standards for writing skills,
 - 1.4. involve teachers in capacity building opportunities to develop their own skill and develop teaching materials and plans,
 - 1.5. formulate statements describing core literacy and numeracy skills,
 - 1.6. apply those statements in curriculum outlines and unit plans and connect them to assessment strategies of student work,
 - 1.7. increase the student's test taking habits/abilities, improve local standards and averages,
 - 1.8. match provincial standards and averages,
 - 1.9. exceed provincial standards and averages.

In light of discoveries and of learning regarding the history of local First Nations and residential schools, we are involving our students in programs throughout the grades that teach and enable them to speak knowledgeably and to act with empathy and care for their neighbours. We do not have First Nations, Métis and Inuit students enrolled but we ensure that all students, teachers and school leaders learn about their perspectives and experiences, treaties, agreements, and history.

Goal 2 components regarding TfT:

2. Developing unique local programming that reflect the mission and vision of the school regarding the 'Teaching For Transformation' framework:
 - 2.1. *Consider and articulate the school's story,*
 - 2.2. *consider and formulate a deep hope and statement of purpose for the school and for each classroom,*
 - 2.3. *develop and maintain good homeroom practices that promote personal, transformational growth and community building,*
 - 2.4. *formulate the three main TfT core practices,*
 - 2.5. *distinguish essential practices of each of the core practices,*
 - 2.6. formulate goals for developing each of these essential practices,
 - 2.7. develop strategies of integrating the deep hope and the practices in all of the curriculum,

¹ Italicized items are considered completed and achieved.

- 2.8. write subject thematic statements that include a deep hope statement and each of the practices,
- 2.9. build teacher capacity in understanding and using the Tft framework and practices,
- 2.10. provide teacher opportunity to plan the integration of Tft practices and goals in the grade / subject units and lessons,
- 2.11. evaluate and assess effectiveness of the Tft effort for the students' learning and personal growth,
- 2.12. communicate and celebrate the nature and success of the Tft.

Goal 2 components regarding GtC:

- 2. Developing unique local programming that reflect the mission and vision of the school regarding the 'From the Garden to the City' framework:
 - 2.1. *distinguish elements of each domain,*
 - 2.2. *formulate goals for each of those elements,*
 - 2.3. *develop strategies of activating those goals within all of the curriculum,*
 - 2.4. write subject thematic statements that include each of the domains and goals,
 - 2.5. build teacher capacity in understanding and using the GtC domains and goals,
 - 2.6. provide teacher opportunity to plan the integration of GtC domains and goals in the grade / subject units and lessons,
 - 2.7. evaluate and assess effectiveness of the GtC effort for the students' learning and personal growth,
 - 2.8. communicate and celebrate the nature and success of the GtC framework.

Goal 2 components regarding Character Development:

- 2. Developing unique local programming that reflect the mission and vision of the school regarding the 'Character Development' program:
 - 2.1. *Articulate the reason for a character development program,*
 - 2.2. *Identify the main character traits we want to see in our students,*
 - 2.3. *Develop a framework by which we teach the students about the nature of each of the character traits,*
 - 2.4. *Maintain a schedule based on which character traits are highlighted throughout the school year,*
 - 2.5. *Employ and manage a system by which students are recognized and rewarded for demonstrating particular character traits in exemplary ways,*
 - 2.6. *Invite chapel speakers who teach and illustrate the importance of particular character traits,*
 - 2.7. Create visual signs and object reminders that teach students about the character traits,
 - 2.8. Celebrate and publish to the school community some unique student achievements and special occasion that embody good character.

Goal 3 components:

- 3. Develop and improve the governance and operational structure and practices of the organization.
 - 3.1. *Maintain and nurture traditional structure of parent representation on the elected school board and in committees that advise the board and society,*
 - 3.2. *provide training for current and new board members,*
 - 3.3. *develop a board handbook that guides procedures and practices,*
 - 3.4. *work with service organizations such as the Prairie Centre for Christian Education to develop board capacity for governance practices,*
 - 3.5. *develop policies that guide the daily operation of the school and regulate the tasks and responsibilities its participants,*
 - 3.6. attract an experienced new principal and streamline the effectiveness of the administrative structure,
 - 3.7. develop and improve reporting structure for society and government relationship.
 - 3.8. start and build a credible, quality music program,
 - 3.9. develop and maintain a credible, quality athletic program,
 - 3.10. start an automotive program.

Implementation Strategies

To broaden the students' understanding of the value of a wholesome, comprehensive education we continue the planning and implementation of special programs for Visual Arts, Wood Working, Foods and Nutrition, Drama, Choir, Band, Computer programming, Robotics, Choir, etc.

About 40% of the grade 1, 2, and 3 students were identified with issues of learning loss in the core numeracy and literacy areas.² Each of those students were targeted for specific personal support for a five-month period, and then again for the remainder of the school year. Our Special Ed coordinator works with the classroom teachers to monitor students' progress. Further testing and specific evaluation will be done if there are indications of the need of additional student support or remediation. The results from those tests are guiding our planning for the Elementary grades in general and for some individual students in particular. We employ classroom aides and volunteers when we feel that students are falling behind in the acquisition of essential skills and knowledge.

Overarching school goal 1

Increasing academic standards and achievement.

Our grade 12 students must be better prepared for their Diploma Exams. We want to see more of them score in the Acceptable and Excellent category.

Better writing ability will invariably improve the PAT and Diploma scores. We have found that, in past years, many students were simply not able to write well and express their thoughts effectively and proficiently. We believe that the meagre PAT and exam results were partly a result of that and of streaming into courses that were beyond the students' ability.

- We are increasing our student's test taking habits/abilities and their awareness of the value/importance of taking tests well.
- We have made policy changes that will set minimum standard for exam performance and minimize the temptation for students to work only for the minimum passing grade.
- We have made policy changes that set stricter standards for the streaming of high school students into courses in which they have good opportunity for success.
- We are in the fourth year of the implementation of a school wide program to improve our students' writing abilities. At the elementary level that focusses mostly on sentence and paragraph construction for creative writing. In the higher grades the emphasis is on the students' ability to write a quality essay that makes an argument in a clear, well written format.
- We expect to enroll our students in some writing contests and publications in order to encourage their efforts and celebrate their successes.
- We are in the fourth year of implementing a Kindergarten through grade 6 differentiated reading program to improve our students' reading abilities.
- Our teachers are regularly engaged in Professional Development collaboration with fellow educators to expand their capacity and implement ways to enhance our student's rate of success.

² Appendix 6

Overarching school goal 2

Developing unique local programming that reflect the mission and vision of the school.

We are not satisfied with evidence of successful acquisition of information only. We want to see the formation and transformation of a whole person through the application of what was learned.

- Our Education Committee and board have encouraged staff to develop greater understanding of the classroom implications of 'Teaching for Transformation'.
- To emphasize the transformational nature of learning and growing in a Christian school we have introduced grade specific homeroom times for grades 7-12 at the start of each day.
- Throughout the grades we aim to create opportunities for our students where they can learn and apply that faith and knowledge leads to acts of gratitude and responsible action.
- Our 'character development' program teaches and rewards character traits: personal character, skills, and attitudes such as good work ethic, ownership, responsibility, and care. There is increasing evidence that this program is playing some positive role in our total effort of Christian education and has integrity to make a difference in their personal character growth.
- We are expanding the occasions at which we take students out of their classroom comfort zone into the community to learn to contribute real life value to real life needs.

Overarching school goal 3

Develop and improve the governance and operational structure and practices of the organization.

- Board training through workshop settings provided by the Prairie Centre for Christian Education,
- Board training through monthly brief reflections at board meetings on readings or video instructional materials regarding board governance,
- Enable committees to actively search for a new principal, think about long term future growth issues, consider new fundraising opportunities, etc.
- Employ surveys to improve parent voice and gain understanding of priorities in the school society.

Stakeholder Engagement

The governance structure of PCS enables the parents to be involved in board elections, board committees, society general meetings, volunteer activities, etc. AGMs are held twice a year. Board and school administration provide extensive information during those meetings. In the spring the society membership elects new board members to 4-year positions. Parents serve on various board committees for Education, Curriculum, Finance, etc. The Education Committee in particular serves well to keep parents informed of curriculum and policy changes. The school society members receive monthly newsletters about the affairs of the society and the school. The parents receive weekly newsletters about the programs, events, and educational efforts of each week. Parents are encouraged to get involved as volunteer helpers in school, as committee members, etc. During the AGM matters of enrolment projections, class configurations, curriculum updates, etc. are explained and discussed.

Budget

Budget Summary 2023/2024	
Revenue Summary	
Alberta Government Grants	\$ 1,433,841
Tuition fees	\$ 593,135
Donations & Misc. Income	\$ 363,040
Total Revenue	\$ 2,390,016
Expense Summary	
Instruction	\$ 1,389,081
Administration	\$ 267,245
Operation & Maintenance	\$ 288,533
Transportation	\$ 261,025
Total Expenses	\$ 2,205,884
Surplus (Deficit) of Revenue over Expenses	\$ 184,132
Comments:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The above chart only provides a summary of the 2023/2024 budget. Detailed information is available from the treasurer of Providence Christian School Society.We have budgeted a surplus for 2023/2024. A portion will be set aside to cover capital items needed.We are very thankful and show great appreciation for the support we receive from Alberta Education, and we pray for continued support in the years to come.	
Capital and Facilities Projects	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The board is looking to the future as enrolment continues to increase to ensure that we can accommodate the growth. At this time there is no concrete plans in place.	
Summary of Facility and Capital Plans	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fundraisers takes place throughout the year and we have been blessed with a generous community that donates to the needs of our school. Through donations we have been able to pay down extra on the principal of our mortgage through the Christian Credit Union in Lethbridge.	

Accountability Statement

The Education Plan for Providence Christian School commencing August 25th, 2023 was prepared under the direction of the Board/Board of Directors in accordance with the responsibilities under the *Private Schools Regulation* and the *Education Grants Regulation*. 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 May 25, 2023.

Communication

The AERR and the specific measurement results were shared with board and society membership in the fall of 2022. The rolling goals were reviewed and discussed with teachers early in the spring of 2023. The Education Plan is shared with the board in the Spring of 2023 and with the society at the May AGM.