

Explore | Connecting with Partners

school: an urban experience at the education center
2022-23 Annual Report



learn



explore



Calgary Board
of Education



Chief Usih reads to the

30 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 connection 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 30 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 2022-2023, 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 2022-2023 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 rich 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.

Learning

Students are immersed in education and come to understand how it 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 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.



Trees Sculpture on Stephen Ave mall



How do you share a story of our city through a puppet



Where do we see evidence of animals in our city



Students work in partnership with the Calgary Zoo to explore wildlife in our city

This report aims to offer insight into how a week at 2School was embedded into a year of learning in the 2022– 2023 school year, highlighting our many partners.

Collaboration

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 CBE staff and community partners.

What is Nature Telling Us?

Grade 3 students from St. Josephine Bahkita explored the question, What is nature telling us? They examined this question through the lens of how they might look at cities as sites of wild spaces and how humans, plants and animals can interact in a positive way with each other.

One concept they explored was wildlife in our city. Working in partnership with the Calgary Zoo, Students examined biofacts of the Black-billed Magpie, the Eastern Grey Squirrel and Coyote to see how behavioral and physical adaptations have enabled them to survive and thrive in an urban environment. Students then got to observe the animals in the “wild” of the city and gain an appreciation and respect for the resilience that these wildlife offer to the biodiversity of our community.

Students also explored the role that architecture plays in combining our built environment with nature. Grade 3's examined the difference between materials that were used in Calgary's past and present architectural styles to see how our buildings could be seen as pieces of nature which surround us. Students walked around our city to recognize and identify our iconic sandstone buildings as the sedimentary rock formations they originally were, coming from the Paskapoo Slopes, near what is now Win Sport. Students also recognized dolomitic limestone, a common sedimentary rock from Manitoba called Tyndall Stone in many of the buildings along Stephen Avenue as well as at the CBE Education center.

One special characteristic of this stone is that hidden in it are fossils! Students also examined many of our modern buildings and found that they use glass, which is a combination of limestone, calcium bicarbonate and sand. Students compared the downtown towers to mountains in the sky, both emerging from natural materials and yet very different in how we view them.

Students reflected that even though our cities are filled with people they are also places where nature exists and thrives. The students were very keen to take their learnings and compare their own community to that of downtown. Some of the questions they left with to investigate were, where do we see signs of wildlife in our community? What areas of our community are good for plants, animals and people and which could be made better? Where in our community can we find native plants? How can we foster and celebrate nature in Evanston?

What Stories Connect our Community?

Grade 3 students from New Brighton asked the question, What stories connect our community? One of the main stories that was examined during the week was through asking the question, whose story is being told? Students observed and used a quick sketch journal technique to see some of the Beltline Urban Murals Project (BUMP) and connect the art with story in our community. Students learned about Violet Davis, Canada's first Black female lawyer who graduated from the University of Alberta as the only woman in her class. They also learned about Cree and Metis myths from artist Sarah Houle-Lowry, surrounding the idea that we share this planet with other beings that exist among us in different realms. These beings are here to remind us to live well with Mother Earth. Students also explored the relationship between our environment and the art in our city. Many students reflected that our landscape and animals are part of our identity and that we need to remember this story of connection in order to do things that are good for our environment and community.

Students had the opportunity to visit New Zones gallery which had an exhibition on by artist, Colleen Philippi titled "Exercises in Ridiculousness." Colleen's work uses painting palettes, letters, scraps of images and textiles as key visual elements. Students used these works of art as inspiration to share a story about our downtown community and turn the story into a puppet. Students were then going to have their puppet share their story of who they were and compare it to their school community of New Brighton and other cities around the world to see how they may be similar or different to our own stories.



New Brighton Student Journal of BUMP murals



New Brighton Students visit New Zones Art Gallery

What Does It Mean To Be A Citizen?



Manmeet Singh Bhullar Students, what is the value of trees in our communities

Grade 6 students from Manmeet Singh Bhullar School asked the question, What does it mean to be a citizen? Using the four pillars of democracy: Representation, Justice, Equity and Freedoms, they examined infrastructure, citizen voice in decision making, and what it means to be a member of Treaty 7 in the context of these pillars.

Public infrastructure was examined to explore the relationship between trees, parks and communities. A study completed in 2021 examining the relationship between tree canopy and income found that lower income communities, which tend to also have more new Canadians, have less trees. This is important for a number of key reasons which include physical, social, environmental and economic benefits. Students noticed the lack of tree representation in their community compared with the downtown and concluded that it was undemocratic to have such inequity when it came to tree canopy given how important it is to our environment and people. Students were keen on looking at raising awareness through citizen voices in their community around how to plant more trees and bring equity to their neighbourhoods.



Manmeet Singh Bhullar students reflect on being part of Treaty 7

Grade 6 students also explored what being a member of Treaty 7 meant to them. By examining the original intention of Treaty 7 students began to appreciate what it might look and feel like to share this community we call Calgary/ Mohkinstsis with all treaty people. Students responded in their journals to the question, what are two ways I might honour and share Treaty 7 with friends and family? Some responses were:

“To learn and share the names of where I was born and where I live”

“Connect with my community, the people and the land and learn how it helps us live each day”

“Ask questions and read about our Treaty 7 indigenous groups that have lived here and been stewarding the land for thousands of years”

“Go to events and celebrations that honour the land and the people”

“Give thanks to nature and do actions that care for it”

Where Do We Gather?

Grade 1 students from Riverside school had been studying their community and how it connects people to each other. They were curious about the question, where do we gather? To see which types of spaces in a community were the most successful at promoting collaboration and building community.

They met with Chief Superintendent Usih and Trustee Vukadinovich of the Calgary Board of Education to find out how schools were important as gathering spaces to a community. Students learned that their school is one of 250 in the school board and that 1 in 6 students in the province of Alberta attends a Calgary Board of Education school.

Grade 1's had the opportunity to examine public gathering spaces and connectors in our city. They learned about the history of the Peace Bridge. How there was initial conflict with the location, choice of architect, materials and cost to being a celebrated landmark in our city. Students also moved through Calgary's plus 15 network, which connects many of our downtown office buildings and enables people to move fifteen feet above street level. They had the opportunity to eat lunch in Brookfield Place's plus 15 and observe how many people gathered with friends during the lunch rush. Grade 1's then took the C-Train connecting them through the downtown allowing them to experience public transit and the different routes that it connects our city.

Students noticed that many people were gathered in spaces that were calm, filled with nature or beautiful. They commented on the Beltline murals as well as parks being spaces that people gathered more often and made connections to the spaces in their own community that included these components. Students left messages of gratitude for the community in a park as their thank you for being able to be a part of the downtown community for their field study.



Riverside School, why do we gather in colourful spaces



Riverside students experience the plus 15 at lunch hour

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 130,000 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-meaning.

Engagement Statistics:

- 600+ Students
- 25 classes
- 25 teachers
- 9 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
- 24 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. Riverside students have begun the planning their own "Great Gathering Spaces of Calgary" guide including a map of the downtown community so that others can discover and visit spaces they believe are successful and must sees in our city. New Brighton school looked deeply into the pollinator population in Calgary and recognized the need to introduce and foster bee habitats. They received Mason Bee cocoons and when the bees emerged they released them into their community hoping they would add vital pollinators to help support the native plants in the area. Deer Run grade 5/6's worked alongside the City of Calgary identifying needs for park space in the school community. Students provided engagement and feedback for the park plan for the next 20 years. Students reflected on the importance of being able to use their voice to create change in their community. 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

2022-23 Program

Date	Big Idea/Inquiry Question	School	Grade
September 15, 16 & 19-21, 2022 September 14 & 26-29, 2022	What does it mean to be a good citizen? How can we belong well with each other?	Manmeet Singh Bullhar	6 5
October 3-6 & 14, 2022	How might we live well with change?	William Pratt	7
October 13 & 17-20, 2022 October 24-27 & Nov 7, 2022	How do stories connect community?	New Brighton	3
October 31- November 4, 2022	What needs to be considered when designing an urban space?	Earl Grey	5/6
November 14-18, 2022 November 28-December 2, 2022	What is the role of story in my life? Which stories get told and which ones get left out?	Deer Run	5/6
December 5-9, 2022 December 12-15, 2022	How do we include everyone in a community through our actions?	Capitol Hill	1
January 16-20, 2023 January 23-27, 2023	How does change affect our communities today and in the future?	Capitol Hill	2
February 6-10, 2023 February 13 & 21-24, 2023	How do we make our communities welcoming and inclusive?	Andrew Sibbald	5
February 27-March 3, 2023 March 6-9 & 13, 2023 March 20-24, 2023 April 3-6 & 18, 2023	How is my story reflected in the community?	Buffalo Rubbing Stone	4
April 11-14 & 19, 2023	How are we connected to nature in an urban environment?	Sir John A Macdonald	7
April 24-28, 2023 April 20 & May 1-4, 2023	Where do we gather?	Riverside	1
May 8-12, 2023	What does our city look like in Spring	West Dover	2/3
May 15 -18 & 30, 2023 May 23-26 & 31, 2023	How do we connect and reconnect as people?	Louis Riel	4



Peace Bridge in Sunnyside



discover



engage



partner |



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