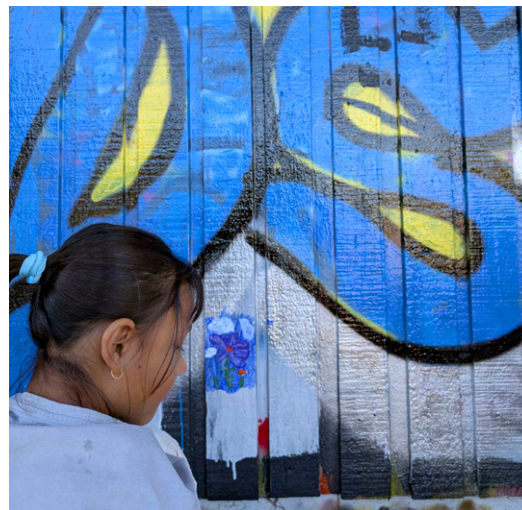
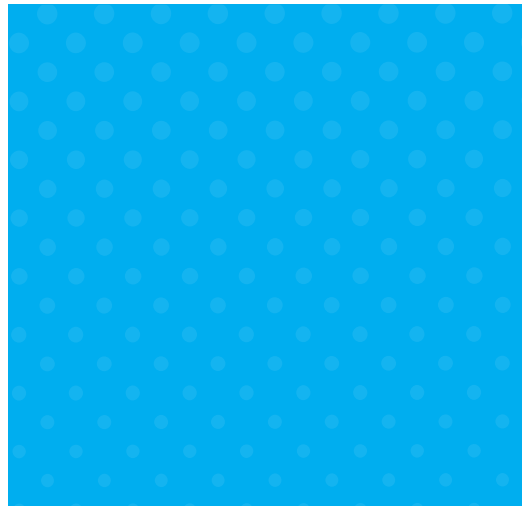
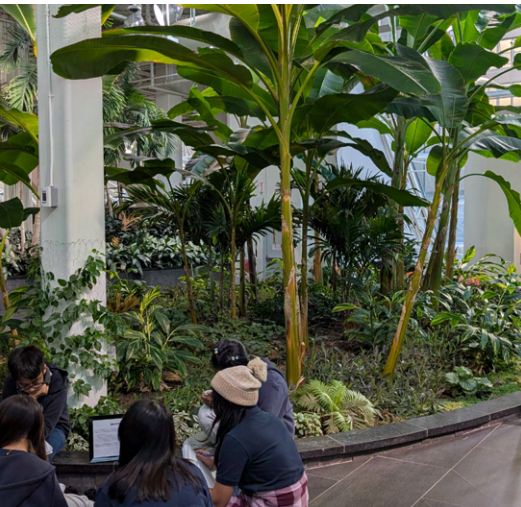


# 2School: An Urban Experience at the Education Center

2025-2026 Annual Report



# Introduction

Thirty-two years ago, the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) created Campus Calgary/Open Minds, an innovative educational model that takes students beyond traditional classrooms for week-long, real-world learning experiences. Conceived in 2003, 2School draws its name from the connection between the historic Central Collegiate High School (now the Dr. Carl Safran Centre) and the CBE's downtown office — honouring the role of public education through time.



Students look out past Telus Sky and Bow Tower towards the Confluence.

## Program & Student Experience

2School is a partnership between the CBE, its stakeholders, the surrounding community, and Campus Calgary, bringing teachers, students, and community experts together for a week-long, curriculum-based experience using downtown Calgary — including a historic 1908–1912 classroom with original CBE artefacts — as a living classroom. Each week is personalised for the attending class, with CBE employees, community members, and the land and urban spaces

themselves sharing their expertise alongside students, celebrating the diverse inner-city neighbourhoods and all they have to offer. Through a yearlong, interdisciplinary study, students explore community connections and public education's role in community development, deepening their identity as Calgarians and recognising their role in shaping the city and the reciprocity that comes with belonging to it.

## Teacher Support

Teachers participating are offered the following throughout the year:



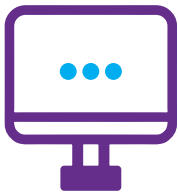
### Three In-Person Workshops

With our coordinator team exploring ways to integrate experiential place-based learning through interdisciplinary curriculum.



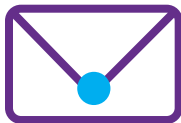
### Journaling Workshop and Journey into Journalling Resource

Techniques to slow down, capture, document and analyze their understandings, evaluate their experiences and reflect on their learning.



### Four Virtual Workshops

Campus Calgary/Open Minds Coordinator/Collaborator led workshops designed to share a concept and accompanying task or journal technique.



### Weekly Newsletters

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 monthly explorations are intended to get teachers and students out in their school community to observe and document their findings through journaling.

*This report aims to offer insight into how a week at 2School was embedded into a year of learning in the 2025–2026 school year, highlighting our many partners.*

# Explore

## Hugh A. Bennett Grade 4 — What can structures and the land teach about the ways people care for one another?

During their week at 2School, students from Hugh A. Bennett explored the purpose of structures in downtown Calgary and how they connect people to the land and to one another. Students listened in real time to the sounds of Bow Glacier — the headwaters of the Bow River — at Brookfield Place, reflecting on the glacier’s role in their own lives and in communities far downstream. Walking to the banks of the Bow and a wetland ecosystem, students made connections between their lives and the Earth’s interconnected systems of soil, water, air, and land.

**As one student observed,  
“What we do here  
matters to other people  
we don’t even know.”**



*Hugh A. Bennett Students explore how schools and public spaces foster belonging and community.*

## Hugh A. Bennett Grade 3 — How can public spaces be designed to bring people together?

Grade 3 students from Hugh A. Bennett met with Chief Pitman to explore how schools and public spaces foster belonging and community. They encountered the mural *Thanks for Being There to Hold My Ears As They Burn* by Elicser Elliott in Humpy Hollow Park, reflecting on love, patience, and holding space for others. At the Ramsay inclusive playground, students discovered universal design principles in action — multisensory instruments, accessible spinners, and creative use of landscape. A highlight of the week was painting at The Confluences Free Wall YYC, where each student chose something about their community that brings people together: food, nature, friends, and family.

*Hugh A. Bennett Students walk the banks of the Bow River.*



## Olympic Heights Grade 6 — How is abstraction used to interact meaningfully with the world?

Olympic Heights Grade 6 students began their week exploring the history of everyday objects before meeting with city councillors and CBE trustees, all of whom returned to the same word: service. Students connected this abstract concept to the daily decisions that shape their lives. They experienced Kristy North Peigan's installation *Rise Up: Stars, Stories and Connections*, discovering how Indigenous knowledge and the wonder of the night sky can be woven together through symbol and story. Students then explored the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms through murals, creating their own layered art pieces reflecting how their unique identities are protected and given meaning by lived experience.



*Olympic Heights Students meet with city councillors.*

## Simons Valley Grade 6 — How does our sense of wellness and mental health shape how we connect with ourselves, others, and the community?

Simons Valley students used mapping and empathy to explore wellness in their school community. Through an empathy audit of their own school building and community spaces, students identified where they feel a sense of belonging and where they do not — and developed plans to address those feelings as part of their wellness journey. Using downtown Calgary as a living extension of this inquiry, students deepened their understanding of how the places we inhabit shape our wellbeing and our connections to ourselves and others.



*Simons Valley students create empathy maps.*

## Riverside Grade 8 — How might we build a classroom community where everyone feels safe, valued, and empowered to learn and grow together?

Riverside students used the CASEL framework to explore social-emotional learning during their week at 2School, developing self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making through hands-on experiences in the city. Students practised self-management by working in teams to complete a Downtown Challenge and Wellness Walk, navigating Calgary's public transit, +15 system, and public buildings toward a shared goal. They developed social awareness by walking alongside a landscape architect who shared how the built environment is designed to meet the needs of a city of two million people. At the end of the week, all three classes came together with Kelci Hilferty a CBE Graphic Designer and Artist Kristy North Peigan to reflect on their learning and explore how their experiences might be captured in a storyboard and image to share with their school community.



*Riverside students learn about storytelling with CBE Graphic Designer.*

# Connecting the Learning

The 2School program offers teachers and students new ways to connect with their city, communities, and schools. Many students don't realise that the CBE extends far beyond their building — they are part of a system of more than 145,000 students across 252 schools. For many, 2School marks their first extended time exploring downtown Calgary.

Whether examining the value of public spaces or practising community collaboration, students' and teachers' worlds expand beyond the four walls of their classroom. Reflections from participants indicate a deepened connection to the land, their school community, and their city — strengthening identity formation and fostering a sense of belonging and attachment to place.

Learning has continued well beyond time on site, including:

- Noticing and naming downtown learning back in their home communities — from magpie nests to Canadian wildlife
- Community walks that connect curriculum to the school neighbourhood
- Designing community murals
- Bringing friends and family downtown to share the stories of their city



*Hugh A. Bennett student learns about interconnected systems of soil, water, air, and land.*

## 2School Teacher Feedback



*Grade 1 students wait for the CTrain while exploring goods and services in the community.*

“

There are interesting and meaningful stories all around us, we just need to be open to explore and dig deeper into the stories and history of the places we frequent.

”

“Inclusion and acceptance has become such a big part of our learning still.”

“

Students have learned to see the land as an active part of their lives — and to see themselves as having a role in contributing to it.

”

“They have a deeper understanding of what a landmark is or could be. They feel more connected to Calgary because they know more about the people and places that have shaped it.”

“Our students ask more questions than they did before. They are curious and interested in the world around them.”

“2School has created a learning environment that fosters curiosity, confidence, and a sense of belonging — where the classroom extends beyond the school walls and into the neighbourhood.”



*Students examine the diversity of public spaces and parks in the Beltline community.*

“Experiential learning allows us to go in depth, to slow down and to really build concepts.”



*Olympic Heights students discover Indigenous knowledge and the wonder of the night sky.*

“Curriculum lives everywhere! The history of our city is actually so cool!”



“My students still talk about our experience and our learnings daily — they reference what they were taught all the time and share their connections consistently.”

*Listening to trees communicate with one another. Students journal at Contemporary Calgary.*

“Meaningful learning can happen beyond the classroom. Student engagement was amazing!”



*What types of multi-sensory experiences are available in playgrounds?*



*How are animals amazing architects? How might we identify their presence in urban parks?*

“Change is bigger than it might seem — the world around us changes so much every day and yet people like me don’t even notice. I am going to look harder now and ask more questions.”

— **Grade 3 Student**

“

One of our education assistants noticed a marked difference: students who previously didn't interact were waving goodbye and saying 'see you tomorrow!' It is very special to see how this experience has brought students together.

”

“I came back to the Confluence on Sunday to share it with my family.”  
— **Grade 4 Student**



### Engagement Statistics

- 600+ Students
- 23 Classes
- 23 Teachers
- 6 School Board Trustees
- 115 Parent Volunteers
- 27 CBE Teaching Staff
- 90+ School Board, City and Community Experts
- 10 Student Teachers

*How do people move through the city?*

# We're Proud of Our Accomplishments This Year

Big Idea/Inquiry Question	School	Grade
What can structures and the land teach about the ways people care for one another?	Hugh A Bennett School	4
How can public spaces be designed to bring people together?	Hugh A. Bennett School	3
How can accepting our imperfections help us grow, connect with others and build confidence?	Chief Justice Milvain	6
How does our sense of wellness and mental health shape how we connect with ourselves, others, and the community?	Simons Valley	6
How is abstraction used to interact meaningfully with the world?	Olympic Heights	6
How might we build a classroom community where everyone feels safe, valued and empowered to learn and grow together?	Riverside	8
Why is our experience the way it is now and how might it be different?	Ian Bazalgette	7
Whose stories are being told?	Eugene Coste	5
How does play help us build community?	Eugene Coste	1
How does our history impact our present wellness?	Varsity Acres	3
What stories live in the land, people, and places of Calgary and what can they teach us about who we are?	Varsity Acres	1 & 3
How can playing and learning through the medicine wheel, help us live well and thrive?	Kenneth D. Taylor	3
What does it mean to belong?	Eric Harvie	2
How are we connected?	Woodbine School	2
How can we acknowledge and celebrate the diverse communities around us?	Dr. Roberta Bondar	1
Who does a place truly belong to?	Eric Harvie	2

# Community Partners

The 2School program thrives because of the vibrant Beltline communities of Connaught and Victoria Park, and the many businesses and organisations across Calgary's downtown and inner-city neighbourhoods. Through the lens of public education, these partners bring rich, meaningful learning experiences that challenge students to deepen their understanding and explore their inquiry questions. We are grateful to all who devote their time and expertise to our students:

Alberta Foundation for the Arts  
Beltline Urban Murals Project  
Bow River  
Bow Tower  
Brookfield Place  
Brown Bagging for Calgary's Kids  
Calgary Board of Education  
Calgary Catholic School District  
Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC)  
Calgary Opera  
Central Library  
Chinese Cultural Center  
City of Calgary Municipal Building  
City of Calgary Mobility Engagement  
City of Calgary Transportation and Planning  
City of Calgary Climate and Outreach  
Contemporary Calgary  
Eau Claire Wetlands  
Elbow River  
Ground Cubed Architecture

High Park  
Inglewood Bird Sanctuary  
NewZones Gallery  
Kensington BRZ  
Lougheed House  
Memorial Park Library  
Mustard Seed  
Nova Building  
O2 Planning and Design  
Peace Bridge  
Pixel Park  
Prince's Island Park  
Safeway  
Saint Patrick's Island  
Simmons Building  
Suncor Building  
Thomson Family Park  
University of Calgary  
17th Avenue Business District



*Riverside students explore what it means to build a classroom community where everyone feels safe, valued, and empowered to learn and grow together.*

## Your support has made a difference.

Your support has made a difference. 2School is fortunate to have the continued support of the CBE Board of Trustees, the CCSD Board of Trustees, CBE and CCSD superintendents, as well as many CBE employees who welcome students to their workplace.

