

3-Year Education Plan for Hillcrest Christian School May 2021

Accountability Statement

The Three-Year Education Plan commencing September 1, 2021 for **Hillcrest Christian School Society** was prepared under the direction of the Board in accordance with its responsibilities under the *Private Schools Regulation* and the *Education Grants Regulation*. This document was developed in the context of the provincial government's business and fiscal plans. The Board has used the results reported in the document, to the best of its abilities, to develop the education plan and is committed to implementing the strategies contained within the plan to improve student learning and results.

The Board approved this Three-Year Education Plan for 2022/2024 on May 21, 2021.

Sharon Ambros
Board Chair

Preamble

It is the hope of every educational institution to grant the opportunity to every child to succeed. The difficulty in making this a viable reality in today's context is the fast pace of education, society's demand for results, fiscal and physical restraints all coupled with the incredible uniqueness of every child.

This uniqueness in each child is represented via the context of a blend of familial world views, financial situations, the place the family holds in society, the child's experiences, as well as the child's mental, intellectual and physical abilities. All of this has been processed by the child to create an individual that comes to the world of education with hopes, dreams and potential unique to themselves.

It is the goal of Hillcrest Christian School to give each child the opportunity, encouragement and resources needed to help them on this road to discover their God given gifts, abilities, and potential in an environment of flexibility in schedule, pace, and programing. Hillcrest is committed to the whole child. This encompasses the academic, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of each child.

Foundation Statements

Vision

- To increase the quality and diversity of our program using a Biblical worldview as a framework in order to help prepare students for society's demands.
- To foster interest and provide training in the arts.
- To develop peer leadership training opportunities so that students are prepared to participate positively in their communities.
- To give our teachers opportunities and support for further training through seminars, etc.
- To develop in the students a keen interest and joy in learning.
- To continue to develop an atmosphere, in the school in general and in the individual classrooms, conducive to learning.
- To ensure open communication between parents/guardians and school administration/teachers regarding all aspects concerning students (course progress, discipline, goals).
- To ensure that parents and society members have access to school information.

Mission

To set and maintain the highest level of professional, ethical, and educational standards for the students while granting them the opportunity to better understand the Christian faith and learn to live it out in their daily lives.

Principles

- Students are responsible for participating in the achievement of their educational success.
- Teachers provide opportunities for all students to acquire strong reading, writing, and math skills with which to develop critical thinking and self-directed learning.
- Teachers must endeavor to be exemplary role models in lifestyle, attitude, conduct, and life-long learning.
- Students are entitled to a safe, secure, and caring learning environment where each individual is respected and valued.
- Education, incorporating a Biblical worldview, is an important building block in a student's development.
- The education process involves providing our society with creative critical thinkers and problem solvers, who are prepared with a strong moral base to participate in the world of

- work, postsecondary studies, life-long learning, and citizenship.
- In striving for quality educational programs, six dimensions of student development are considered: social, physical, intellectual, cultural, emotional, and spiritual.
 - All students are challenged to learn and achieve through high learning expectations.
 - The success of students is the shared responsibility of students, parents, school, church, community, and government.
 - Parents have opportunities for involvement in important decisions about their children's education.
 - All those responsible for decisions about education, including the expenditure of government education funds, school fees, fund raising monies, and donations are accountable to HCS society members and Alberta Education.

A Profile of the School Authority

Hillcrest Christian School had its beginnings as an outgrowth of an intentional Christian community. Since those early days of serving its own community, the school has become a center of education for a number of families. This includes both parents and children who do not necessarily adhere to the Christian faith but believe that the values held within the school system provide a healthy environment for their children. Parental feedback over the years indicates that we have a niche in our community as a school that provides support for students struggling emotionally and/or academically, by ensuring a low student to teacher ratio and a strong emphasis on Biblically based character development. The staff also attempts to address student issues on an individual basis by providing extra support when needed in conjunction with the students' parents. Some of these students, when ready, move back into the public system, while others prefer to remain in the school. We are glad to be able to offer this support to the families in the Grande Prairie area.

Our enrolment fluctuates between 55 and 70 students, from kindergarten to grade twelve. We offer the Alberta Education Program of Studies, including Physical Education, Music, Art, Drama, and Dance, as well as CTS courses and Work Experience.

Our student body consists of a wide range of academic, emotional, and social abilities. Our focus on student leadership and character development helps the students learn how to reach out to individuals first within the school community and then beyond. For those students who struggle, the staff attempts to address these problems and provide support where possible on an on-going basis.

We encourage our staff and students to attempt to live by the teachings of the Scriptures. This allows us to work towards fulfilling one of the most important aspects of our mission; that of offering Christ's love to students through the way that teachers teach and deal with conflicts that arise with the students. To be patient, accepting, encouraging, and giving of unconditional love while remaining firm in our expectations of the students and fellow colleagues, is an ongoing challenge that we work diligently to meet.

Student Growth and Achievement

Student growth and achievement can be analyzed both subjectively as well as analytically. Analytical evaluation is fairly easily determined as it can be verified by numbers. Subjective growth is more difficult to measure as it reflects changes in a student or student body that reflect in increasing scale of maturation of intellect and character. Both growth and achievement are an important part of the education of the child, but it must not be assumed that academic achievement necessarily reflects growth, nor is the opposite true.

Summative Assessment is measured using a variety of tools such as PAT's, diploma examinations, MIPi's, an ELA evaluation tool, and regular in-class assignments. Students and parents use feedback from these ongoing assessments to reflect on progress, identify strengths and areas of need, and set learning goals. Additionally, literacy and numeracy skills are reported to stakeholders at the school's biannual society meeting in which parents, students and community members are welcome. Regularly communicating summative assessment results with stakeholders is an important aspect of school accountability and assurance.

Student growth and achievement has been impacted in ways that could not have been anticipated this past year. Due to the recent events that have prevailed itself on Alberta and the world, education moved to At-Home-Learning (AHL) in early spring of 2020. This definitely impacted academic achievement as well as the growth of the students for this past year. Couple that with the uncertainty students have faced as different levels of lock-downs, polarized opinions, mandatory isolation, social distancing and the inability to socialize has taken its toll on the whole student and student body to varying degrees. While we are seeing some of the outcome in both academics and student growth already, it is difficult to plan for outcomes that could present themselves for a number of years to come.

Suffice it to say the old axiom, "you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink" holds true when it comes to AHL. The best intentions and well laid out plans from teachers and technology that allowed for electronic interactive learning definitely made AHL a viable possibility. However, buy-in was difficult over such a long period of time for both students and their parents.

Student Achievement

Due to the small numbers of students, discrepancies in the students achievement is difficult to measure and set targets on a yearly basis with only one measuring tool. Hillcrest utilizes the Mathematics Intervention/ Programming Instrument (MIPI) for grades 1-9, and our own English Language Arts (ELA) evaluation tool for the elementary. The ELA evaluation tool is based on several different standard evaluation tools that track phonemic awareness, spelling and vocabulary, grammar, and reading and comprehension. These tools along with the PAT's and Diploma results give a better and more rounded picture of learning at Hillcrest.

We have no PAT's and Diploma results for 2020.

Math

Results for Mathematics Intervention/ Programming Instrument (MIPI)

Elementary	Results		Target	Target	Target
	2019	2020	2022	2023	2024
Percentage at Grade level. Grade level is equal to or greater than 75%	86.0%	93.3%	82.0%	84.0%	85.0%
Percentage Below Grade level. Grade level is less than 75%	13.4%	6.7%	18.0%	16.0%	15.0%
Students who achieved 50% or higher	93.5%	100.0%	92.0%	92.0%	93.0%

Jr High	2019	2020	2022	2023	2024
Percentage at Grade level. Grade level is equal to or greater than 75%	43.3%	60.0%	55.0%	60.0%	63.0%
Percentage Below Grade level. Grade level is less than 75%	56.7%	40.0%	55.0%	60.0%	65.0%
Students who achieved 50% or higher	83.3%	100.0%	92.0%	93.0%	93.0%

2020 Overall percentage of students at grade level, 75% or higher.

76.7%

2020 Overall percentage of students who achieved 50% or higher

100.0%

Math Results Comments

2019 is the first year we implemented the MIPI examinations for grades one to nine and that has given us the baseline for developing targets for the next 3 years. The Math Intervention Programming Instrument (MIPI) chart shows how the grade one to grade nines fared on the MIPI. While the percentage of students who passed was very high we set an acceptable standard of 75%. This is due to our understanding that strong math skills at the lower grade levels translate to strong math skills at the higher level. Thus, by setting a high standard it is our hope to accurately track the mathematical abilities of our students.

The results from this year's MIPI is higher than was anticipated. Suffice it to say that it was not due to exceptional teaching during the lockdown. The results must be interpreted in light of the academic reality at the end of the 2020 school year. First, MIPI's were sent home and completed electronically, meaning the school had no ability to control quality or integrity of the writing. Second, only 38% of the eligible students wrote the MIPI. Third, it can also be assumed that the 38% that did write were also the students who bought into at-home-learning and were the ones academically inclined to complete their grade level as best they could. Therefore, while the results are very positive, it can be assumed that they are not an accurate reflection of the entire schools' mathematical abilities.

English Language Arts

Results and Targets for Lower & Upper Elementary ELA					
	Actual Results	Actual Results	Target	Target	Target
Lower Elementary	2019	2020	2022	2023	2024
Percentage of students whose grade level of development is at 85% or greater.	47%	56%	40%	43%	47%
Percentage of students whose grade level of development is at 65- 84%.	23%	21%	40%	41%	45%
Emerging Students who achieved 0 - 64%.	30%	23%	20%	16%	8%
Upper Elementary	2019	2020	2022	2022	2023
Percentage of students whose level of development is at 85% or greater.	45%	53%	40%	43%	47%
Percentage of students whose level of development is at 65- 84%.	28%	30%	40%	41%	45%
Emerging Students who achieved 0 - 64%.	26%	17%	20%	16%	8%

ELA Results Comments

Our English program was standardized and implemented several years ago. Student literacy is evaluated throughout the year at the elementary level. It must be understood that our ELA program is a developmental program. The above numbers do not reflect a snapshot in time like the PAT’s or the MIPi’s. The program evaluates student’s academic growth over the course of the year and reflects the targets within the program. Students are measured against preset outcomes for their grade level and their final grade is an aggregate of the years’ work.

This program has taken some time to develop and implement with consistency throughout the elementary grades. 2020 would have been the first year we would have been able to produce an accurate baseline for ELA. However, due to the COVID-19 situation we were unable to accomplish this. The 2020 results reflect student progress for approximately 70% of the school year. The ELA program is not a tool that lends itself to at-home assessment, as most parents do not have the tools and in-depth knowledge of the program to assess the program properly. The 3-year targets are based on what the teachers were experiencing within the classrooms as viable goals for the upcoming years. There is a strong likelihood that there will still need to be some adjustments made to the program and its outcomes as it grows.

Research shows us that in 5% of students, learning to read seems effortless; for 35% of students, it is relatively easy with broad instruction. For 40-50% of students, learning to read proficiently requires code-based explicit, systematic, and sequential instruction, and for 10-15%, learning to read requires code-based explicit/systematic/sequential/diagnostic instruction, with many repetitions. The research demonstrates that two-thirds of students require a structured literacy approach.

Based on this research, the ELA program that we use at HCS to measure progress in reading and writing fluency is built on the following nine strands: handwriting, phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, spelling, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, composition, and reading & comprehension. Morphology is an integral component in helping students to expand their vocabulary. With three levels within each kindergarten to grade six program, teachers are able to differentiate instruction and facilitate teaching students with varying levels of skill or prior knowledge. It is a scaffolded curriculum based on the multi-sensory Orton-Gillingham method, which has been used successfully for over eighty years to teach students, with dyslexia, autism, and other disabilities, how to read.

Since we implemented this ELA teaching philosophy six years ago, beginning with the Kindergarten class, we have noticed a steady, overall increase in the reading and writing abilities of a larger percentage of students than before implementing this program. This percentage, however, does fluctuate within a particular grade from year to year, based on the number of struggling readers and writers in the class in any given year.

Provincial Achievement Test Results

Performance Measure	Results (in percentages)					Evaluation			Targets		
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Achievement	Improvement	Overall	2022	2023	2024
Overall percentage of students in Grades 6 and 9 who achieved the acceptable standard on Provincial Achievement Tests (overall cohort results).	68.8	*	57.1	82.5	na	High	Maintained	Good	58.3	69.2	75
Overall percentage of students in Grades 6 and 9 who achieved the standard of excellence on Provincial Achievement Tests (overall cohort results).	18.8	*	0.0	25.0	na	High	Maintained	Good	15	17	19

Provincial Achievement Test Results
Hillcrest Christian School 3-year average

PAT Results	2018	2019	2020	3 yr average
Acceptable	57.1	82.5	na	69.8
Excellence	0	25	na	12.5

Diploma Exams and High School Data

Performance Measure				
Overall percentage of students who achieved the acceptable standard on diploma examinations (overall results).	Overall percentage of students who achieved the standard of excellence on diploma examinations (overall results).	High School Completion Rate – Percentage of students who completed high school within three years of entering Grade 10.	Percentage of students writing four or more diploma exams within three years of entering Grade 10.	Drop Out Rate - annual dropout rate of students aged 14 to 18
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

The above charts are a snapshot of our current academic outcomes and the targets we hope to achieve in the following years. It is a difficult thing to set targets when the physical aspect of education has been cancelled for almost a quarter of the year and learning has gone to online in which the educator has no control over the lesson once it has been delivered.

PAT's

The PAT's and diploma exams were not written for the 2019 - 2020 school year so it is difficult to assess how the disruption to education has affected our outcomes at the local and provincial levels. It will be interesting to note how future outcomes will vary as it is a simple fact that PAT's do not account for the discrepancies associated with small numbers and varied students. We do not have sufficient numbers to stop the pendulum from swinging between the highs and lows. As well as a specific student population of non-coded special needs students who write PAT's, and the strengths and weaknesses of certain class groups causes a wide variance from year to year over which we have no control.

Learning Supports

There are a number of strategies implemented to help us meet the projected student achievement targets.

- Variety of programming for core subjects.
- Students learn at individual ability level not grade level.
 - Differentiate instruction so struggling students will be challenged to achieve levels consistent with their abilities.
 - Differentiate instruction so exceptional students will be challenged to achieve levels consistent with their abilities.
 - While students remain in age appropriate grade levels, academic work is differentiated to allow for the student to succeed at their ability level, whether it is above or below the average grade level.
- Small student to teacher ratio.
- Aide assistance for the most vulnerable students whether it be academic, emotional or behavioral.
- Flexible scheduling for health or artistic pursuits.
 - In collaboration with parents create and allow for students who have mental or physical health issues to take time during the school day to have these issues addressed.
 - In collaboration with parents create time for students to pursue artistic pathways outside of the classroom that the school does not offer.
- PAT practice.
- Find ways of motivating students to see test taking abilities as an important skill in their educational and personal tool box. While this strategy lends itself to the acceptable level, we are hoping it will also have a strong impact on our excellent level.
- Increase the teaching of analytical and problem-solving skills in core subjects.
- Use a 3-year average to measure PAT results and analyze outcomes to develop targeted areas.
- Use actual numbers from students writing - not cohort numbers - to assess our yearly outcomes.
- Discuss dramatic changes in results to diagnose variances in outcomes so an understanding of discrepancies can be highlighted and solutions sought.
- Individually assess students to help guide forthcoming changes as a result of disproportionate discrepancies so learners' improvement is not compromised.

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Students

While we have no data due to small numbers, Hillcrest Christian School has taken steps to integrate FNMI education into the school.

Learning Supports

- Inviting First Nations elders and community member to teach staff and students FNMI history, traditions and pertinent ongoing issues.
- Working with foster parents in conjunction with Child and Family services to ensure success for individual students through their Success in Schools Program.
- Incorporating the areas rich First Nations' heritage into the different educational aspects of the school's program.

- Some of the teaching staff are piloting the new curriculum in order to integrate the new FNMI outcomes into their teaching.

Student Results of Accountability Pillar Survey Measures

Last year, 2020, was the first year that our accountability surveys were administered via Alberta Education. The Accountability Pillar questions that were reflected in our own surveys in previous years had very similar results to those of 2020. It would appear in the areas surveyed, Student growth, teaching and leading, and governance that the overall outcomes are favorable, that students, staff, and parents feel that Hillcrest is doing their job well in all of these aspects. Is there room for growth? The simple answer should be yes, there's always room for growth. However, the last year as well as this current year, the predictable flow of education has been disrupted in ways that were unforeseeable and difficult to measure.

Planning for the next 3 years is a difficult task when attitudes toward authority, education and governance have all been affected due to the Global disruption of normal life. It is a hard thing to anticipate how the school and its students and parents will be directly affected in the years to come. Thus, it will be through this uncertain lense that the results and the planning will be interpreted, with the understanding that this is simply a plan that may need adjusting as we move through the landscape that the future will bring.

Authority: 9171 Hillcrest Christian School Society

		All
Percentage of teachers, parents and students satisfied with the opportunity for students to receive a broad program of studies including fine arts, career, technology, and health and physical education.	2019	n/a
	2020	74.1
Percentage of teachers, parents and students satisfied with the overall quality of basic education.	2019	n/a
	2020	93.2
Percentage of teachers, parents and students who are satisfied that students model the characteristics of active citizenship.	2019	n/a
	2020	83.6
Percentage of teacher, parent and student satisfaction with the accessibility, effectiveness and efficiency of programs and services for students in their community.	2019	n/a
	2020	59.9
Percentage of teacher, parent and student agreement that programs for children at risk are easy to access and timely.	2019	n/a
	2020	88.1
Percentage of teacher, parent and student agreement that: students are safe at school, are learning the importance of caring for others, are learning respect for others and are treated fairly in school.	2019	n/a
	2020	95.5
Percentage of teachers, parents and students indicating that their school and schools in their jurisdiction have improved or stayed the same the last three years.	2019	n/a
	2020	77.3
Percentage of teachers and parents who agree that students are taught attitudes and behaviours that will make them successful at work when they finish school.	2019	n/a
	2020	100
Percentage of teacher and parent satisfaction that students demonstrate the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning.	2019	n/a
	2020	96.9

Notes:

1. Data values have been suppressed where the number of respondents is less than 6. Suppression is marked with an asterisk (*).
2. Because the student surveys differ by grade, the Student Average is the average of the averages for each grade level (4-6, 7-9 and 10-12).
3. Due to small numbers only the overall average is reported here..

Student Growth

Student Growth Comments

It's difficult to imagine setting targets to increase most of these outcomes. Aside from the subjective nature of the questions which allow for a wide range of interpretation, the student response to the first three questions does raise some concerns. The strategies we've put in place to address these concerns are there to help students learn how to be respectful to others in the school community. However, education is competing with an increasingly digitally connected world that allows students to disconnect on a personal level.

Learning Supports

- All learning does not happen in the confines of the classroom. Allowing for flexible scheduling for health or artistic pursuits promotes student growth.
 - In collaboration with parents create and allow for students who have mental or physical health issues to take time during the school day to have these issues addressed.
 - In collaboration with parents create time for students to pursue artistic pathways outside of the classroom that the school does not offer.
- High teacher parent interaction while parents drop off and pick up children as there is no bussing.
- Electronic interaction via email with parents and students during all aspects of education, whether it be in class or at-home-learning.
- Teach and model proper respect for colleagues and students to increase the respect students show to each other.

Teaching and Leading:

Teaching and Leading Comments

The data collected can be subjective in the sense that the questions relating to citizenship and work preparation can be interpreted by the responder through their worldview lens. Analysis of our parent and student results show that while the numbers have moved a little, the response is still very positive. With 70% of the parents enrolling their child/ren in the school for 4 or more years, the implication is that there is a strong sense that they approve of the programming. It would appear that there may be other issues to pursue for the 26% of students who have no idea if their school work is challenging.

Learning Supports

- Through school wide events that promote positive interaction between all grade levels.
- As students mature, the higher-grade levels are given supervised responsibility while interacting with younger students at these events.
- Teach the Volunteerism CTS courses at the Jr. Sr. High levels.

- As a small school, supervised lunch recess allows all students to interact at various grade levels.
- Parents and alumni are recruited and encouraged to participate in school activities and celebrations in order to model effective citizenship.
- Commitment to ongoing professional development.
- Staff retreat to help create an atmosphere of unity and continuity within the staff.

Governance

Governance Comments

The parent responses to this survey question aren't surprising as we are an independent school that charges tuition. In a landscape of educational choice where parents are consumers, the fact that they continue to choose our 'product' is a testament as to how they view the school, teachers, and school authority leaders.

The school is a member of AISCA, who is an important source of consultation and collaboration, informing leadership (school administration and board members) of best practices, networking, and professional development. AISCA continues to be an essential source of assurance. Through accountability and training AISCA expands the school's capacity for professionalism within our governance.

Learning Supports

- Alberta Education oversees our operations on an annual basis as well as carries out periodic in-depth school audits of our operations.
- The school's Board is comprised of parents and community members.
- The school board has two annual meetings per year which are regularly attended by the following stakeholder groups:
 - Parents
 - Students
 - Staff
 - Alumni
 - Community Members
- The meetings share information regarding school operations as well as continuing and newly implemented programs. Information is also shared regarding the school's relationship with Alberta Education, the results of the last year's academic reports, along with a look at the future. Stakeholders are consulted, and feedback is sought on major school decisions and direction setting. Our recent move to Level 2 status is one such example of stakeholder feedback influencing school policy. This is a demonstration of assurance in action.
- With the growth of online education via Zoom or other platforms teachers are encouraged to attend sessions that promote solutions and/or have helpful information that pertains to particular areas of need or interest within their classrooms.
- The interest and needs of the students along with input from parents is used to help design and fine tune new programs like the Impact Program.
- Teachers are encouraged to collaborate with other schools for programs that they may integrate with, or view as a possibility for implementation in our setting.
- Parents are very involved with their child's education. The school does not have bussing. This is an opportunity of consistent and immediate feedback, as parents drop off and pick up their children.

- Parents with children struggling academically or otherwise are viewed as a resource, whose feedback and participation are essential tools in implementing positive change.
- Because we do not advertise, many of our new families come from parent referrals, indicating that the school parents are pleased with teachers, school leaders, and school authority leaders.
- Parents, the major stakeholders, are regularly involved in school activities via extracurricular school events. As experts in their various fields, parents are utilized in classes as support roles. As another form of assurance, this gives parents an in-depth and intimate view of the school, individual classes, and student/teacher interactions.

Local and Societal Context

Local and Societal Context Comments and Learning Supports

It is difficult to get a good picture of exactly how the school interacts with the school community as well as the community of Grande Prairie through a survey. The numbers report that those who've responded feel we do a good job. These are the people that drop off their children every day, attend the Christmas and End of Year programs and have a lot of interaction with the school community throughout the year. This also includes parent volunteers, as well as parent experts who assist with some of the optional classes.

In the greater community, the school reaches out to use venues like the climbing wall at the college, the indoor soccer pitches, and a host of other community venues to meet the requirements for our Jr/Sr high PE class and will continue to do so for the coming years.

In order to have the students who participate in the Arts experience real time feedback, there is a commitment to reach out to other schools, assisted living complexes and other venues to bring a display of their craft. This leads to personal interactions with the greater community.

Through our CTS courses which include volunteerism, intentional plans are made to reach out to the community to make a positive impact in our immediate surroundings. This includes partnerships and collaborations with organizations such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award and the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Students also participate in local choir groups on an on-going basis. Opportunities for student participation in community scholastic events like the Northern Alberta Three act Play or Fairview Colleges Trades Apprenticeship tryouts are a few of the things that help extend the students' outlook and participation in other educational events.

These relationships are important as they expand our capacity as a school to be a part of the community and enrich student experience. We receive positive feedback from these various groups and the school is not only welcomed back but many organizations request future interactions with the school. Interactions between the school and these organizations are one way the school demonstrates assurance with our broader community stakeholders.

For the staff there is in-house professional development. Staff also have a fund they can draw from for professional development that they feel will strengthen them as individuals. With the rise of technological advances this past year programs and professional development offered by other venues have become more accessible. This has also helped with staff collaboration with colleagues in other schools and school districts.

Budget and IMR Link

<https://www.hcsgp.ca/>