

# Education Plan



**2026 - 2029**

May 25, 2026

## Preamble

Education Plans are designed to cover a three-year period. As a Board, we believe it is crucial to evaluate our practices and student learning outcomes each year. Creating an annual report offers faculty and the principal regular opportunities for reflection and adjustments, ensuring that all students are learning and aiming for higher achievements. Our Education Plan for 2026-2029 incorporates the 2026-2027 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.

## School History

In 2023, First Steps Elementary Academy proudly attained the status of an Independent Accredited School with Alberta Education. Before this milestone, we functioned as a Registered Private School. Often referred to as the “green school,” we provide our Kinders-Plus to Grade 8 students with enriched instruction and valuable learning experiences. Our school emphasizes respect, tolerance, culture, academic and personal achievement, as well as accountability and responsibility.

## School Profile and Programs

### *Welcome to Our Small Independent School*

We are a small, independent school with an enrollment of 40 students, where all children are welcome. We do not require references or entrance exams; we simply ask that families prioritize education and seek the highest quality of learning for their children.

### *Unique Class Size*

Our small class size sets us apart in the educational landscape. With a maximum of 12 students per classroom, every student receives personalized instructional time with the teacher each day. Our goal is to ensure that every child reaches their full potential, as we do not support mediocre learning.

### *Embracing Diversity*

Our school is culturally diverse, welcoming families from Europe, Asia, and Africa. Classroom teachers cover all subject areas, and we often leverage teachers’ specialties through team teaching and collaboration. This approach enhances student learning, increases engagement, and provides evidence-based data for our instructional decisions.

### *Enriching Experiences*

Students also participate in off-site physical education activities. We place a high value on The Arts, and STEAM education. Our students attend theater productions, symphony concerts, produce their own Christmas show, visit art galleries and museums and study the visual arts.

## **G.A.T. Hub and Future Programs**

The G.A.T. Hub pilot program was very well received by students and parents, who expressed interest in having it run year-round. For the 2026-2027 school year, we will implement it as a pull-out program, one day per week. Additionally, as the enrollment of immigrant families increases, we will introduce an EAL program in the fall to meet the children's learning needs.

We are excited to announce that French will also be included in the timetable for the upcoming school year, as we love to open doors to our students and children.

## **Challenges and Opportunities**

### **Navigating Economic Pressures in Our School**

The economic challenges and escalating costs of maintaining our building pose significant hurdles for our school. While our enrollment numbers remain stable, some families are facing tough decisions due to rising living expenses. To assist those in need, we offer a Reduced Tuition Program for qualifying families.

Our budget is carefully managed to ensure that no aspect of our programming is compromised, and we are successfully achieving this goal. Additionally, our Parent Advisory Council (PAC) has established the FSEA Foundation, a non-profit organization with registered charity status. This foundation will collaborate with us to create opportunities for financial donations and support our efforts in promoting and enhancing our school.

To further our outreach, we have engaged a marketing company to develop a new customized website and improve our SEO. Currently, we face limitations in our location for outdoor physical activities. While we utilize a green space behind the school for such purposes, our ideal scenario would be to have a location that meets all our needs.

## Stakeholder Engagement

Engaging Our Stakeholders Through:

### *PAC-Generated Parent Surveys*

In February and March, our Parent Advisory Council (PAC) creates a survey for parents. This survey seeks their feedback on various topics and includes a performance rating in key areas.

### *Student Surveys*

Annually, typically in March, students from Kinders-Plus to Grade 8 participate in a survey. The questions focus on their feelings regarding safety, respect, and learning. Additionally, the survey allows them to express what they appreciate about our school, what they find less favorable, and their suggestions for improvements.

### *Communication with Parents*

At the conclusion of each month, families receive classroom calendars along with a school newsletter. In addition, teachers distribute a weekly summary of the week's activities at school. The calendars and newsletters are also displayed at each entrance. We conduct Parent/Teacher Conferences three times a year. Before each conference, parents are provided with their child's Progress Report. These meetings offer a valuable opportunity to discuss the child's strengths, areas needing further attention, and any other concerns that may arise for either the parent or teacher.

### *Faculty Engagement*

Each January, our faculty participates in a SWOT analysis. This evaluation tool gathers individual insights on our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The collected data informs changes to our policies and procedures, helps shape our school culture, and initiates strategies aimed at enhancing student learning outcomes.

### *The Board*

Our board operates strategically, setting goals for the upcoming school year that are integrated into the school's operational plans. These plans are executed by the principal and faculty members.

## Accountability Statement

The Education Plan for First Steps Elementary Academy commencing May 25, 2026 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 2026/2029 Education Plan on Thursday, May 25, 2026.

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Board Chairperson  
Cindy Bower-Benusic (original signed)

2026 - 2029 Education Plan  
First Steps Elementary Academy

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SCHOOL PRIORITY #1

School Priority

We are witnessing an increase in enrollment among immigrant families. We are committed to offering additional instruction and support for our diverse learners, focusing on reading intervention and learning assistance. Our students who excel in their academics will also receive further opportunities to enhance their learning and personal achievements.

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Assurance  
Framework  
Domain

Student Growth/Achievement

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Outcomes

Students achieving grade level or above with their English Language Skills.  
Fostering the child's self confidence to interact with classmates.  
Developing the student's foundational skills needed for independent learning and socialization.  
Meeting the diverse learning needs of our gifted students.

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Context

We have decided to concentrate on this area due to the enrollment of students who arrive with minimal or no proficiency in English, both written and spoken. Additionally, these children possess varied learning needs. By meeting them at their current level, we can effectively enhance their language skills, facilitating a more seamless transition into a new culture and home. It is also essential that we recognize the needs of those students who are academically talented.

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Strategies

- We continue to build our resources to assist with this focus.
- Pearson Reading Level Indicator
  - IXL
  - Handwriting Without Tears
  - Study Pug (older students)
  - Literacy Intervention Instructor (if required)
  - Benchmarks for English as an Additional Language
  - AFRS - Assessment Foundation of Reading Skills
  - Evidence Based Results - portfolios and testing
  - G.A.T. Hub
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Measures

- Outcomes will be measured by:
- pre/mid/post year assessments
  - documented improvement in specific learning area
  - evidence based learning - portfolios/daily work/assignments
  - daily teacher anecdotal documentations
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Implementation  
Plan

- For the 2026-2027 school year we will:
- Continue to expand our instructional strategies and curriculum tools
  - Attend professional development sessions focused on EAL/diverse learning and instruction.

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## First Steps Elementary Academy

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### SCHOOL PRIORITY #2

School Priority	<p>We are dedicated to cultivating an environment that promotes our children's educational achievement and personal development. Our quest for excellence in education motivates us to consistently enhance student performance. Recognizing each child's individual strengths and challenges is vital to our mission. We strive to ensure that our children and students feel acknowledged and valued, knowing that we genuinely listen to and understand each of them.</p>
Assurance Framework Domain	<p>Student Growth and Achievement</p>
Outcomes	<p>We are thrilled with our students' Early Learning Assessment outcomes from September and January. Nevertheless, we aspire to enhance student engagement in both writing and math. It is crucial to help our students grasp the significance and relevance of their current studies, as well as how these lessons impact their future choices and decision-making. Fostering leadership skills among our senior students is a vital aspect of their personal development.</p>
Context	<p>To fulfill our Mission Statement, we commit ourselves to our students and children. Observing their achievements—both personal and academic—is vital. We are dedicated to fostering the leaders of tomorrow. It is imperative to nurture character traits such as respect, tolerance, honesty, integrity, accountability, and responsibility in our future leaders.</p>
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Our Leaders of Tomorrow provides our senior students opportunities to lead within our school.</li><li>• Cross graded learning and teacher collaboration</li><li>• POD Days - multi graded pods in which the leader carries out the planned activity - staff supervised</li><li>• Involvement/planning volunteering in various charities and organizations within our community</li><li>• Academic strategies - technology, IPPs, small group pull outs, presentations</li><li>• G.A.T. Hub</li><li>• Reading Buddies</li><li>• Learning opportunities which expand student awareness of future options and today's classroom studies</li></ul>
Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continuous assessments and observations within the classroom, supported by evidence-based data</li><li>• Implementation of student portfolios</li><li>• Utilization of standardized testing, such as Early Learning Assessments, Pearson Reading Level Indicator, PATs, and AFRS</li><li>• Participation in POD days, showcasing leadership qualities, and an increase in activities led by senior students</li><li>• Gathering student feedback regarding career options, opportunities, and programming</li></ul>
Implementation Plan	<p>In the upcoming year, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain the implementation of a formal reading program, UFLI, supplemented by Heggerty</li><li>• Ensure ongoing staff collaboration</li><li>• Allocate monthly time for collaborative reflection on alternative teaching and learning strategies</li><li>• Assign leadership roles to our senior students throughout the year</li></ul>

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### SCHOOL PRIORITY #3

**School Priority** In our Mission Statement, we emphasize that personal growth and development are equally as crucial as academic achievement. We aspire for our students to cultivate and demonstrate empathy, forge connections with their peers and others, and develop citizenship and leadership skills. Additionally, we encourage the observance of etiquette and protocols, guiding them to become productive and contributing members of society. Instruction and learning experiences related to FNMI will also be an integral part of the student learning journey.

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**Assurance Framework Domain** Local and Societal Context

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**Outcomes** Students will behave appropriately by showing respect for themselves and others, appreciating diverse cultures, adhering to established expectations, and cultivating essential life skills.

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**Context** Our school's atmosphere is inviting and nurturing, providing a comfortable and friendly space for everyone. We encourage our students to demonstrate integrity, show respect, and appreciate both culture and achievement. By embodying these qualities in their daily actions and attitudes, we aspire to cultivate a student body that is compassionate, considerate, and accepting of all.

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- Strategies**
- Visits to independent living facilities
  - Volunteering opportunities
  - Christmas concerts and sing-alongs in the community
  - House system - PODS
  - Daily Announcer - shares school news, birthdays, and announcements
  - Inviting elders into our school to share their history, art, and culture
  - Exploring the diverse cultures within our school community
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- 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
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- Implementation Plan**
- Ongoing Efforts: We will maintain and strengthen our relationships within the community. Additionally, we will leverage POWWOW.com as a valuable resource for Indigenous activities. Second resource Curriculum by Grade | Indigenous Culture Based Learning <https://share.google/HXFkZD20uCLAlcKoF>
  - Term Activities: We intend to organize one outing and invite a guest speaker for each term:
    - September - December
    - February - May
  - Land Acknowledgement: Integrate land acknowledgements into our assemblies.
  - Assemblies: Weekly assemblies will take place throughout the year.

A link to the 2026 Budget Report can be found here: <https://www.firststepselementaryacademy.ca/about-us>