

HILLCREST MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

3-YEAR EDUCATION PLAN 2024/2025 – 2026/2027



HILLCREST MONTESSORI
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1ST YEAR 2024-2025
2ND YEAR 2025-2026
3RD YEAR 2026-2027



FORT McMURRAY
—MONTESSORI—
SCHOOL FOUNDATION

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT



The Education Plan for Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School, commencing September 2025, was prepared under the direction of the operator and/or governing body, in accordance with the responsibilities outlined in the Private Schools Regulation and the Ministerial Grants Regulation. This plan was developed within the context of the provincial government's business and fiscal plans. The operator and/or governing body has utilized performance results to inform the development of the plan and is committed to implementing the strategies contained within it to enhance student learning and outcomes.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Shonhiwa".

Board Chair - Charity Shonhiwa

Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School

ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK



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 also serves with an out-of-school care program upon request. Our enrollment comprises 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-certified teacher. The elementary classroom is led by a Montessori guide/Alberta Education-certified 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. To ensure that we meet the Alberta Education Curriculum, our Kindergarten Program of Studies and the Alberta Education Program of Studies, our Montessori curriculum fully aligns with the requirements of Alberta Education.

HMES Education Plan outcomes are aligned with Alberta Education's Business Plan for 2024-27, as student success and achievement are at the forefront of planning. Additionally, HMES's pursuit of new program opportunities, such as introducing French Bilingualism and marketing campaigns for additional spaces for Grades 4 to 6, is aligned with Alberta Education's commitment to promote choice in education and address Alberta's growing student population through increasing the number of classrooms across the province.

School KEY INSIGHTS

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.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



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.



Stakeholders at HMES include and are not limited to, staff, parents, students, the Board of Directors and community partners. This team each year engages in the development of HMES Education Plan.

- Each year The annual Alberta Education Assurance (AEA) survey is sent to teachers, students and parents of HMES. Due to the school size, we send out the local surveys to all parents and the responses form critical information for the reporting (AERR) and planning processes. The results from this survey provide feedback and data for local priorities and school-level initiatives
- Our teachers remain engaged through ongoing dialogue during staff meetings and designated professional development Fridays throughout the year.
- The HMES Board of Directors supports strategic planning by providing input and guidance to the school principal. In collaboration with the principal, the Board helps develop the annual budget and ensures alignment between the Education Plan and budget priorities.
- The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is invited to contribute questions to the survey development process. Following the survey, results—along with the Annual Education Results Report (AERR)—are presented and reviewed at PAC meetings to gather feedback and input, providing valuable insights for the planning process.

FOSTERING ENGAGEMENT WITH THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY



In 2024-2025, Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School had 3 students who self-identified as Indigenous. and the number has remain the same for the 2025-2026 school year.

During this time, we have worked closely with our staff and the students' families to enhance our programs and ensure the success of current Indigenous students, as well as any future Indigenous students who may join our school.

At Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School, we use the Montessori approach to education, which emphasizes sensitive periods, a prepared environment, sensory education, and spontaneous activity through repetition.

- Sensitive Periods: Students are encouraged to focus deeply on specific aspects of their learning, which helps increase concentration and attention span.
- Prepared Environment: Planned activities and consistent calendars provide structure, reduce stress, and ease transitions.
- Sensory Education: Hands-on learning fosters curiosity, strengthens the senses, and encourages discovery—for example, exploring the outcomes of science experiments.
- Repetition: Through repetition, learning is reinforced while maintaining spontaneity and excitement.

To ensure these practices are meaningful and inclusive, HMES works in partnership with parents and guardians, while also considering the cultural context of student learning.



We are honored to present Elder Janette Flett-Jones as a special part of our school community.

Elder Flett-Jones was born and raised in Fort Chipewyan, growing up speaking Dene and living the traditional Dene lifestyle before attending the local Residential School at age six. She later became a teacher for over 40 years and continues to be a strong voice for Dene language and culture. She is a proud mother, wife, aunty, and granny to three beautiful grandchildren, and is deeply passionate about teaching and preserving the Dene language.

We are excited to share that Elder Flett-Jones will be visiting our school once a week to work closely with our students. She will share her knowledge, culture, stories, and language in ways that inspire connection, learning, and respect for Indigenous traditions.

Her weekly visits will be a meaningful opportunity for students to engage with Dene culture and history directly from a respected Elder and educator.

We look forward to learning from her wisdom and building this special relationship together.



HMES SCHOOL PRIORITIES

SUMMARY



PRIORITY #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.

PRIORITY #2

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

PRIORITY #3

Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School will promote enrollment of more students.

PRIORITY #4

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

PRIORITY #5

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.

PRIORITY #6

Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School aims to enhance and broaden its Physical Education (PE) and Wellness programming to support the holistic development of its students—physically, mentally, and emotionally.

OUR 1ST PRIORITY



OUR 1ST PRIORITY OUTCOMES

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.

PRIORITY 1

1st Year 2024-2025

STRATEGIES

Enabling Learning Environment

- HMES will prepare learning spaces that reflect Montessori principles—mixed-age groupings, hands-on materials, thoughtfully arranged learning areas—that foster independence, peer teaching, and respect for diversity. Explicit school-wide norms (respect, kindness, ownership) will be taught and consistently reinforced through restorative practices, morning community circles, and calm-down zones.
- Staff will engage in cultural responsiveness training and regularly celebrate diverse identities and perspectives within curricula and community events.

Definition of Inclusion

- HMES will establish a clear and comprehensive definition of inclusion that will be understood and embraced by students, staff, parents, and community members. This shared understanding will provide a foundation for inclusive practices, ensuring that all individuals will feel welcomed, valued, and supported in the school community.

Staff Support and Professional Development

- Our staff will receive extensive resources and training to effectively integrate social-emotional learning within the classroom environment. This training will equip educators with the skills to foster emotional intelligence, self-regulation, and empathy—vital components for student success in an inclusive setting.

Policies and Codes of Conduct

- HMES will introduce new policies and social codes of conduct that will embed inclusive education principles into everyday school life. These policies will focus on ensuring respect, understanding, and equitable opportunities for all students, thereby promoting a culture of inclusivity across the school community.

Enrollment of All Students

- HMES will continue to prioritize inclusivity by enrolling all students, regardless of their academic or intellectual capabilities. We will provide equitable access to education for every child, ensuring that all students will receive the support they need to thrive.

RESULTS

Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School (HMES) has made significant strides in fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students, staff, parents, and community members. Below is a report outlining the key accomplishments in the areas of inclusion, social-emotional learning (SEL), and community engagement.

Enabling Learning Environment

- HMES had prepared learning spaces that reflected Montessori principles—such as mixed-age groupings, hands-on materials, and thoughtfully arranged learning areas—that fostered independence, peer teaching, and respect for diversity.
- Explicit school-wide norms (respect, kindness, ownership) were taught and consistently reinforced through restorative practices, morning community circles, and calm-down zones.
- Staff engaged in cultural-responsiveness training and regularly celebrated diverse identities and perspectives within curricula and community events, drawing from Montessori's multicultural approach—where inclusive lessons, cultural festivals, and diverse materials are woven into the classroom to model respect and global citizenship

Definition of Inclusion

- HMES successfully established a clear and comprehensive definition of inclusion that is understood and embraced by students, staff, parents, and community members. This shared understanding provides a foundation for inclusive practices, ensuring that all individuals feel welcomed, valued, and supported in the school community.

Staff Support and Professional Development

- Our staff received extensive resources and training to effectively integrate social-emotional learning within the classroom environment. This training equipped educators with the skills to foster emotional intelligence, self-regulation, and empathy, which are vital for student success in an inclusive setting.

Policies and Codes of Conduct

- HMES introduced new policies and social codes of conduct that embed inclusive education principles into everyday school life. These policies focus on ensuring respect, understanding, and equitable opportunities for all students, promoting a culture of inclusivity across the school community.

Enrollment of All Students

- HMES revitalized policies to ensure the enrolment procedures worked to prioritize inclusivity by enrolling all students, regardless of their academic or intellectual capabilities. We believe in providing equitable access to education for every child, ensuring that all students receive the support they need to thrive.

PRIORITY 1 - CONTINUED



	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

2nd year 2025-2026

STRATEGIES

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Integration

- HMES will form a dedicated SEL Leadership Team (including administrators, teachers, and parents) to craft a unified SEL vision aligned with Montessori pedagogy. The team will design and embed short SEL lessons—morning meetings, emotion check-ins, role-play, restorative circles—across all academic subjects and classroom routines.
- Teachers will receive ongoing SEL training and peer coaching, enabling them to model and guide emotional literacy, self-management, empathy, and responsible decision-making. Outcome tracking will include student surveys, behavior data, and teacher observations, reviewed regularly for continuous improvement

Enhancing the Enabled Learning Environment

- Staff will engage in cultural responsiveness training and regularly celebrate diverse identities and perspectives within curricula and community events.

Confident, Inclusive Teaching Staff

- HMES will invest in professional development aligned with evidence-based SEL and inclusive teaching practices. Teachers will be trained in SEL curricula and Montessori methods, receive coaching on integrating emotional intelligence into all subjects, and model empathy and self-awareness.
- Montessori-trained educators will co-teach in mixed-age settings, mentoring one another and integrating inclusion into daily instruction. SEL and behavior management tools will include micro-lessons, class meetings, and restorative conferencing. Regular teacher reflection meetings will review implementation fidelity and adjust strategies as needed.

Parental Engagement and Awareness

- HMES will engage families as partners in SEL and inclusion through structured communication and education. This will include Back-to-School SEL orientation, monthly SEL tip newsletters, home-school connections like emotion-tracking activities, and interactive workshops.
- Parent participation will be encouraged in community-building events—cultural celebrations, service projects, and classroom observations—facilitating shared ownership of inclusion values.
- Regular feedback loops via surveys and conferences will inform ongoing adjustments while reinforcing inclusive practices at home and school.

OUR 2ND PRIORITY



OUR 2ND PRIORITY OUTCOMES

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

PRIORITY 2

1st Year 2024-2025

STRATEGIES

Introduction of Non-Competitive Drama and Theatre Programs

- HMES will introduce non-competitive drama and theatre programs, along with a filming and broadcasting enrichment opportunity for students in Grades 1-5. These programs will aim to increase students' appreciation for literacy skills, providing creative outlets to develop both verbal and non-verbal communication abilities.

Early Speech and Language Assessments

- HMES will ensure all Early Years and Kindergarten students are tested by trained and qualified Speech-Language Pathologists. These early assessments will allow the identification of any speech or language delays and will enable us to provide appropriate support, ensuring that all students will receive the early intervention they require for educational success.

Benchmark Assessments

- HMES will conduct benchmark assessments in October, February, and May to monitor student progress in literacy and numeracy. These assessments will allow the identification of areas in need of improvement and will ensure that personalized supports can be provided as needed.

Alberta Education Literacy and Numeracy Assessments

- As part of the new Alberta Education framework, HMES will administer literacy and numeracy assessments to Kindergarten students in January and to Grades 1-3 students in the Fall. These assessments will help identify key areas of student development and will enable targeted support early in the school year.

RESULTS

Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School (HMES) has made significant progress in enhancing student learning outcomes across various academic areas, with a particular focus on literacy, numeracy, and enrichment activities.

Introduction of Non-Competitive Drama and Theatre Programs

- HMES introduced non-competitive drama and theatre programs, as well as a filming and broadcasting enrichment opportunity for students in Grades 1-5. Children participated in role-plays, skits, and video productions built into the broader curriculum to boost literacy and public speaking skills
- Students gained confidence in public speaking, storytelling, and teamwork, while enhancing their literacy and comprehension skills.

Early Speech and Language Assessments

- All Early Years and Kindergarten students were assessed by qualified Speech-Language Pathologists on-site - a service embedded in HMES's Sensory Integration Program - Pathologists completed screenings early in the year, identified individual needs, and worked alongside educators to develop targeted support plans.
- This early intervention model ensured that students received tailored language support through both clinic-style sessions and classroom strategies, promoting clear foundations for learning.

Benchmark Assessments

- HMES administered benchmark assessments in October, February, and May to track progress in literacy and numeracy. Using classroom-level data, teachers identified learning gaps and implemented differentiated instruction tailored to each student's needs. These assessment cycles were paired with Intervention Team meetings, where evidence-informed strategies were selected and regularly updated based on student improvement, ensuring responsive and targeted support.

Alberta Education Literacy and Numeracy Assessments

- Aligned with the Alberta Education framework, HMES conducted standardized literacy and numeracy assessments: Kindergarten students in January, and Grades 1-3 in Fall. Educators analyzed results to pinpoint developmental needs, and collaboratively designed individualized learning plans.
- Based on insights, they prioritized small-group work, targeted mini-lessons, and ongoing progress monitoring to ensure early identification and remediation in key academic areas.

PRIORITY 2 - CONTINUED



	Provincial	Local
Measures	Student Learning Assessment K- Grade 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provincial Literacy and Numeracy Screening Assessment K-Grades 3 AEA survey results Classroom Measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Montessori Early Years and Lower Elementary Assessments that align with the Alberta Education curriculum.

2nd year 2025-2026

STRATEGIES

Looking ahead to the 2025-2026 school year, HMES plans to expand and enhance its literacy and numeracy programs, continuing to build on the strong foundation established this year.

Re-Introduction of the Reading Buddies Initiative

- The Reading Buddies initiative will be re-introduced, with upper elementary students partnering with Kindergarten students on a weekly basis. This will not only improve the literacy skills of both groups but also strengthen the sense of community within the school. This peer-to-peer learning model aligns with the Montessori philosophy of collaborative learning

Home Reading Programs

- HMES will launch a home reading program for all students in Grades K-Gr 3, providing personalized reading plans tailored to each student's level. This initiative will aim to foster a lifelong love of reading while reinforcing literacy skills at home, promoting continuous growth in reading fluency and comprehension.

Staff Professional Development in Phonemic Awareness

- HMES will host a series of professional development workshops focused on phonemic awareness. Teachers will learn how to create and use hands-on manipulatives to support early learners in mastering letter sounds. These activities will strengthen foundational literacy skills in Early Years and Kindergarten.

Kindergarten Pilot Reading Program (2025-2026)

- HMES will launch a Kindergarten pilot reading program running five days per week for one hour, focused on strengthening English reading while students are simultaneously beginning French. This balanced bilingual initiative will ensure equitable literacy development in both languages, supporting dual-language proficiency from an early age.

EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES 2025-2026

OUR 3RD PRIORITY



Alberta Education Accredited Montessori Elementary School

Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School

259 likes • 298 followers



HILLCREST MONTESSORI HIGH SCHOOL



OUR 3RD PRIORITY OUTCOMES

Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School will promote enrollment of more students.

PRIORITY 3

1st Year 2024-2025

STRATEGIES

Conduct social media marketing campaigns

- HMES will implement Strategic, targeted campaigns on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn will showcase the school's culture, programs, events, and success stories. We will use paid ads, parent testimonials, and student spotlights to reach prospective families and increase online engagement.

Community outreach

- Hillcrest will strengthen community ties by hosting public events, volunteering initiatives, open houses, and educational seminars. Active participation in local fairs and festivals will position the school as an integral part of the community, fostering goodwill and increasing interest among local families.

Improve marketing, branding, and digital presence

- We will refresh our branding to reflect the school's mission, values, and modern approach to Montessori education. Website enhancements, mobile optimization, and professional graphic design will ensure that all marketing materials consistently communicate quality and credibility.

Conduct annual family satisfaction survey to determine areas of interest

- An annual feedback survey will be created to help us understand the needs and priorities of our families. Results will guide strategic improvements, inform programming decisions, and demonstrate our commitment to continuous quality enhancement.

Engage Hillcrest Montessori Alumni to support enrollment plans by sharing their Montessori experiences on our social media platforms

- We will build an alumni engagement program that invites former students to share testimonials, videos, and career updates. Their success stories serve as powerful endorsements for prospective families and reinforce the long-term value of a Montessori education at Hillcrest.

RESULTS

Conduct social media marketing campaigns

- HMES implemented targeted campaigns on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to showcase the school's culture, programs, events, and success stories. These campaigns included paid advertisements, parent testimonials, and student spotlights, aiming to increase online engagement and attract prospective families. The school's active presence on social media helped build a strong online community and enhanced its visibility.

Community outreach

- HMES organized several public events to connect with the local community. One notable event was the Community Garage Sale held on May 10, 2025, at the school's gymnasium. This event featured bouncy castles, glitter tattoos, and a bake sale, providing a family-friendly atmosphere while supporting local students.
- Additionally, the school participated in local fairs and festivals, positioning itself as an integral part of the community and fostering goodwill among local families.

Improve marketing, branding, and digital presence

- Recognizing the importance of a cohesive brand identity, HMES refreshed its branding to reflect the school's mission, values, and modern approach to Montessori education. This included website enhancements for mobile optimization, professional graphic design, and consistent messaging across all platforms. These updates ensured that all marketing materials consistently communicated quality and credibility, reinforcing the school's commitment to excellence.

Conduct annual family satisfaction survey to determine areas of interest

- HMES conducted an annual family satisfaction survey to gather insights into the needs and priorities of its families. The results guided strategic improvements, informed programming decisions, and demonstrated the school's commitment to continuous quality enhancement. By actively seeking and responding to family input, HMES created a responsive and supportive educational environment.

Engage Hillcrest Montessori Alumni to support enrollment plans by sharing their Montessori experiences on our social media platforms

- HMES established an alumni engagement program that invited former students to share their Montessori experiences on social media platforms. The first Alumni Committee meeting was held, where alumni shared inspiring stories of resilience, growth, and community. By featuring alumni success stories, the school highlighted the long-term benefits of a Montessori education and strengthened its reputation among prospective families.
- This initiative also fostered a sense of pride and connection among alumni, encouraging them to remain engaged with the school community.

Through these initiatives, HMES has successfully enhanced its community engagement, digital presence, and alumni relations, reinforcing its commitment to providing a supportive and inclusive educational environment.

PRIORITY 3 - CONTINUED



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

2nd year 2025-2026

STRATEGIES

Incentivize key employers within the Wood Buffalo Regional Municipality to have their staff's children at Hillcrest

- We will work with major employers in the region to create enrollment incentive programs. These may include tuition discounts, employer-sponsored scholarships, or flexible payment plans. By aligning with the HR goals of these organizations, Hillcrest positions itself as a family-friendly benefit that supports employee retention and satisfaction.

Leverage technology, school diversity, and search engine optimization (SEO) to improve enrollment

- By showcasing our diverse school community and innovative use of educational technology, Hillcrest will enhance its digital footprint. Improved SEO practices—like optimized website content, blogging, and keyword targeting—will increase online visibility to families searching for quality education options.



OUR 4TH PRIORITY



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



PRIORITY 4

1st Year 2024-2025

STRATEGIES

Implement a Structured Montessori Professional Development Pathway

- Hillcrest will establish a comprehensive, year-long professional development schedule that aligns the Montessori approach with Alberta's updated curriculum. This plan will include quarterly in-house workshops facilitated by experienced Montessori educators and visiting specialists, focusing on key areas such as early literacy, numeracy, and interdisciplinary project work.
- Hillcrest will dedicate professional development funds to support staff enrollment in MACTE-accredited Montessori training programs. Teachers pursuing credentials will be given flexibility in their schedules and paired with mentors to support their coursework and practicum components, ensuring both pedagogical growth and practical application in the classroom.

RESULTS

Implementing a Structured Montessori Professional Development Pathway

- HMES launched a year-long structured professional development program designed to align Montessori principles with Alberta's evolving curriculum. Four in-house workshops were held during the year, facilitated by seasoned Montessori educators and visiting specialists, each focusing on areas like early literacy, hands-on numeracy, and interdisciplinary project-based learning.
- The school allocated a budget specifically to support staff enrollment in MACTE-accredited Montessori training. Teachers chose programs based on classroom needs—many opting for hybrid models—and were granted scheduling flexibility, including release days for coursework.
- Each participant was paired with a mentor (typically an AMI- or AMS-trained guide), ensuring classroom learning could be immediately applied through practicum experiences. The combination of Montessori-accredited training, mentor support, and school-funded tuition reflected best practices in educator development and teacher retention.

PRIORITY 4 - CONTINUED



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

2nd year 2025-2026

STRATEGIES

1. Promote Reflective Montessori Practice School-Wide

- To embed reflection as a core aspect of professional growth, all teaching staff will maintain a weekly reflective journal focused on Montessori principles, student behavior, and the effectiveness of the prepared environment. Time will be allocated during staff meetings and professional development days for teachers to share insights and engage in group reflection.
- At the end of each term, teachers will complete a self-assessment that prompts evaluation of their alignment with Montessori pedagogy and personal teaching goals. These reflections will form the foundation for performance dialogue with school leadership, enabling meaningful, strengths-based feedback and individualized goal setting. This approach ensures that professional development remains teacher-driven and grounded in daily classroom experience.

2. Create a Mentorship & Coaching Program for Professional Development in bilingual Montessori Instruction

- To foster a collaborative learning culture, Hillcrest will implement a structured mentorship and coaching program that pairs French-speaking staff with experienced Montessori guides. These mentor-mentee pairs will meet monthly for planning, observation debriefs, and problem-solving sessions. Classroom observations will be conducted at least twice per term using a shared framework, allowing mentors to provide constructive feedback focused on lesson delivery, classroom flow, and student engagement.
- For Bilingual classrooms a French instructional coach will be engaged to model high-quality lessons, assist with bilingual material development, and offer direct support in classroom routines.
- To promote peer-to-peer learning, a formal observation cycle will begin mid-year, giving staff the opportunity to visit colleagues' classrooms, reflect on practices specific to bilingual Montessori instruction, and participate in guided reflection discussions to share strategies and insights.
- To support high-quality bilingual instruction, Hillcrest will establish a dedicated Montessori Resource Library, available both physically in the staff room and digitally via a shared drive. This library will be stocked with French-language readers, grammar and vocabulary tools, culturally relevant content, and Montessori-specific guides for language instruction.

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PRIORITY 4 - CONTINUED



2nd year 2025-2026

STRATEGIES

3. Dedicated Bilingual Montessori cycle year delivery

- To establish strong French language foundations and maintain continuity, we will implement a clearly structured, developmentally appropriate French delivery model across all cycle years—from Early Years through Lower Elementary. Students will receive consistent, daily exposure to French during core instructional blocks, with lessons woven into practical life, grace and courtesy, cultural studies, and thematic work periods.
- For Early Years, oral communication and vocabulary acquisition will be prioritized through songs, movement, storytelling, and hands-on activities. In Lower Elementary, these foundations will expand into reading, writing, and spontaneous conversational practice, encouraging bilingual expression across subjects. Classrooms will include French routines and transitions—such as greetings, calendar time, and clean-up songs—to normalize French in everyday life. The program will emphasize not just language learning, but language living—cultivating comfort, curiosity, and confidence in both languages

4. Montessori-French Aligned Language & Literacy Materials

- Supportive materials such as labeled classroom objects, story baskets, flashcards, games, and puzzle words will be introduced to reinforce vocabulary acquisition and sentence construction. Songs, rhymes, and action-based commands will be integrated into daily routines to support auditory memory and fluency. Storytelling materials—such as felt boards, puppets, and story sequencing cards—will deepen comprehension and expand narrative vocabulary in playful and memorable ways.

5. Staff Capacity Building

- To ensure the success of our bilingual program, we will invest in the recruitment and professional development of qualified French-speaking staff. A certified French Language Teacher and/ or Assistant will be hired to lead language instruction and collaborate with classroom guides. Additionally, trained French-speaking support staff may be placed in classrooms to reinforce vocabulary and facilitate immersive conversation throughout the day.
- Ongoing professional development will be provided to all teaching staff on effective strategies for bilingual instruction in Montessori settings, including workshops on second language acquisition, cross-language transfer, and integrating French into existing Montessori materials and routines. Shared planning sessions will support bilingual alignment between English and French instruction, helping staff build thematic and developmental consistency across both languages.

6. Assessment and Recognition

- We will monitor student progress using language portfolios that include samples of work in reading, writing, and speaking—such as vocabulary lists, sentence compositions, oral recordings, and mini-projects. Informal oral assessments will be embedded into regular routines through observation, conversation prompts, and interactive activities like “show and tell” or role play.
- To build confidence and celebrate growth, students will participate in periodic project-based assessments such as short presentations, skits, puppet shows, or book readings in French. These will be shared with peers and families to showcase progress and build language pride. Achievements will be recognized through certificates of participation, class newsletter features, or participation in bilingual showcases during school-wide events. Celebrating milestones will help students—and parents—see tangible progress in bilingual development and stay motivated to grow.



HILLCREST MONTESSORI
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

OUR 5TH PRIORITY



 **Your Principal's Weekly Report**
September 23rd to September 27th, 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians

It is my pleasure to announce that the Upper Elementary students will be having an opportunity to work together with the Chair of our School board during this school year to discuss student perspectives on topics impacting the school. Identifying common needs and goals among the students and the Fort McMurray Montessori School Foundation Board of Directors. The students will provide the Board with feedback and insights from the student perspective on school processes, policies and initiatives to ensure that needs of all students are included as decisions are made. They will be bringing to the Chair's attention existing and emerging issues expressed by students they represent.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Patricia Marzore

NEWS

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE
AGM
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Oct 22nd, 2024
7.00PM TO 8.00PM

2 ways to participate
"in person or online"

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Location
190 TAMARACK WAY,
SCIENCE ROOM

- CHILD MINDING AVAILABLE
- PARENTS ARE WELCOME TO BRING SNACKS

Online
GOOGLE MEET TO JOINING CLICK HERE



HILLCREST MONTESSORI
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



OUR 5TH PRIORITY OUTCOMES

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

PRIORITY 5

1st Year 2024-2025

STRATEGIES

Create Homeroom Communities

- Homeroom communities will be launched in September, with each class forming a parent-teacher circle. Monthly meetings—both in-person and virtual—will become a routine platform for sharing updates, collecting feedback, and coordinating support for classroom projects and school events. Discussions will include curriculum previews, volunteering opportunities, and ideas for parent-led enrichment activities.
- A summary of each meeting will be shared via email for those who cannot attend, ensuring all parents will stay informed.

Classroom Newsletters

- Each classroom will launch a monthly digital newsletter featuring student highlights, upcoming lessons, Montessori at-home tips, and reminders.
- Photos of student work, quotes, and project summaries will be sent to parents on a bi weekly basis help parents feel connected to daily classroom life.
- A newsletter template will be developed and shared among staff, promoting consistent formatting and content quality—an approach shown to boost parent engagement and brand awareness .

Facilitate Enrollment in Montessori Parenting Courses

- A curated list of online, self-paced Montessori parenting courses will be shared with families.
- Free in-person workshops on topics like fostering independence, positive discipline, and Montessori environments at home will be offered to all parents.
- Participation feedback will indicate an increase in parental confidence and effective Montessori support in the home—an important outcome of strong parent-school collaboration .

Parent Ambassador Program

- At the start of the year, a volunteer call-out will identify enthusiastic returning parents who will be trained as ambassadors.
- New families will be matched with ambassadors before the first day of school and will be introduced through email and orientation events.
- Ambassadors will check in regularly, answering questions and guiding parents on routines, expectations, and communication channels.

Open House Sessions for Community Engagement

- Each term, HMES will host Open House days to invite current and prospective families to observe classrooms in action. Guided tours will be led by student ambassadors, and teachers will give presentations explaining Montessori philosophy. Visitors will participate in interactive activities and will view student work displays that highlight Montessori learning outcomes.

RESULTS

Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School promoted overall, parent and community involvement and engagement to cultivate a thriving educational environment, that positively impacted students, families, and the school community as a whole through thoughtful planning consistent implementation, and community collaboration

Create Homeroom Communities

- Homeroom communities were launched in September, with each class forming a parent-teacher circle.
- Monthly meetings—both in-person and virtual—became a routine platform for sharing updates, collecting feedback, and coordinating support for classroom projects and school events.
- Discussions included curriculum previews, volunteering opportunities, and ideas for parent-led enrichment activities.
- A summary of each meeting was shared via email for those unable to attend, ensuring all parents stayed informed.

Classroom Newsletters

- Each classroom launched a monthly digital newsletter featuring student highlights, upcoming lessons, Montessori at-home tips, and reminders.
- Photos of student work, quotes, and project summaries helped parents feel connected to daily classroom life.
- A newsletter template was developed and shared among staff for consistent formatting and content quality.

Facilitate the Enrollment of Parents in Montessori Parenting Courses

- Online course options were curated and shared with families who preferred self-paced learning.
- Free courses and parenting workshops on topics such as independence at home, positive discipline, and preparing a Montessori-friendly environment were offered all parents to maximize accessibility.
- Feedback surveys indicated increased confidence among parents in supporting Montessori values at home.

Parent Ambassador Program

- A volunteer call-out at the start of the year identified enthusiastic returning parents who were trained as ambassadors.
- New families were matched with ambassadors before the first day of school and introduced via email and at orientation events.
- Ambassadors checked in regularly with their matched families, answering questions and providing guidance about routines, expectations, and communication channels.
- The program fostered a welcoming inclusive atmosphere and improved parent satisfaction during the transition phase.

Open House Sessions for Community Engagement

- Open House days were hosted each term, inviting current and prospective parents to observe classrooms in action.
- Guided tours were led by student ambassadors, and teachers gave short presentations explaining the Montessori approach.
- Visitors participated in interactive activities and viewed student work displays to understand Montessori learning outcomes.
- Community members—including educators and local leaders—were impressed by the calm, purposeful classroom environments and the independence demonstrated by students.
- These sessions helped boost enrollment and deepen public understanding of the Montessori philosophy.

PRIORITY 5 - CONTINUED



	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

2nd year 2025-2026

STRATEGIES

1. Encourage Parents to Join the International Montessori Family Alliance (IMFA)

- An IMFA informational session will be held during the first parent orientation night, highlighting the benefits of membership through expert-led presentations and personal testimonials. This session will introduce families to IMFA's resources.
- Parents will be regularly reminded through monthly newsletters and homeroom meetings to explore IMFA content—such as newsletters, blogs, and live webinar events—and will receive summaries of new resources and invitations to upcoming sessions.
- We will facilitate IMFA membership among Hillcrest families by promoting group membership discounts and encouraging participation at homeroom meetings.

2. Strengthening Homeroom Communities

- To build stronger connections and consistent participation, we will introduce themed monthly topics aligned with Montessori values—such as independence, emotional regulation, and purposeful play—which will guide discussions and support collaborative problem-solving in a purposeful way. Teachers and administrators will prepare 2-3 key discussion prompts in advance to keep meetings focused.
- In program meetings parent involvement will be encouraged by rotating facilitation roles, allowing different parents to co-host meetings with support from the teacher and using a short facilitation guide to boost confidence.

3. Enhancing Classroom Newsletters

- The school will evolve our monthly newsletters into more engaging, dynamic tools by including optional video or audio clips from students reflecting on their work, allowing parents to hear directly from their children. Staff will be supported with clear privacy guidelines and consent protocols to protect student identity.
- Within our monthly snapshots we will feature a "Parent Corner," where families can share Montessori moments from home, practical tips, or even reflections on parenting challenges. Contributions will be organized in advance with a sign-up calendar coordinated by each classroom.
- To ensure consistency across classroom newsletters, staff will receive dedicated training and professional development on using newsletter tools and maintaining a uniform, polished presentation.

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PRIORITY 5 - CONTINUED



2nd year 2025-2026

STRATEGIES

4. Growing Montessori Parenting Course Participation

- To help families implement Montessori principles beyond the classroom, we will establish monthly Montessori Learning Circles, held either online or in-person. These sessions will involve watching a short video or reading a course excerpt together, followed by group discussion led by a staff facilitator.
- To motivate and recognize learning, we will issue digital or printed certificates to parents who complete designated courses, and spotlight their participation in our newsletters.
- We will coordinate with local Montessori trainers and parenting experts to host live workshops throughout the year, focusing on practical topics like discipline, home routines, and language development. When sessions are held in person, childcare will be offered to maximize participation.

5. Strengthening the Parent Ambassador Program

- We will strengthen the Parent Ambassador Program by formalizing expectations and training. Each ambassador will receive a one-page guide outlining their role, sample talking points, and ways to support new families effectively. An orientation session in late August will prepare ambassadors through role-play, Q&A, and real-life scenarios. Midway through the year, we will conduct a check-in to gather feedback and provide additional support or updates.
- Ambassadors will be encouraged to host informal gatherings—such as park meetups, coffee mornings, or evening chats—which will be promoted through school channels and supported by the admin team to ensure good attendance and impact.

6. Evolving Open House Sessions

- We will reimagine our Open House events to be more targeted and interactive by organizing themed sessions that highlight specific areas of the Montessori curriculum, such as Sensorial Exploration, Practical Life Skills, or Montessori Math. These events will include live demonstrations, work displays, and hands-on experiences for parents.
- We will invite alumni families and former students to share how their Montessori foundation has supported their higher learning journeys and speak on differences between their experience navigating Montessori and non Montessori schools. Their testimonials will offer valuable insight for prospective and current families alike.
- We will enrich Open Houses by including community booths featuring local libraries, parenting services, and Montessori-aligned vendors, curated and coordinated by school staff to offer meaningful takeaways for visitors.

PRIORITY 6

1st Year 2024-2025

STRATEGIES

Use of Outdoor and Community Facilities

- To encourage connection with nature and promote lifelong physical activity habits, we will increase the use of outdoor and community spaces. Nearby parks, walking trails, and tennis courts will become regular sites for PE lessons, group games, and exploration-based activities.

Developing Family & Community Involvement in Wellness

- To extend wellness beyond the school environment, we will actively engage families through annual events and regular communication. A yearly "Wellness Week" will feature themed days focused on movement, nutrition, emotional wellness, and sleep, ending with a Family Sports Day where parents and siblings are invited to participate in games, relays, and workshops.

Staff Training

- To ensure a school-wide culture of wellness, we will provide targeted professional development opportunities for staff. Teachers will be trained on how to incorporate movement into classroom routines without disrupting instruction—such as using brain breaks, chair yoga, or transition games.

RESULTS

Use of Outdoor and Community Facilities

- Hillcrest actively integrated local parks, walking trails, and tennis courts into its physical education and exploration curriculum. Every week, PE lessons were held outdoors where students engaged in nature-based activities—such as measuring trail distances for math or conducting mini-ecology studies—linked directly to academic skills.
- In addition, regular group games and exploration-based learning sessions were scheduled at these community locations, allowing for dynamic physical activity in natural settings.

Developing Family & Community Involvement in Wellness

- Hillcrest organized a Wellness Week each year with themed days focusing on movement, nutrition, emotional well-being, and sleep. The week culminated in a Family Sports Day where parents and siblings joined students in cooperative games, relays, and interactive wellness workshops—such as healthy snack assembling and yoga demonstrations. Preceded by newsletters and homeroom invites, this event strengthened family engagement in wellness initiatives.

Staff Training on Movement Integration

- To develop a whole-school culture of movement and wellness, select staff underwent focused professional development sessions. Workshops trained educators to incorporate brief yet effective movement breaks—like brain-based stretching, chair yoga, and transition games—into classroom routines. Teachers practiced these during training and applied them daily, using tools such as desk-based yoga from the Yoga Ed chair yoga model. These strategies helped boost student attention, reduce stress, and make learning more engaging and dynamic.

By purposefully using community spaces, inviting family participation in wellness, and equipping staff with movement-based instructional tools, Hillcrest built a holistic wellness environment. This approach supported students' physical health, emotional well-being, and established habits that extend into family life.

PRIORITY 6- CONTINUED



Measures	Provincial	Local
	AEA survey results	local survey results

2nd year 2025-2026

STRATEGIES

Structured Weekly Programming

- To build consistency and student engagement, we will implement a structured, rotating 8-week cycle that introduces a variety of sports and physical activities including soccer, basketball, volleyball, badminton, and basic athletics (running, jumping, throwing). Each sport will include age-appropriate skill development, teamwork exercises, and friendly intra-class competitions.
- Daily movement breaks will be scheduled into classroom routines—short bursts of guided physical activity like stretching, yoga poses, or dance routines will help re-energize students and improve focus. Each week will also highlight a “Wellness Theme” such as mindfulness, hydration, balanced nutrition, sleep, or emotional regulation. These themes will be reinforced through classroom discussion, posters, and short activities or challenges. All programming will be aligned with Alberta’s Physical Education and Wellness curriculum, ensuring developmentally appropriate learning outcomes in both physical literacy and well-being.

Partnerships with Community Organizations

- To diversify students’ exposure to physical activity and wellness practices, we will establish partnerships with local organizations and fitness professionals. These may include dance studios, martial arts schools, yoga instructors, and local recreation centers.

Expanding Use of Outdoor and Community Facilities

- Once per month, we will host an “Outdoor Challenge Day” or “Wellness Walk” open to entire classes or grade groups. These activities will emphasize endurance, teamwork, and mindfulness in nature, such as trail scavenger hunts, relay races, or nature-based obstacle courses. Teachers will receive an outdoor activity toolkit with materials and guidelines to facilitate safe and engaging sessions. Collaboration with local municipal recreation services may also open up additional access to community sports infrastructure.

Enhancing Family & Community Involvement in Wellness

- To extend wellness beyond the school environment, we will actively engage families through annual events and regular communication. A yearly “Wellness Week” will feature themed days focused on movement, nutrition, emotional wellness, and sleep, ending with a Family Sports Day where parents and siblings are invited to participate in games, relays, and workshops.
- Monthly or bi-monthly wellness newsletters will be sent home with activity suggestions, screen-free challenges, healthy recipes, and movement routines families can do together. Families will also be invited to contribute to a shared “Wellness Wall” by sending in photos or stories about how they stay active and healthy at home. This reinforces the Montessori philosophy of the prepared environment, extending learning into the home.

EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES 2025-2026

GOVERNANCE



Local Component: Budget Summary 2025-2026

Revenue Summary	Amount	Contextual Information
Alberta Education	\$186,279.00	ECS-Gr6
Tuition	\$170,550.00	Parent Payment
Non-instructional Fees	\$27,783.00	Board, system Administration, and operations
Other	\$15,000.00	Donations
Total Revenue	\$399,612.00	
Expense Summary	Amount	Contextual Information
Salaries and Benefits	\$196,200.00	Non certified & non certified staff
Services, Contract and Supplies	\$164,690.00	Includes services for special education students
Amortization	\$0.00	
leases & Other	\$35,268.00	
Total Expense	\$396,158.00	
Total Revenue Less Expense	\$3,454.00	

EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES 2025-2026

GOVERNANCE



PHASE 1 - 1ST YEAR 2024-2025

Investment in Professional Development

- Hillcrest Montessori recognizes that the quality of education begins with the expertise and passion of its educators. To support this, the school is committed to enhancing funds allocated for professional development each year. These funds will ensure both returning and new staff members receive ongoing training in Montessori pedagogy and current best practices in child development, differentiated instruction, and educational research.
- Training will include Montessori refresher courses, attendance at national and international Montessori conferences, workshops on inclusive education, and access to modern pedagogical tools. A portion of funds will also be reserved for onboarding newly hired staff, ensuring consistency and alignment across classrooms. Investing in our staff not only strengthens student learning outcomes but also promotes teacher satisfaction and retention.

PHASE 2- 2ND YEAR 2025-2026

Expanded Literacy and Numeracy Programming

- To support academic excellence and address the diverse needs of our students, Hillcrest has allocated a specific portion of the 2024-2025 budget to acquire new instructional materials that reinforce literacy and numeracy development. These resources will include Montessori-aligned materials, leveled readers, math manipulatives, bilingual support tools, and guided practice kits designed to support differentiated instruction.
- Funds will also support the implementation of assessment tools to track student progress in reading comprehension and mathematical reasoning, helping teachers provide targeted support. This investment reflects our goal to ensure all students—regardless of learning style or language background—achieve strong foundational skills in core subjects.

Strategic Planning for Grade 7-9 Expansion

- In alignment with Hillcrest's long-term vision, the school is actively exploring the addition of Grades 7 through 9 within the next two years. This expansion is being guided by consultation with our Parent Advisory Council (PAC), Board of Directors, current families, and the broader community.
- To prepare for this growth, the school will assess facility needs, staffing models, curriculum development, and budgetary requirements to ensure a seamless and high-quality transition. Early-stage financial planning will include setting aside funds for feasibility studies, potential classroom renovations, and recruitment of specialized junior high staff. Community input and engagement will remain central to shaping a sustainable financial and educational model that honors Montessori values at the adolescent level.

PHASE 3 - 3RD YEAR 2026-2027

Fundraising for Facility and Equipment Improvements

- Hillcrest Montessori Elementary School is actively dedicating funds raised through targeted fundraising efforts to enhance our physical learning environment—specifically the school gymnasium and related facilities. Planned improvements include repainting the gym to create a vibrant and inviting space, updating storage and equipment areas, and purchasing new physical education equipment such as mats, balls, nets, and agility tools. These improvements aim to enrich the quality of our physical education programming and provide students with a safe, dynamic space to explore movement, team sports, and personal wellness. Fundraising events and campaigns will be transparently tracked and publicly reported to ensure community trust and engagement in these upgrades.



**HILLCREST MONTESSORI
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**



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