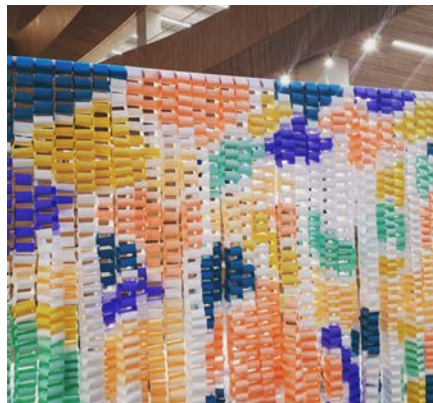


Explore | Connecting with Partners

2School: an urban experience at the education center
2023-24 Annual Report



Calgary Board
of Education



Richmond Students journal at the Elbow River

31 years ago, the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) led the development of an exciting new educational model that would take student learning beyond the four walls of the traditional classroom. Called Campus Calgary/Open Minds, the idea was for students to spend a whole week in a variety of environments where they could discover real-life connections to their learning.

The idea of 2School was first conceived in 2003 when plans were drawn up for a new administrative office in downtown Calgary. We knew we had the opportunity to bring students from around the city to an urban location where they could investigate the community and the role that public education plays in how a community is shaped. The urban environment provides endless learning opportunities, including a circa 1908-1912 classroom with original CBE furnishings and artifacts.

Celebrating 31 years, Campus Calgary/Open Minds (CC/OM) with support of the Calgary Board of Education continues to lead the development of an exciting education model. With 12 full sites, the CC/OM model continues to grow and expand.

The concept is so popular with schools that sites are booked a year in advance. CC/OM is 80 percent over subscribed resulting in turning schools down for the following year.

In 2023-2024, over 600 CBE and Calgary Catholic School District students spent a week at the Education Center. This coming year, we will continue to expand the possibilities as we welcome teachers and their students who are new to the concepts of CC/OM.

This report includes some of the highlights from our 2023-2024 school year. 2School is a partnership between the Calgary Board of Education, its stakeholders, the surrounding community and Campus Calgary. As a program, 2School brings teachers, students and community experts together for a week-long curriculum-based experience utilizing the downtown urban environment as their classroom. This program brings together Calgarians to learn, talk and celebrate the vibrant inner city neighborhoods and the many exciting things they have to offer. Each week is personalized for the attending class with CBE employees, members of the community, the land and urban spaces sharing their expertise while working alongside students.



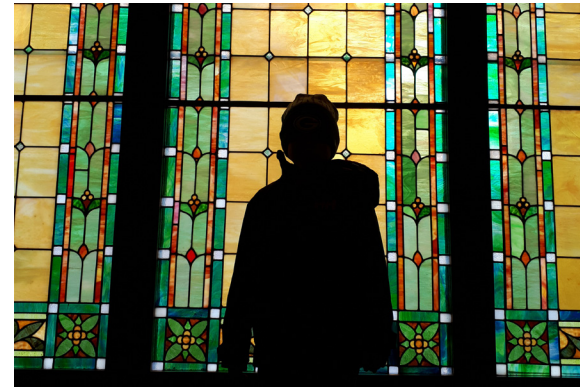
Grade 7 Student from St. Ambrose experiments with a biofeedback art installation at Contemporary Calgary

Learning

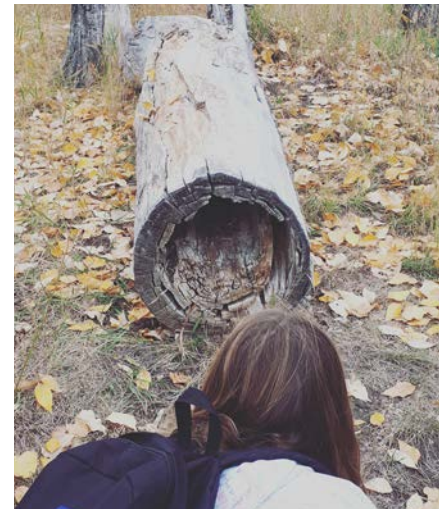
Students are immersed in interdisciplinary curriculum and come to understand how education serves citizens. Students explore stories and have direct experiences with spaces and places which help them develop a greater connection to the Calgary community and their own identity as a Calgarian. Students also create change as they realize their importance in shaping their city and the gratitude and reciprocity that accompanies being connected to the community.

Each week is designed to be transformative for the participating class. The program is also intended to be an integral part of the students' yearlong study. Teachers participating are offered the following throughout the year:

- Three in-person workshops with our coordinator team exploring ways to integrate experiential place-based learning through multiple lenses
- Journaling workshop and Journey into Journaling Resource. This allows teachers to learn techniques to share with their students in how to slow down, capture, document and analyze their experiences
- Four virtual workshops. Campus Calgary/Open Minds Coordinator/ Collaborator led workshops designed to share a concept and accompanying task or journal technique
- Weekly newsletter to all participating classes highlighting what is happening in our schools and in our city, community celebrations and current events that connect their studies and curriculum (Alberta Program of Studies). The newsletter introduces teachers to resources that support learning in their classroom
- Community explorations. These are embedded throughout the year with the intent to get teachers and students out in their school community to observe and document their findings through journaling. Feedback has been very positive as it supports teaching and learning



Grade 1 student from Dr. Roberta Bondar Elementary experiences the gift of stained glass



Grade 6 student from Dr. Martha Cohen explores biodiversity on St. Patrick's Island.



Students from Ernest Manning High School look at the Come Together activation Mural



Students get to see how Good Neighbour works as a community resource

This report aims to offer insight into how a week at 2School was embedded into a year of learning in the 2023– 2024 school year, highlighting our many partners.

Collaboration and Relationships

Collaboration is an integral part of the 2School program. Each week is uniquely designed specifically for that class. Students walk in the footsteps of the experts working side by side with CBE staff and community partners. Being on the Land and in place, builds relationships. Students come to understand how land is our teacher and how our communities store intergenerational knowledge.

How are we connected to place? What is our responsibility to where we live?

The leadership class from Ernest Manning High School spent 1 day each month exploring concepts around connection, place and responsibility. The 5 days allowed them to connect to a concept, meet with the community and then reflect and act on their learnings by implementing change in their school. The following aims to capture their learning journey from September to December.

Leadership students began their inquiry into the significance of place at the confluence of the Elbow and Bow River. This site is a cultural and historic gathering place rooted in stories and lifeways of the Treaty 7 nations. Students explore questions about the origins of our city and how perspectives from different groups of people can shape our understanding of our collective history. Students then met with Jasmine MacGregor at Central Library to learn about Indigenous placemaking practices. Students examined the ways that this initiative develops traditional and contemporary artworks that promote understanding of Indigenous peoples and cultures within Treaty 7 territory.

The leadership class reflected on their day and created three engagement opportunities for students at their school to gather and take part in during Truth and Reconciliation Day.

Ernest Manning Students learned about Calgary's Downtown Strategic Plan while they visited the Nova building. They examined one of the 5 key strategies which related to "Future proof and innovate for the next generation." They used the 4 directions thinking strategy to reflect on how Calgary could potentially solve office vacancy rates while creating interest for young people to visit and spend time downtown.

Students visited the City of Calgary Park, Devonian Gardens. This park is unique as it is Canada's largest indoor park and is attached to the Core Shopping Center. Using the 4 key attributes of "What Makes a Great Space" from the Project for Public Spaces students evaluated The park, finding that it meets many of the requirements to be considered a great space for citizens of all ages and abilities.

Students then met in the East Village community with Anna Lake, Senior marketing manager with the Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) to walk them through the evolution of placemaking in the East Village. Students learned how this contributed to the development of the neighbourhood, and how the CMLC is using these principles today in the Culture and Entertainment District, which is in the development stages today. Students got to hear about the plans for the newest placemaking initiative/site activation adjacent to Enoch Park (315 11 AVE SE), called Pixel Park and walked to the site.

Earnest Manning students' last day began at Good Neighbour Community Market, Calgary's first pay-what-you-can market. Students met with Co-founder Alice Lam to hear about how the space came to be and who it serves in the community. Students learned that the store bridges the gap for folks downtown who can't go to second-hand stores, or for those who don't feel comfortable going to certain non-profits for clothing or food. Whether it is seniors, students or newcomers to our community, the store is a welcoming space. The store's motto is, "take what you need, leave what you can, pay what you want" so that customers know that there is no right or wrong amount to donate.

Leadership students wanted to see other placemaking tools that the downtown community used to build community and a sense of belonging. From eating in a coworking shared space, and listening to art that connects us to Bow Glacier, visiting a shoe museum and experiencing a manufactured park space filled with encouraging words and photo opportunities, students came to know our city and feel connected to the downtown community differently.

Many students mentioned that their experience of Campus Calgary changed the way they felt about our city; as vibrant, inclusive, diverse and thoughtfully designed. They also reflected on the challenges that we continue to face; poverty, mental health and isolation. They reflected on their responsibility as leaders in their school community that they can create change, even in small ways, and that their actions matter now and moving forward.



Good Neighbour storefront

How Can I be an Agent of Change in my Community?

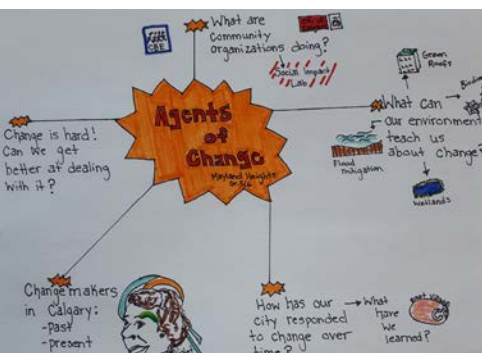


Beltline mural

Grade 5/6 students from Mayland Heights School asked the question, How can we be agents of change in our community?

Grade 5/6 students learned about the artists involved in the Beltline Urban Murals Project (BUMP) who were using their art to speak out about their personal experiences with change. Students learned about Violet Henery, Canada's first Black female lawyer who graduated from the University of Alberta as the only woman in her class. Students also learned about the role that Nelly McClung played in the suffragette movement and in getting women to be recognized as persons in the Canadian Constitution. Students reflected that change takes time and that patience is required during the process.

They worked with Kelsey Brown, from the Social Impact Lab, a non-profit organization that aims to create a positive social impact for the community. Students engaged in a design thinking task exploring how lunchtime could be better. Their school community struggled with playing organized sports so much so that they were no longer able to participate in these activities during lunch. Students worked collaboratively to brainstorm ways that could positively address and solve these challenges. Students went back to their school and implemented some of their ideas.



Mayland Heights School Inquiry

How Are We Adapting to Change in our Environment?

Grade 6 students from Dr. Martha Cohen School were curious about how our city is adapting to change in our environment.

Students examined ways that the city has used flood mitigation strategies to prepare for our changing climate and the extreme weather events that connect to it. They learned about the human-designed wetlands downtown that filter stormwater and slow down water entering our river. They also examined the role of wetlands in animal habitats, how to identify native plants in different seasons, some of which are considered to be medicines for the Blackfoot peoples, and how these plants help with soil erosion. Students reflected on the biodiversity in such a small urban area.

Students were able to journal in an old-growth Balsam Poplar forest on St. Patrick's Island.

They identified and documented the layers of the forest and found evidence of habitats in their observations. Students reflected on the value that these forests provide to our city for humans, animals and the environment. They made connections to the trees that they have back in their community of New Brighton and the ways that their community was supporting biodiversity and a changing environment.

How do Stories Connect Us? What Do They Teach Us?

Grade 2/3 students from Queen Elizabeth began their year exploring a new mural that was being painted in their community. They met with the artist who shared how art can tell stories about the land and the people who live there. This began their inquiry into the stories that are being held by the community and what they teach us.

Teachers planned community walks for each Wednesday throughout the year. Students would walk to investigate and explore their community by examining it through story. One story was about parks, another was about little free libraries, and another was investigating shapes, and materials that were being used in and around the community and their connections to geometry and science. Through these walks students actively questioned, journalled and used walking as a research method to investigate curriculum.

During their week, students examined the stories of architecture, beginning with the understanding that the Blackfoot Confederacy's traditional territory was vast and they would camp in the summer at the confluence of the Bow and Elbow Rivers and that the rivers are why we are here today. Students experienced Sandstone buildings (Historic classroom at CBE Education Center, Lougheed House, Memorial Park Library, Haultain School, Center Street Lion) and came to recognize its characteristics and why it became known as the Sandstone City.

Students also examined the Beltline Urban Murals Project (BUMP) and heard the stories that the murals in a different community than their own were telling about people, Land and place. Students reflected that even though the murals were all done by different artists (even some from around the world) the art reflected who we are as Calgarians and shared stories that were important (stories of migration, of ecological well-being, Indigenous languages and culture, and stories of joy and sorrow).



Water levels in the Bow River



Queen Elizabeth Students journal about the stories of the Beltline Murals

Participating in the 2School program gives students the opportunity to connect to their school in new ways. Many students don’t realize that the CBE is more than their school; they are a part of the almost 140,000 students who attend 251 CBE schools. Many students have never spent so much time downtown. Whether it is an examination of the value of public spaces, or how we collaborate within our community, students’ worlds become larger when they venture outside the four walls of their classroom. Students felt a greater connection to their school community and to their city after attending 2School, building on their own identity formation and enhancing their sense of place.

Engagement Statistics:

- 600+ Students
- 26 classes
- 28 teachers
- 8 school board trustees
- 321 parent volunteers
- 27 CBE teaching staff
- 90+ school board, city and community experts
- 7 education assistants
- 5 administrative staff
- 10 student teachers
- 25 classes from the Calgary Board of Education
- 1 classes from the Calgary Catholic School Division

2School students understand we all have a responsibility to create the type of community we wish to live in. After attending 2School, many students were able to think of ways they could make a difference in their own community. Simons Valley Grade 6’s have been advocating for safer streets to encourage active transportation to and from school. Queen Elizabeth students have continued their weekly community explorations to connect curriculum and identify issues in their community that they might be able to help. One initiative was to fill the little free libraries in their community to provide access to literacy. Dr. Roberta Bondar Grade 1’s spent their year examining the gifts that Calgary provides us and have begun to look at how they might reciprocate the favour to Calgary in their community. Students reflected on the importance of being able to use their voice to create change in their community. Participating teachers also expressed an interest and confidence in guiding their students on field-study experiences. Many teachers built confidence in what learning in community and on Land can teach students and the interdisciplinary nature that occurs with these experiences. 2School demonstrates that students all over our city are learning about important issues and are taking steps to engage and make a difference.

We're proud of our accomplishments this year

2023-24 Program

Date	Big Idea/Inquiry Question	School	Grade
September 14 & 26, October 11 November 17, December 5	How are we connected to place? What is our responsibility to where we live?	Earnest Manning High School	10,11 & 12
September 18-21, October 10 October 2-6	How Can I Be An Agent of Change in My Community?	Mayland Heights School	5/6
October 12 & 16-19, October 23- 27, October 30- November 3	How are we adapting to change in our environment?	Dr. Martha Cohen School	6
November 6- 8 & 15, 16, November 20-23 & December 4 December 18-22	What is the identity of a city?	Richmond School	5/6
November 27- December 1, December 11-15	When I look at my city, where do I see nature?	Douglasdale School	1
January 29- February 2	How might we create positive change in our community?	St. Ambrose School	8
January 22-26, February 5-9	How might we use the Montessori Peace Flower to guide us in learning about our city?	Lake Bonavista School	3/4
February 26- March 1, March 4- 8	What is citizenship and how is it demonstrated?	Simons Valley School	6
March 11-15, March 18 & April 2-5	Who are public spaces made for? Who is excluded?	David Thompson School	9
April 8-12, April 22- 26, May 6-10	How do stories connect us? What do they teach us?	Queen Elizabeth School	2/3
April 29-May 3, May 13-16 & 21, May 27-31, June 3-7	What gifts does Calgary provide us with and how might we give back?	Dr. Roberta Bondar School	1



Dr. Martha Cohen Students
examine water levels in the
Bow River

The Beltline Communities of Connaught and Victoria Park

The 2School program would not have been a success without the region of the Beltline, which includes the communities of Connaught and Victoria Park as well as other businesses and people in Calgary's downtown and inner city neighbourhoods. Calgary is rich with businesses and organizations that are integral to the growth and vitality of our city. Through the lens of public education, community organizations work with schools to help explore their big idea/inquiry questions. These organizations, spaces and people provide rich and thoughtful learning experiences which challenge and push students to take their learning to a deeper level of understanding.

Thank you to our partners for devoting their time and expertise to work with our students:

- Bank & Barron
- Beltline Community Association
- Battistella Developments
- The Bow (building)
- Brookfield Place (building)
- Calgary Board of Education (CBE)
- Calgary Catholic School District (CCSD)
- Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC)
- Calgary Police Service: Crime Prevention Unit
- Calgary Public Library
 - Memorial Park branch
 - Central branch
- Calgary Chinese Community Association
- Calgary Chinese Cultural Center
- Cenovus Energy
- City Hall School
- City Hall Municipal Building
- The City of Calgary Planning, Development and Assessment Department
- The City of Calgary Public Art, Culture and Recreation Department
- Contemporary Calgary
- Devonian Gardens
- Dialog Design
- Eau claire Market
- Enmax
- Fairmont Palliser Hotel
- Grace Presbyterian Church
- Ground Cubed Landscape Architecture
- Good Life Fitness
- Good Neighbour
- Kasian Architecture
- Lougheed House
- Mark on 10th
- The Mustard Seed
- Newzones Gallery
- O2 Planning + Design
- Phil and Sebastian Coffee
- Safeway Ltd (Beltline Location)
- Southland Transportation
- Sustainable Calgary
- Telus Sky (building)

Your support has made a difference.

Your support has made a difference. 2School is fortunate to have the continued support of the CBE Board of Trustees, the CCSD Board of Trustees, CBE and CCSD superintendents, as well as many CBE employees who welcome students to their workplace.



discover



engage



partner |

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We are proud of the 2School program and our students. All photos are of students who attended 2School.