

Council of School Council questions and answers from Oct. 3, 2018

Please note: CBE administration has responded to the questions posed by parents through the Sli.do tool at the Oct. 3 COSC meeting. There are several questions still outstanding. In the interests of responding in a timely manner, the answers provided to date are posted in this document. The remaining questions and answers will be added to this document once available.

Playgrounds

Q: How can we get playground funding for schools that were built before January 2014?

A: If a community wants to upgrade or replace an existing playground, they can apply for a [Community Facility Enhancement Program](#) grant offered through Culture and Tourism. This funding is approved on a matching basis, meaning the applicant must contribute an amount equal to or exceeding the CFEP grant request. This funding may be cash, donated labour, equipment or materials. Parent societies and communities often plan other fundraising activities to raise the funds required.

If construction of your new school was announced after Jan. 1, 2014, Alberta Education will provide grant funding of up to \$250,000 per school to support the construction of a playground for [eligible projects](#) (to be updated with schools announced as part of Budget 2018).

Should a school community wish to build a playground that costs more than the \$250,000 provided, they will have the option of fundraising to supplement the project.

New schools that receive the Education playground grant will not be eligible for other provincial grants that support playground construction (including the Community Facility Enhancement Program grant).

PowerSchool

Q: What is the timeline for rollout of PowerSchool features? Right now most (attendance, fees, waivers, announcements, etc) are "disabled by school administrator".

A: Schools have the ability to limit the information that will display on their PowerSchool page for both students and parents. Please contact your school with any questions.

Q: With PowerSchool will we be able to pay school fees that are under \$10 as this has been an issue in the past.

A: No. The \$10 minimum for paying fees online remains.

Q: Is technology support available to parents for PowerSchool?

A: Please visit our [Technical Support Site](#) or contact your school for assistance.

Q: Where are the servers for PowerSchool based?

A: In the United States.

Q: It would be nice to have a myCBE mobile app, same as PowerSchool mobile app. Any plans for that?

A: Not at this time.

Q: This is a comment of recognition, not a question. As a parent user of PowerSchool and my CBE, I'd like to express how useful and friendly the new apps are.

A: Thank you!

Q: Why can't we pay fees or book parent teacher interviews through the PowerSchool app?

A: The PowerSchool Application is an "out of the box" product that does not reflect the unique applications and functionality that the CBE has created for parents. For this reason, CBE users are advised to access the [MyCBE/PowerSchool website](#) (via computers or smart devices) for all transactions.

Q: Can you provide more information on what the app can be used for?

A: The PowerSchool application generally only allows parents to view information on their child's classes, attendance, and depending on the grade level, assignments and grades. The app **does not** allow users to view bell schedules or to access CBE applications for things like registering for noon-supervision or paying fees. Again, parents are advised to access PowerSchool via the [MyCBE/PowerSchool website](#).

Q: Can we have an update on the implementation of PowerSchool?

A: Staff are working hard to assist parents with the sign-up and use of [MyCBE/PowerSchool](#) and to respond to questions as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, staff training continues. To date, about 55,000 new parent accounts have been created. For those parents/guardians who have not already done so, you will need to create a new account to do the following:

- View academic information (schedule, grades and attendance)
- View learning activities using Brightspace by D2L
- Register for transportation and noon supervision
- Pay fees (throughout the year) and request fee waivers; or
- Book school conferences

Mental health

A number of questions were submitted regarding mental health services for students. Some of these questions were similar, and have been grouped together below.

The CBE wants all students to be successful in school and we recognize that positive mental health plays a critical role in making that happen. Mental health is only one aspect of a student's overall wellbeing. As a school system we focus on the following four areas as part of a [Comprehensive School Health](#) approach:

- [Healthy eating](#)
- [Healthy relationships](#)
- [Physical activity](#)
- [Positive mental health](#)

The work of the CBE around mental health support is aligned with the work of Alberta Education. Alberta Education collaborated with school authorities, community partners and cross-ministry partners who shared their expertise in the development of a resource entitled [Working Together To Support Mental Health in Alberta Schools](#).

Supporting student mental health and well-being takes a village: students, families, Alberta Health Services, community supports and school staff all play a role - [Roles Supporting Student Mental Health](#).

Here are answers to some of your more specific questions.

Q: Anxiety & mental health issues are on the rise in youth significantly, I don't see the programs you mentioned implemented or applied in schools? Why? It was promising to hear all the mental health programs and initiatives you spoke...why is this not known or practiced in the schools?

A: Not all programs are offered in all schools, and some programs are just in the early stages. For example, the Stop Now and Plan Program (SNAP) has been piloted in some elementary settings. This work will move forward to include more elementary schools in the future.

The Early Learning Team has partnered with the Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre to pilot a program in 14 elementary schools to focus on the brain science and how it impacts learning and mental health

Teachers also work with occupational therapists to learn self regulation strategies to help our students be ready to learn

Q: Loved hearing the initiatives around mental health in middle school & high school. What programs does the CBE offer for k-6? Any prevention programs? Can you speak to program offered about mental health in elementary schools?

A: See answer above. In addition, Mental Health Literacy is offered to elementary school staff as well. The curriculum is taught to Grade 8 students but all staff can participate in the training so they are more aware and knowledgeable about mental health. You can check out "Go To Educator" at www.teachmentalhealth.org.

Q: How does the CBE mental health strategy link to community resources, AHS and foundations like Lionheart?

- A: We connect families with many community resources, including AHS, through our schools. Please see our [mental health page](#) on our corporate website for more information on the various roles played by teachers, families and community partners.
- Q: Does the CBE have a program to raise awareness and ensure support on youth mental health issues?
- A: See general information above.

Math

- Q: Can you please give an update on the funding of math coaches? If I remember correctly it only received 1 year of funding for the 3 year program.
- A: Deploying a team of mathematics learning coaches has been a key action item in our Math strategy. In the 2017-18 school year, 25 mathematics coaches worked with 42 schools at a cost of \$2 million. Our math coaches made a positive impact on student learning last year. They enhanced professional learning in schools, supported teachers in their classrooms and shared best practices for instruction and assessment. For 2018-19, 31 coaches are supporting 61 schools and there is a designated math leader in each school. The cost of the math coaches for this school year is \$3.5 million.
- Q: Can we get a quick update on the Math engagement process and the status of Discovery math in the CBE?
- A: The math engagement process was completed in the 2016-17 school year. The process included five face to face parent engagement session in various areas throughout Calgary as well as an online survey. The Math Strategy reflects data on CBE students' achievement and our provincial context, educational research as well as input we received from students, teachers, parents, community members, mathematicians and post-secondary educators. We rolled-out our Math Strategy in the 2017-18 school year and we are continuing to action that strategy. An [update](#) was posted on the CBE website in April 2018 outlining the actions that took place during the 2017-18 school year.
- The CBE follows the Alberta Programs of Study (curriculum). Teachers use their professional judgement to select resources and methods of teaching that will best meet the needs of their students in learning the outcomes required by Alberta Education.

Snow day

- Q: Why not call a snow day for yesterday (Oct. 2)? I love the schools are open for a safe place for kids to go but why not call a snow day and have a few staff come in?

A: In severe weather conditions, people often ask why we don't close our schools. We know students come to school regardless of the weather, for numerous reasons. Many families do not have the option of making alternative arrangements for their children, particularly on short notice. Some families simply do not have the ability to receive messages about school closures. Therefore, it is exceedingly rare for our schools to close. The only exception in recent memory was during the flood of 2013, when the CBE closed its schools after following the direction of the Calgary Emergency Management Agency.

Because students do arrive, we need to ensure that school are open to provide welcoming, caring, safe and warm learning environments.

Q: How are resources for snow removal allocated?

A: CBE Grounds & Landscape staff provide the following levels of snow removal service.
Priority 1

- Snow clearing and sanding of City of Calgary perimeter sidewalks adjacent to school property
- Snow clearing and sanding for handicap bus drop-off areas and other related handicap zones
- Please allow up to 48 hours for Priority 1 cleaning following a snow event.

Priority 2

- Snow clearing of asphalt playground compounds at elementary schools.
- School parking lots are not plowed on regular basis.

Early dismissal Fridays/bell times

Q: Other school systems have eliminated ½ day Fridays in favour of combining into full day as a way to reduce overall number of busing days spent.

A: In May 2017, the CBE announced bell time changes for the 2017-18 school year to help maximize transportation services. The cost of a yellow school bus is based on a block of time – 90 minutes. The more routes a single bus can run during this block of time, the more cost-effective the transportation service is. Aligning bus times allows a bus to run two, and in some cases three, routes during each block of time.

Q: Why are we still charged for lunchroom supervision with half day Friday's when there is no lunchroom supervision?

A: Noon supervision fees are charged based on the number of days a child stays at school and receives supervision. Some students may still receive noon supervision on an early dismissal day if there is an extended time for a nutrition break or a full lunch break on Fridays.

4-day program	\$265
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4/5-day program	\$285
5-day program	\$295

- Q: What prompted the change to Friday afternoons off?
- A: Prior to this change, more than 85 per cent of schools already had an early dismissal. With the bell time changed that number has grown to nearly 95 per cent.
- Q: How is the CBE saving money with the reduced hours on Friday?
- A: This allows us to partner school bus routes, reducing the overall cost of transportation. It's important to note that the overall number of instructional hours in the school year has not changed, as this time is made up throughout the remainder of the week.
- Q: We still have concern with bell times between schools on the same land, and the late time our elementary school kids get out at the end of the day
- A: There needs to be sufficient time between bell times for the bus to travel between a previous run's end point, and a subsequent run's starting point as well as to complete the subsequent run. Double or triple routing reduces the overall cost of busing because fewer buses are required to transport students to nearby locations. For example, instead of four yellow school buses transporting students to an elementary and junior high in close proximity – two buses can be used to transport the elementary students to school and then return to pick up the junior high students.

Curriculum/assessment

- Q: Does the curriculum include Montessori schools?
- A: All CBE schools deliver the Alberta Programs of Study (curriculum). Students in the Montessori program achieve success through engagement in Alberta Programs of Study using the Montessori philosophy and methodology.
- Q: Has the CBE considered how to tie curriculum to Olympic plebiscite or any thoughts about doing parallel voting in the schools to increase student engagement?
- A: Individual schools may find learning opportunities that connect current local events such as the Olympic plebiscite with outcomes from the Programs of Study.
- Q: Why are PATs done at the end of the school year as opposed to earlier in the year, with chance to correct curriculum outcomes? Now they feel like an autopsy rep.
- A: The purpose of the Provincial Assessment Program is to determine whether students are learning what they are expected to learn, to report to Albertans how well students have achieved provincial standards at given points in their schooling and to assist schools, authorities and the province in monitoring student learning. The tests are given at the end of the school year because they measure what students have learned over the course of that year based on the outcomes of the Programs of Study. Results are used by schools to understand where they can focus and improve. Teachers assess

students all year long through classroom tasks and activities, and can make adjustments to ensure that students are learning the curriculum.

Q: Where are we at with the rolling out of the new curriculum - will it be before our provincial election?

A: No. Please visit the [new Alberta Learning website](#) to see the draft K - 4 Curriculum that was released on Oct. 10. The Minister of Education has said that he expects to sign off on the new curriculum by the end of December, but it would not be rolled out to schools until 2020.

Q: Is our school system moving towards individualized learning or accommodating strategies?

A: The CBE has focused on personalized learning for students for many years. Our mission states: Each student, in keeping with their individual abilities and gifts, will complete high school with a foundation of learning necessary to thrive in life, work and continued learning. You can see our strategies and actions related to personalized learning in our [Three-Year Education Plan](#).

Q: Are we looking at a better report card system for measuring our students vs the current 1234, as it is challenging to know where kids are vs the norm.

A: The CBE is not currently reviewing the K - 9 report card. Please visit our [Assessment and Reporting webpage](#) for answers to frequently asked questions.

Communication with parents/technology

Q: Will the CBE be digitizing forms i.e. field trip forms, to reduce paper and costs.

A: We have transitioned some of our paper processes, like transportation registration, to be available online to reduce environmental impact, increase convenience for parents, and reduce costs. There are other similar opportunities, and we assess them based on the need to ensure that we can continue to protect sensitive student and parent information, and also to act in light of the financial cost to build (or buy) and integrate a new system as well as the cost in terms of the technical or business expertise that would be required to be successful.

Q: Are there any policies or plans for a tool for teachers to communicate to parents? With every different teacher it seems like there is a different system.

A: We use SchoolMessenger for group communication with parents, and teachers have access to this tool for email or SMS messages to parents. For individual communication, teachers generally use email or call parents as is appropriate.

Q: Why did the CBE move to teacher pages that are public websites rather than keeping them as private to the class? (Accessible from the school website)

A: Different types of information require different communication channels, and we try to treat each teacher's communication appropriately. When a teacher is creating content that is appropriate to be visible to the public, they have the option of creating it directly in their school website, or using Blogger (part of the G Suite) and either embedding that

blog in their website or linking out to it. If the content includes any information that isn't appropriate for the public website (like images of students or their work that should be private), then a secure tool like Brightspace is the best place. We value convenience, but never at the cost of student safety or privacy.

Q: Is the CBE tech team working on enabling the calendars on school websites to be synced with iCal or other online calendars as they were before?

A: Yes, we are working with the vendor for our school website software to allow parents to subscribe to calendars, and even to filter that subscription so that they can choose to see only the events related to their child's grade or program.

Q: Many of the councils are fundraising for technology but they are not supported or updated by the CBE. Why?

A: Schools are provided with funding each year from which they make decisions about what is most important for them to purchase. In addition to general funding, each school is allocated funding specifically to refresh computers and classroom displays. The amount of funding can vary year to year. This year, the CBE has set aside enough funding to refresh approximately 400 classroom displays and 10,000 student computers.

Schools may continue to find other means, such as fundraising through school councils, to purchase additional or upgraded technology.

All technology purchased by schools from the approved list of devices, regardless of the source of funding, is fully supported. At times schools choose to purchase technology outside of the approved products and those products do not receive support. Careful consideration of these support consequences should be made by schools and councils when making technology purchasing decisions.

New Chief Superintendent

Q: Can you please comment on the parent engagement process in recruiting and hiring the Superintendent and what the delays have been.

A: Trustees engaged parents at the Mar. 1, 2018 COSC meeting regarding creation of a potential survey trustees could circulate to parents as part of the recruitment process for a new chief. Parents did not feel that the survey would be beneficial and that trustees were already familiar with public expectations, having just recently gone through an election. Parents expressed a desire for the trustees to do their work in setting expectations for the chief and to move the process along. Therefore, no further engagement was conducted.

In terms of the delay, trustees started this work in early 2018 by hiring a recruitment firm to begin the search. In March, the government announced it was working on a new compensation framework for superintendents and that no new superintendent contracts could be approved by the Minister of Education until it was complete. The new Superintendent of Schools Regulation came was released on June 1, 2018. The terms and conditions set out in the regulation had an impact on the recruitment timeline.

Trustees also wanted to ensure that we take the time necessary to hire the right person for this critical role. The work is progressing, and the goal is to have the new chief in place by the end of 2018.

French Immersion decision

Q: Will the decision on French immersion in the NW be finalized in Nov or will the open house planned for Nov be part of the engagement process?

A: The proposed plan will be posted on the CBE website by the end of the day on Nov. 6. An open house will be held on Nov. 13 at Sir Winston Churchill High School from 5:30 – 8:30 for parents to share their feedback on the proposed plan. The decision will be made in December, and the plan will be implemented as soon as the 2019-20 school year.

School council questions

Q: Is there a resource or work shop available to help schools recruit new people?

A: ASCA (Alberta School Councils Association) does provide a number of tools for school councils. COSC meetings also provide an opportunity for school council representatives to share knowledge and experiences with each other in recruiting new people. We will try to highlight some of these ideas in the Key Communique this year.

Q: What benefit would be of joining Alberta School Councils Association have for the councils?

A: Please visit these links for more information:

<https://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/about/membership/benefits-of-membership>

Brochure

<https://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/public/download/documents/40771>

Q: What exactly is the ASCA and what does it mean to a school council to join?

A: ASCA is the Alberta School Councils Association. It is a province - wide organization of school councils that:

- Brings the parental perspective on education issues to government and others;
- Provides resources and support to enhance school council effectiveness;
- Promotes the involvement and engagement of parents in education, primarily through school councils;
- Works with other education organizations and government to promote excellence in public education;
- Provides well - researched and timely information on education to school councils.

Q: What are the actual limits/types of insurance required by CBE with regards to parent associations/societies? Ex CGL \$1/2/5 million, etc.

A: Here are a number of resources that outline the insurance requirements:

School Council Resource Guide (ASCA) -

<https://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/public/download/documents/40732>

From ASCA: <https://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/public/download/documents/40868>

Please refer to the CBE School Council Handbook – page 19

<https://www.cbe.ab.ca/FormsManuals/School-Council-Handbook.pdf>

Crosswalks

Q: Does anyone have any guidance as to how to address the city about making a crosswalk?

A: Here is some information from the City of Calgary regarding making a crosswalk request.

The City of Calgary uses a warrant system to determine if a crosswalk location should be painted and/or have crosswalk signs installed. Factors considered include:

- pedestrian volume and age range
- traffic volume and road classification
- speed limit
- road geometry
- mid-block crossing locations
- amenities in the area, such as schools.

[eService - Request a new crosswalk location](#)

Q: Is CBE working to renegotiate the Education Building lease arrangement?

A: The CBE actively explores all opportunities to reduce costs not directly linked to teaching and learning. That work includes an examination of the Education Building lease as well as all other significant contractual agreements. Information on the Education Centre lease can be found in the [2018-2022 budget report](#).

ILETS exam

Q: Compulsory ILETS Exam for High School students who were born and raised in Canada is felt by those students as discriminatory. Yard stick should change.

A: We are not aware of any compulsory IELTS exams in our high schools.

Alberta Education transportation funding and walk zones

Q: Any updates from Alberta ed re transportation funding& walk zones? Specifically around middle schools or students aged 10-14 & public transit expectations?

A: You can check the [Alberta Ed website](#) for up-to-date information.

Cannabis

Q: What would be the process around using cannabis as medical treatment for staff/students?

A: For staff:

If an employee is required to use a prescribed medication at work, including medical marijuana, Human Resources will work with the employee and their supervisor. Together they will ensure that fitness to work is maintained and the medical condition is accommodated in accordance with Human Rights Act obligations.

For students:

If a student is required to use a prescribed medication including medical marijuana during school hours, the parents, student and school must follow the steps outlined in [AR 6002, Student Health Services](#).

Legacy Award

Q: Who is on the selection committee for the Legacy Award?

A: The Board of Trustees is the selection committee for the Legacy Award.

ELL resources

Q: What are the resources for ELL, especially in kindergarten?

A: Nearly one in four CBE students is an English Language Learner. In 2016-17, the CBE spent \$5.2 million on ELL supports beyond what we received in provincial ELL funding. We provide seven years of support for our ELL students, although only five years of funding is provided by the provincial government. Our formal ELL program begins in Grade 1. For more detailed information, please see our [ELL web page](#).

Facility questions

Q: How do you determine the size of a high school? Joane Cardinal Schubert has just opened and is already over capacity?

A: New schools are designed to have space for all designated students when the schools open. In the event that schools reach capacity after opening, the CBE will develop an accommodation plan.

Q: Pick up & Drops offs System and Parking Facilities at Nelson Mandela High School is Very Far from Satisfactory. The issue should be reviewed.

A: The CBE works with the City of Calgary when identifying new school sites. New school sites are located with “collector-sized” streets on two sides of the school site to ensure there is enough space for bus and parent drop-off/pick-up zones and for through traffic.

Traffic is a concern at every school. Concerns are addressed by the school principal working with the parents, community and students. Specific traffic concerns can be reported to the school principal and/or the City of Calgary at 311.

