

HILLCREST MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL THREE YEAR EDUCATION PLAN

2024-2025
TO
2026 – 2027



HILLCREST MONTESSORI
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



FORT McMURRAY
—MONTESSORI—
SCHOOL FOUNDATION

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT



The Board is committed to using the results and inputs from families and staff, to the best of its abilities, to create outcomes for students and to ensure that all students enrolled in Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School (HMES) can acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to be successful and contributing members of society. The Education Plan was prepared to commence on September 2nd, 2024. The education plan was prepared under the direction of the Board of Directors based on evaluating the school's operations in the years 2021 through to 2023. The Board approved this Annual Education Plan for 3 years on June 3rd, 2024. The Plan was revised and updated on November 22nd, 2024

Board Chair - Charity Shonhiwa

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Shonhiwa", is placed over the printed name.

Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



HILLCREST MONTESSORI
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

"We acknowledge that we are on traditional territories of the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Alberta and express gratitude and respect for the land we use, pledge to end systemic racism, commit to advancing reconciliation and partnering with Indigenous peoples in our work with the students, the staff and families of Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School ."

"We acknowledge that we are on traditional territories in Alberta of the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries."



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ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK



HILLCREST MONTESSORI
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



HMES bases its direction of the education plan on the results of the previous AERR to determine priorities and shape the direction of the Education Plan. Commencing September 1, 2024, our school is committed to implementing the strategies contained within to continue and improve student learning and results.

HMES School Authority Profile

Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School is a not-for-profit independent school proud to be celebrating its 10th anniversary year from its founding date. The school is accredited by Alberta Education offering junior kindergarten, kindergarten, and elementary programs. We pride ourselves on offering an inclusive education that meets the needs of both gifted and special students. HMES is also serviced with an out-of-school care program upon request. Our enrollment comprises of 22 pre-kindergarten to kindergarten children and 9 elementary students in grades one through six. At the pre-kindergarten level, the children are team-taught by a Montessori guide (teacher) and a Montessori-trained/Alberta Ed certificated teacher. The elementary classroom is led by a Montessori guide/Alberta Education certificated teacher. The preschool and kindergarten classroom environments are conducted in English. All ECS students attend school for 5 days per week.

The foundational basis of our instruction is the Montessori method espoused by Dr. Maria Montessori. This method of instruction emphasizes a hands on approach to learning, starting from concrete to abstract, with students creating an everlasting muscle memory that will lay a strong foundation for an ongoing education for LIFE. In order to ensure that we meet the Alberta Education Curriculum, our Kindergarten Program of Studies and the Alberta Education Program of Studies, our Montessori curriculum is fully aligned with the Alberta Education set requirements.

School Authority Planning & Reporting

Based on the data collected from previous Education Plan outcomes, and local measures, HMES has identified additional areas of improvement that will continue to be developed. HMES continues to work toward a higher level of participation amongst parents and community partners. We are increasingly finding ways to get both parents and local community members be involved in the strategic planning of the the school through PAC meetings and local stakeholder engagements, and getting expert advise from interoperable organizations. Results over the past years have demonstrated that parents require more motivation to become more engaged in school life through PAC initiated activities Parent Information Nights, Student Lead Conferences, School Society Recreational Club and Montessori Family Alliance and curricular events. Results from the Early Years Literacy & Numeracy Assessments reported in the 2023/2024 AERR indicated that most students in the Elementary cohort are meeting or exceeding grade level expectations and a continued commitment to maintaining high achievement and providing support for students at-risk.

FOUNDATION STATEMENTS VISION



HMES MISSION

The Mission of Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School is:

- To inspire a passion for excellence
- To nurture the curiosity, creativity, and imagination born within us all
- To give our students a vision of the universe
- And to awaken the human spirit of every child

A school with a vision of a world that lives in peace; a school community based on interdependence and respect for all life and all people. A Montessori school community of supportive parents, dedicated teachers, staff, and joyful learners.



Excellence: The cultivation within our students of a passion for excellence in everything they do, both in and outside of school.

Universal values: The development of a strongly held set of universal values, which include self-respect, respect for others, honesty, integrity, responsibility, empathy, compassion, kindness, peacefulness, a sense of concern for others, warmth, and a love of community.

Global perspectives: The development of a global perspective and sense of international understanding.

Stewardship: A lifelong commitment to give something back through service to others who are in need.

GOALS & VALUES



GOALS

- The Montessori approach to learning is the educational framework of our educational program.
 - Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School (HMES) is committed to being an international, inclusive and multicultural school.
 - Our school teaches students to be at home in the world of nature.
 - HMES is designed to prepare students both for the university and for life.
- Our goal is to inspire a passion for excellence and a lifelong love of learning.

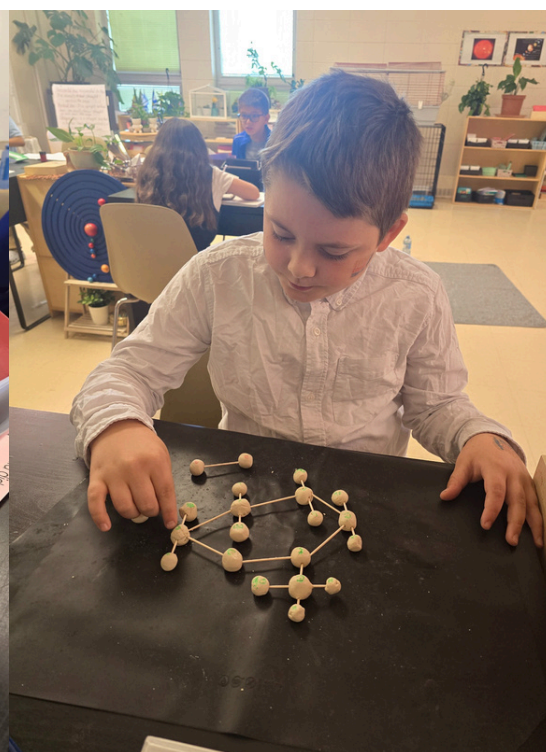
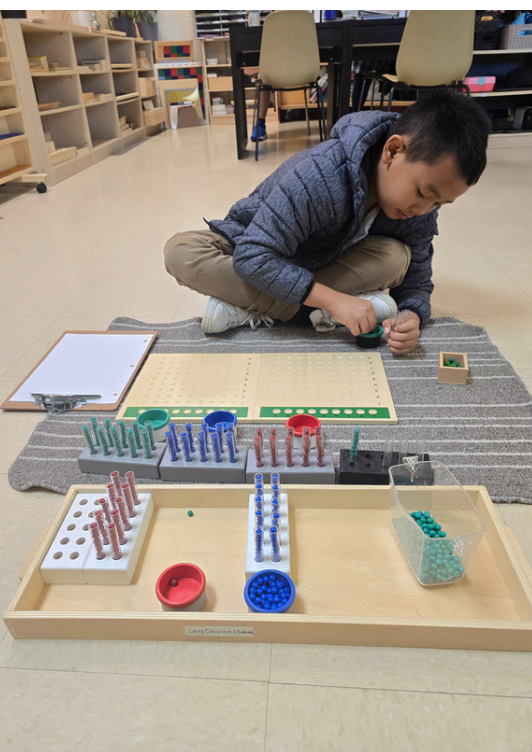
VALUES

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THE FUNDAMENTAL NATURE OF OUR SCHOOL



The Montessori approach to learning is the educational framework of our educational program. Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School (HMES) is committed to being an international and multicultural school.

- HMES is a close-knit community of students, educators, parents, and friends of the school.
- HMES is designed to prepare students both for the university and for life.
- Our school teaches students to be at home in the world of nature.
- HMES is a family-friendly school.
- We are committed to character and values.
- We are committed to diversity and inclusion



BELIEFS & ATTITUDES



We affirm that education begins at birth and continues throughout life. While our emphasis is on our students, we are a center of support for people of all ages to continue learning and developing toward becoming whole, balanced, and healthy individuals.

We believe that intelligence is not rare among human beings, nor is it fixed at birth.

We believe that wisdom can be cultivated.

We believe that true wisdom is the ability to listen to your heart and know how best to put your intelligence to work for you. In order to achieve this goal, self-esteem, human dignity, and emotional well-being, as well as the ability to communicate and cooperate effectively with others, must be valued at least as highly as academic and material success.

We approach learning by seeking to understand and respect each student's uniqueness and by guiding them individually at their own pace through the range of learning skills so that they fully realize their potential.

We celebrate the natural diversity of human beings, be it in learning style, interests, or definition of what makes a happy and successful life.

We affirm the ideal of the renaissance person. Our ultimate goal is to produce renaissance men and women who have not only learned how to learn, but also have an innate love of learning, a wide range of interests, and an openness to new ideas and possibilities.

We nurture self-esteem and affirm that it is a crucial ingredient for the full expression of a person's potential. This is the very fabric of our community and our educational methods.

We teach students to not be afraid of failure. We support them in stepping outside of their comfort zone and to not fear taking risks. We encourage them to learn from their experiences— both successes and failures—and to accept the outcome as non-threatening feedback on their progress and personal growth.

We nurture intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physical growth in developing a whole, healthful being.

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OUR SCHOOL PROFILE



Montessori Education
Psychological Well-being



Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School (HMES) has operated out of the historical former Birchwood School building since 2018. HMES was accredited by Alberta education initially as an ECS Kindergarten program in 2019. Backing into the Birchwood Trails, the building creates breathtaking indoor and outdoor nature-based classrooms, with trails and forest for outdoor activities and fitness programs. We will deliberately seek to create a campus of timeless natural beauty that communicates to our students that the buildings and grounds are expressions of our love and commitment to their education and success.

As of Sept 2020, The Government of Alberta accredited HMES as an independent school offering programs for preschool (ages 3 and 4) through to Grade 6. HMES partnered with the International Montessori Council (IMC) to work on its accreditation status. Using the IMC Montessori principles, HMES is fully committed to following the Alberta Program of Studies in order to set standards stipulated by the Alberta Education.

HMES is steadily working towards graduating a grade each year to promote continued enrolment growth in all programs, with particular emphasis on the Upper Elementary program (Gr4-6) Which we hope to grow into a Junior High School in 2026-2027 school year.

HMES serves families residing in the local thick wood area surrounding the Birchwood trails, Timberlea area, the downtown area, Gregoire areas with the furthest family traveling from Saprae Creek 23km from the school.

Students with identified special education codes are supported within HMES inclusive classrooms. Each class is led by a teacher with both Alberta Teaching Certification and MACTE Montessori Guide training and is supported by a Montessori Assistant, and when necessary, an Educational Assistant to further support student needs and diverse Learning Styles. We acknowledge that children learn in different ways and at different paces. Our goal is to view each child as a unique human being and to be as flexible as possible in addressing his or her learning style and needs as an individual learner. We also seek to provide an environment open to students with diverse learning styles, while our primary focus will always be the well-being and best interests of those students who will thrive in our Montessori environment. In every case, we assess whether our school is able to meet a student's needs, while keeping the integrity of the classroom.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



HILLCREST MONTESSORI
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

We recognize that a Montessori school is more than a place of learning; it is a community of children and adults that has a significant impact on our students' capacity to learn, grow, create, develop, assimilate values, and relate peacefully and respectfully to other people and to the natural world.



Throughout the year we encouraged parents to participate in programs that can help them to refine their parenting strategies, to facilitate the development of independence, responsibility, self-confidence and self-respect in their sons and daughters, and in themselves. We recognize parenting as an extremely difficult, rewarding and valuable job for which we have had little preparation and for which, in the modern world, we get little support. We committed and provided ways to provide that support for families from birth through adulthood by the creation of a parenting center that includes parenting classes currently individually based as on each family's need.

The **Ambassador Parent Program**: We understand the special needs of new participants in the community and the necessity of a program to match new families with ones experienced in the community to provide support and information.

Short term goal:

- We have created ongoing support groups, and a parenting library and Class Community Meetings
- There are also two formally scheduled Parent Teacher Conferences within the school calendar to communicate specific, individualized feedback and a commentary on student progress.
- Parents contributed to strategic planning through Parent Advisory Council meetings.
- Multiple community-based agencies such as Birchwood Circle of care, Providence, Khan Academy Occupational Therapy, Sound Speech Pathology provide input to Individual Program Plans and future direction of learner supports.

Parent Teacher Interviews

This is a confidential meetings between parents and teachers, where discussions revolve around a students progress and any potential issues affecting their learning or behavior. Please prepare to discuss ideas on student and school improvements.

Long Term Goal:

Established of a sensory room and Inclusion lending library for HMA students and the community.



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FOSTERING ENGAGEMENT WITH THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY



Initiatives to support First Nations, Métis, and Inuit student success within Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School

In 2022-2023, Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School had 1 student who self-identified as an Indigenous student, and as we enter the 2024 -2025 HMES now has 4. Within this period we have worked with our staff and the student's family to enhance our programs to ensure success for the aforementioned Indigenous students and any future Indigenous students we may receive. Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School used the Montessori approach to education by focusing on sensitive periods, a prepared environment, sensory education, and spontaneous activity through repetition. During sensitive periods, the students are encouraged to let go of everything else and focus on aspects of their education. This increases their levels of concentration and attention span. A prepared environment planned activities and calendars bring consistency to the students and reduce stress associated with uncertainty and transitions. Sensory education bolsters the development of the students' senses and increases their curiosity. This like every other aspect should be age-appropriate and lead to the discovery of new things such as the results of science experiments. Through repetition, learning is reinforced and the excitement is maintained in spontaneity. For all this to work, Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School would work with the parents and guardians of the students and consider the impact of culture learning.



The Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommends that we all have a part to play to create a Canada in which all people are equal at social, health and economic outcomes. At Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School, we support these recommendations by ensuring that all students are respected and given the opportunity and resources required to succeed. Through the Montessori approach to education, it is even more applicable because Montessori philosophy dictates that an individual approach to education yields the most results as it meets the student at their point of need. This helps the students because a teaching guide takes each student through the curriculum at a pace which ensures success rather than the standard teaching method that may leave slower learners behind.

By celebrating the Orange Shirt Day and National Indigenous People's Day, acknowledgments at school ceremonies First Nations students feel their culture is recognized, respected and represented at Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School. Furthermore, some of school staff members were privileged to attend a Metis training course at Metis Crossing at which they were inculcated the way of life of the Metis people. This assisted them in delivering more relevant, accurate and inspiring teaching of the indigenous people.

EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES



HILLCREST MONTESSORI
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

VALUES

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Stewardship: A lifelong commitment to give something back through service to others who are in need.



An education for a life



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EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES

OUR 1ST PRIORITY

Outcome #1: Create a school community wherein each student, staff, and families feel valued, respected, and accepted as a member of the community and school. They will have a sense of belonging while contributing to an environment where individual needs are respected and accommodated throughout all interactions within our community. The school's role is to put in place an enabling and welcoming, caring, respectful and safe working and conducive learning environment.

Outcome #2: Provision of supports to enhance mental and physical health and wellness for both students and staff.



OUR 2ND PRIORITY

Outcome: Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School will continue to improve student growth in literacy and numeracy skills.



OUR 3RD PRIORITY

Outcome: Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School will promote enrolment of more students.



OUR 4TH PRIORITY

Outcome: Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School will promote the professional development of staff to enhance the knowledge and application of the Montessori philosophy.



OUR 5TH PRIORITY

Outcome: Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School will promote Overall, parent and community involvement and engagement to cultivate a thriving educational environment, that positively impacts students, families, and the school community as a whole.



OUR 6TH PRIORITY

Outcome: Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School to expand Physical Education and Wellness as well as the development of a second language in the students.



A Proud member of



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SCHOOL FOUNDATION

OUR 1ST PRIORITY



HILLCREST MONTESSORI
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



OUR 1ST PRIORITY OUTCOMES

Outcome: #1: Create a school community wherein each student, staff, and family member feels valued, respected, and accepted as a member of the community and school. They will feel a sense of belonging while contributing to an environment where individual needs are respected and accommodated throughout all interactions within our community. The school's role is to implement a welcoming, caring, respectful, safe working, and conducive learning environment.

Outcome #2: Provision of support to enhance mental and physical health and wellness for students and staff.



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SCHOOL FOUNDATION

PRIORITY 1 - STRATEGIES



STRATEGIES

- Established a clear and all-encompassing definition of inclusion regarding our school for students, staff, parents, and community members.
- Staff supported with resources and training to integrate social emotional learning within the classroom environment.
- Introduced policies and social codes of conducts that are embedded inclusion education.
- We worked with First Nations Liaison Officers to learning more about First Nations Culture.
- We are a signatory to the Wood Buffalo Inclusion Charter
- We enroll all students into the school regardless of their academic or intellectual capability
- We enrolled into the Metis Crossing Early Learning Education Childcare Training to enhance our First Nation offering and inclusion
- Introduced staff to social emotional learning concepts in a school setting.
- Created partnerships with various community agencies that support inclusive education, wellness and mental health.
- Maintaining an enabling learning environment that has a clear culture of inclusion
- We have confident teachers that embrace new administrative procedures and school codes that are inclusive in nature.
- Our students have clear sense of belonging to their school community.
- Parental engagement efforts have improved awareness of inclusion in our school.
- There is a school wide creation of a culture of inclusion
- Buy- in from staff, parents and students in establishing health social emotional learning environment has greatly improved.

	Provincial	Local
Measures AEA survey results measures of Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys at parent and community events • First Nations, Métis and Inuit student success • Local survey results

OUR 2ND PRIORITY



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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



OUR 2ND PRIORITY OUTCOMES

Outcome: Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School will continue to improve student growth in literacy and numeracy skills.



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PRIORITY 2 - STRATEGIES



STRATEGIES

- Introduce math clubs and non-competitive fairs at the school to provide platforms from students to train and showcase their numeracy skills
 - Introduce non-competitive drama, theatre and poetry programs to enhance the student’s appreciation, understanding and desire for literacy skills
 - The school will work with trained and qualified specialists such as Speech and Language Pathologists to conduct early assessments for students so as identify any supports required for education
 - Home reading programs will be introduced whereby students will be given set reading plans to follow which will be signed off by parents once attained
 - A reading buddy system will be made available which will see senior students partnered with juniors so as to improve both categories’ literacy skills. This teaching method aligns with the Montessori Philosophy
 - The students will be given an opportunity to run the school store which will provide them with a real-world application of math and literacy
- The school will partner with the Wood Buffalo Library to create a satellite city library within the school library as well as having a representative from the city library do monthly book reading. This will pique the students’ interest in reading

	Provincial	Local
Measures	Student Learning Assessment Grade 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments Used: EYE, DA, TA • Provincial Literacy and Numeracy Screening Assessment grades1-3 • AEA survey results <p>Classroom Measures</p> <p>ERB Comprehensive Testing Program that covers reading, listening, vocabulary, writing, mathematics, and science.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERB Milestone measures assessments are conducted 3 times a year to interpret students’ scores and provide JIT interventions • Montessori Early Years and Lower Elementary Assessments that align with the Alberta Education curriculum.

OUR 3RD PRIORITY



Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School

259 likes • 298 followers



HILLCREST MONTESSORI
HIGH SCHOOL



OUR 3RD PRIORITY OUTCOMES

Outcome: Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School will promote enrolment of more students.

PRIORITY 3 - STRATEGIES



STRATEGIES

- Expansion of the school to accommodate grade 7-9 students
- Partner with strategic stakeholders to enroll international students
- Partner with local daycares to make our school the desired elementary school of choice
- Incentive key employers within the Wood Buffalo Regional Municipality to have their staff’s children at Hillcrest
- Making the school more visible at local and provincial level
- Conduct social media marketing campaigns
- Community outreach
- Improve marketing, branding and digital presence
- Leverage technology, school diversity and search engine optimization to improve enrollment
- Conduct annual family satisfaction survey to determine areas of interest
- Engage Hillcrest Montessori Alumni to support enrolment plans by sharing their Montessori experiences on our social media platforms

	Provincial	Local
Measures	AEA survey results	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enrollment statistics• Local survey results• Budgets & lease establishment /lease reviews



OUR 4TH PRIORITY

Outcome: Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School will promote the professional development of staff to enhance the knowledge and application of the Montessori philosophy



PRIORITY 4 - STRATEGIES



STRATEGIES

- Establish group professional development related to the school wide literacy and numeracy
- Introduce teacher training hubs
- Register teachers to attend conferences and trainings
- Every teacher to have a Teacher Professional Growth Plan
- All teachers to be registered under the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education
- Teachers to receive training on engaging with parents. This will assist in fostering a good parent-teacher relationship for the betterment of the students
- Conduct training series that align Montessori philosophy with the First Nations, Metis and InnuIt education and way of life
- Staff are to attend Montessori workshops as well as Alberta Teachers Association workshops

	Provincial	Local
Measures	AEA survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formal and informal teaching observations by school principal• local survey results



HILLCREST MONTESSORI
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

OUR 5TH PRIORITY



OUR 5TH PRIORITY OUTCOMES

Outcome: Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School will promote Overall, parent and community involvement and engagement to cultivate a thriving educational environment, that positively impacts students, families, and the school community as a whole.



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PRIORITY 5 - STRATEGIES

STRATEGIES

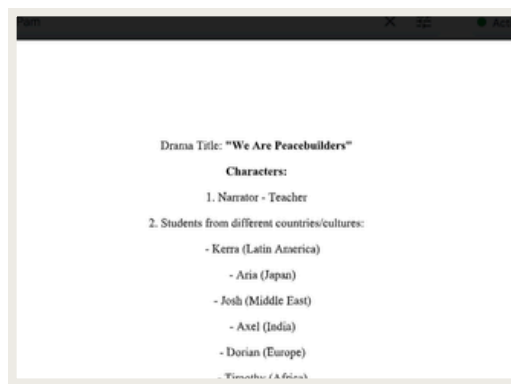
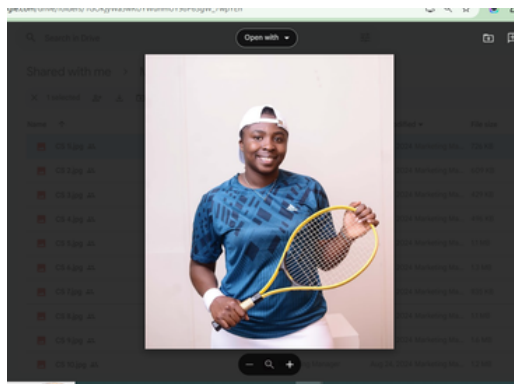
- Create home room communities, comprising of the classroom teacher and parents, which will meet monthly to discuss relevant matters about the school, students and the future classroom activities
- The teacher to introduce classroom newsletters to share news with the parents
- Parents to join the International Montessori Family Alliance which will share tips, suggestions and latest updates on parenting the Montessori way
- Enrol parents for Montessori parenting courses
- Instil an ambassador program in which older parents will be partnered with newer ones to share on what to expect and how things work from a parent's perspective
- Create open house sessions for members of the communities to come and experience Montessori classis in action

	Provincial	Local
Measures	Alberta Education Accountability pillar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing dialogue with Parent Advisory Council to support student growth and achievement • Student led Consultative Meetings with parents to showcase student's leadership skills • Inclusive Education meetings with parents, Providence, Inclusion Alberta, and Wood Buffalo Inclusion Charter to foster inclusion elements in our school. • We are working in collaboration with the Montessori Family Alliance, International Montessori Centre, and Montessori Foundation to equip current and community families with an alternative education system that promotes early learning in literacy and numeracy, great character building, a great love of learning, and an education that meets the needs of a 21st century citizen

OUR 6TH PRIORITY



HILLCREST MONTESSORI
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



OUR 6TH PRIORITY OUTCOMES

Outcome: Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School to expand Physical Education and Wellness as well as the development of a second language in the students



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PRIORITY 6 - STRATEGIES



STRATEGIES

- Hire a dedicated part-time physical education teacher
- Provide targeted physical education activities
- Partner with Fort McMurray sport associations such as the tennis, golf and baseball associations to conduct regular engaging training sessions with students
- Increase membership of the already existing ski club by lowering minimum age requirements
- Introduce Spanish and Michif as additional languages
- Expose student to the languages, culture and way of life of the Metis by visiting Metis communities such as Metis Crossing and working with the local elders to share more about the Metis people with the students
- Conduct field trips to supplement physical education and wellness through activities such as swimming, hiking, walking, skating and bike riding
- Have a qualified yoga instructor to conduct yoga lessons with the students

	Provincial	Local
Measures	AEA survey results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local survey results

GOVERNANCE



Local Component: Budget Summary 2024-2025

Revenue Summary	Amount	Contextual Information
Alberta Education	\$233,652.00	ECS-Gr6
Tuition	\$95,420.00	
Non-instructional Fees	\$13,500.00	
Other	\$7,700.00	
Total Revenue	\$350,272.00	
Expense Summary	Amount	Contextual Information
Salaries and Benefits	\$240,00.00	Non certified & non certified staff
Services, Contract and Supplies	\$23,512.00	Includes services for special education students
Amortization	\$7,000.00	
leases & Other	\$77,760.00	
Total Expense	\$347,272.00	
Total Revenue Less Expense	\$3,000.00	

OUR 2024-2025 : YEAR 1 IMPLEMENTATION KEY PRIORITIES

- The school will strive and be committed to ensuring the appropriate allocation of professional development funds so that returning and new staff can refresh their knowledge of the Montessori pedagogy and apply best practices in current educational research.
- HMES is dedicating funds via fundraising towards improving the school gymnasium, painting, and physical education equipment.
- Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School has allocated funds within the 2024-2025 school budget to acquire additional resources to support expanded literacy and numeracy programming.
- Through consultation with PAC, Board of Directors, parents, and the general community, the school is looking at adding grades 7-9 in the next two years



**HILLCREST MONTESSORI
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**



Contact Us **&**

**Empower your child through
a comprehensive Montessori education**



587 - 258 - 1777



hillcrest@fmamacad.com



190 Tamarack Way. Fort McMurray, AB



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