

Education Plan



2025 - 2028

May 30, 2025

Excellence in Education

Preamble

Education Plans are written for a three year time span. As a Board, we feel it is important to review our practices and our student learning outcomes on an annual basis. Preparing an annual report provides the faculty and the principal with consistent reflection opportunities and practices, making the necessary changes, to ensure that all of our students are learning and striving to achieve more. Our 2025 - 2028 Education Plan includes the 2025 - 2026 Funding Manual for School regulations.

Mission

First Steps Elementary Academy provides the environment and setting for our students to excel in their education and personal development.

Vision

First Steps Elementary Academy inspires integrity, honesty, respect, culture and achievement in our leaders of tomorrow.

Values

Integrity - We will be honest, sincere and transparent in all communications. We will uphold strong moral principles.

Excellence - We strive for excellence each and every day. We show up everyday prepared and ready. Our decisions support our excellence. Our planning supports our excellence. Our actions and words exemplify our excellence.

Team Work - We will communicate with honesty and respect. We collaborate as a committed team taking responsibility in setting clear and defined directions and plans for student achievement, school goals and mission.

Systems - Systems ensure that our school and classrooms operate smoothly and efficiently. Systems are reviewed and modified to address concerns and efficacy of operations.

Education/Growth - We are role models for our students. We value and prioritize continuous learning. We empower not only ourselves but also our students to reach their greatest potential through goal setting, achievement and celebration.

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School History

In 2013, First Steps and Beyond began offering Kinders-Plus under our license with Children and Family Services. In 2016, in a building that our children affectionally call their "green school" we added Grades 1 - 3. At this time we operated as a Registered Private School. The following year, due to the demand for our curriculum and quality of instruction, we added Grades 4, 5, and 6. We changed our name in 2023 to First Steps Elementary Academy as we earned the designation of an Independent School. Our school now includes Grades 7 and 8.

School Profile and Programs

We are a small independent school with enrollment of 55 students. All children are welcome to attend our school. We do not require references or administer entrance exams. All we ask is that families value education, and wish for their children, the highest quality of education available to them. No other school offers our small class sizes which is very important to us. Keeping our classes small means that every student, every day will receive personalized instructional time with the teacher. It is our goal that every student and child perform and learn to meet their potential. We do not support mediocre learning. Our school is culturally diverse welcoming families from the Ukraine, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Asia and Africa. Our classroom teachers teach all subject areas. As often as possible, we utilize our teacher's specialties having them teach that particular curriculum subject. Our students are also taken off site for physical education activities. We place a high value on the Arts. We attend theatre productions, symphony concerts, produce our own Christmas production, visit art galleries and study the visual arts.

Challenges and Opportunities

The pressures of the economy and rising costs of maintaining a building present a challenge for our school. Our numbers are holding steady. But with the increase in living expenses some families are being forced to make a choice. We do offer a Reduced Tuition Program at the school for those who qualify. Our budget is strict to avoid eliminating any component of the programming. We are meeting this goal. Our PAC has now formed the FSEA Foundation. The foundation is a non-profit society with registered charity status. The foundation will work alongside of us creating opportunities for financial donations and assist us in building and promoting our school. Our first goal for the 2025 school year is the purchase of a school bus.

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Stakeholder Engagement

We engage our stakeholders through:

- *PAC generated parent surveys*

In January/February our PAC drafts a parent survey. Parents are asked for their input on items as well as rating our performance in key areas.

- *Student Surveys*

Each year, generally in March, our students from Kinders-Plus to Grade 8 complete a survey for us. Questions are based on their feelings of being safe, respected and their learning. Their survey also lets them share what they like about our school, what they don't like and what would they like to see happen in our school.

- *Communication with Parents*

At the end of each month, classroom calendars and a school newsletter are sent to each family via email. Teachers also send out a weekly synopsis of what took place that week in school. The calendars and newsletter are also posted in each entrance. We hold Parent/Teacher Conferences three times per year. Just prior to the conference, the parents receive their child's Progress Report. These conferences provide an opportunity to discuss the child's strengths, where additional attention needs to be put and any other concerns that the parent or teacher may have.

- *Faculty Engagement*

Each January our faculty completes a SWOT. This evaluation tool collects individual perspectives on our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The data is used to change our policies and procedures, adjust our school culture, and initiate strategies to improve our student learning outcomes.

- *The Board*

Our board acts in a strategic manner. They set out the goals for the upcoming school year which are then incorporated into the school's operational plans. The operational plans are carried out by the principal and faculty members.

- Parents and students also complete the Alberta Education Reassurance Survey deemed by Alberta Education.

Accountability Statement

The Education Plan for First Steps Elementary Academy commencing May 30, 2025 was prepared under the direction of the operator and/or governing body in accordance with the responsibilities under the Private School Regulation and the Ministerial Grants Regulation. This plan was developed in the context of the provincial government's business and fiscal plans. The operator and/or governing body 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 operator and/or governing body approved the 2025/2028 Education Plan on Thursday, May 15, 2025.

Cindy Bower-Benusic (original signed)

Board Chairperson

2025 - 2028 Education Plan
First Steps Elementary Academy

SCHOOL PRIORITY #1

School Priority

To further develop the inclusion of all students/grades in extra curricular activities both on and off site.

Assurance
Framework
Domain

Student Growth & Achievement

Outcomes

Students will have further opportunity and learning experiences that promote social and emotional growth, self confidence, skill sets, perseverance, and strong work ethics. An inclusive environment will allow for peer support along with promoting mental and physical health.

Context

We have implemented this goal based upon parental feedback collected on the survey, as well as feedback on our Student Survey. Further extra curricular activities, both in and away from the school to include all grades and ages, was rated as one of the top improvements on both surveys.

Strategies

Faculty will:

- At our planning meeting in late June, set activities for the upcoming school year.
- Facilities will be booked
- Teachers will have the schedule in hand to incorporate into their monthly and long range plans.

Measures

Outcomes will be measured by:

- Teacher planning and observation during activities.
- Two extra curricular activities planned per semester: Sept-Dec, Jan-March, April-June

Implementation
Plan

For the 2025-2026 school year we will:

- Continue to expand our extra curricular activities as well as draft a consent form to be used by all faculty for ease of wording and consistency. Activities may include, swimming, Taekondo, rental of Dawe gym, skating, rock wall climbing, canoeing, golf, track/field, yoga and after school clubs
- The cost of these excursions have been included in our Operational Budget for 2025-2026. Profits from fundraisers will be used to partially offset the expense.

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SCHOOL PRIORITY #2

School Priority

Our Mission Statement states we provide the environment and setting for our children to excel in their education and personal development. We strive for excellence in education. We want to see continuous increases in student performance. It is important for us to learn each child's strengths, and challenges. We want our children/students to know that we hear and see each of them.

Assurance
Framework
Domain

Student Growth and Achievement

Outcomes

We are very pleased with our students' Early Learning Assessments results in September and January. However, we wish to see further student engagement in writing, and math. It is important that we empower our students in their understanding of the significance and relevancy of today's learning and its impact on future decision making and life choices.

Context

To fulfill our Mission Statement, we invest in our students and children. To see them succeed both personally and academically is vital. We are working with the leaders of tomorrow. Fostering respect, tolerance, honesty, integrity, accountability and responsibility are character traits necessary for our future leaders.

Strategies

Our Leaders of Tomorrow provides our senior students opportunities to lead within our school.

1. POD Days - multi graded pods in which the leader carries out the planned activity - staff supervised
2. Involvement/planning volunteering in various charities and organizations within our community
3. Academic strategies - technology, IPPs, implement the use of a formal reading program, small group pull outs, presentations
4. Learning opportunities which expand student awareness of future options and the relevance of today's classroom studies

Measures

1. Continuous classroom assessments and observations
2. Use of student portfolios
3. Use of standardized testing - Early Learning Assessments, Pearson Reading Level Indicator, PATs
4. Involvement in POD days, displaying leadership qualities, seeing an increase in senior student led activities
5. Student feedback pertaining to career options, career opportunities and programming

Implementation
Plan

For 2025 - 2026 we will:

- implement a formal reading program - UFLI
- staff collaboration will increase
- monthly collaborative time for reflective practice on the use of alternative teaching/learning strategies
- placing our senior students in leadership roles throughout the year

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SCHOOL PRIORITY #3

School Priority

We state in our Mission Statement, that personal growth and development is just as important as academics. We wish our students to develop and practice empathy, make connections with their classmates and others, develop citizenship and leadership skills, observe etiquette and protocols, all becoming productive and contributing members of society. Instruction and learning experiences pertaining to FNMI will be a component of student learning.

Assurance Framework Domain

Local and Societal Context

Outcomes

Students will conduct themselves appropriately demonstrating respect for themselves and others, valuing culture, observing and following expectations, and developing life skills.

Context

Our school's atmosphere is warm and welcoming, offering a cozy and friendly place to be. Our students are expected to act with integrity, be respectful, and to value culture and achievement. By observing these attributes in daily behavior and attitude, we hope to foster a student body who is compassionate, considerate and accepting of others.

Strategies

- Visitations to independent living facilities
- volunteering
- Christmas concerts/sing songs out in the community
- House system - PODS
- Daily Announcer - shares school news, birthdays, announcements
- inviting elders into our school to share history, art, culture

Measures

- teacher/principal observation
- Alberta Education Assurance Measure Survey pertaining to Safe, Caring and Welcoming Environment
- student involvement and willingness to participate/interaction
- weekly parent emails

Implementation Plan

- ongoing - continuing to build relationships with community organizations beginning the 2025 - 2026 school year. At our planning meeting in June, we will compile an interest list to contact and develop plans for the year.
- Two outings per term: October - December February - April
- Make arrangements for transportation - cost to be covered by fundraiser profits and revenue

A link to the 2025 Budget Report can be found here: <https://www.firststepselementaryacademy.ca/about-us>

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