



New Heights

school & learning services

**Education Plan
2021-2022 to 2023-2024**

Published May 31, 2021

Message from the Board Chair:

The 2020/2021 school year will be remembered for a number of changes and challenges. At New Heights we went into the year anticipating a move into our new building, but like everyone else much of our attention was spent managing a pandemic. Transitioning from an in-person and in-the-classroom setting to delivering our services virtually presented a number of challenges, but these were well met and some insights into our programming were gained. At the same time as the pandemic, came changes in the funding model with which we operate. This too has presented significant challenges as we grow our program that we are still addressing. Through it all, the move did occur along with some required renovations. We are thankful to have this part of our journey completed.

The reason New Heights exists is to prepare our kids for the community, and the community for our kids. As we look forward to the 2021/2022 school year there are key priorities that we will continue to focus on with this mission in mind.

Providing practical training for our staff in order for them to acquire the necessary skills to work with kids with autism spectrum disorder is a cornerstone for New Heights. These skills support the creation of individualized programs for our students, which in turn, lead to greater student success. One indication of this success is the ability of the student to transition from our school context to living and thriving in the larger community; and a key part of being able to make this transition is employability. Having real life work experience is fundamental to the success of our students and we continue to look for new and meaningful ways to provide these experiences for them.

The past number of months may not have been everything we wanted or expected, but they have provided the opportunity to consider new methods of doing what we do and hopefully discovering even better ways of serving our students. Despite these obstacles, we have continued to grow and we look forward to doing so for the foreseeable future.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Lepine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small dot at the end.

Gary Lepine

Chairman of the Board

Accountability Statement for the Education Plan:

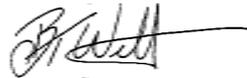
The Three-Year Education Plan for New Heights School & Learning Services commencing September 1, 2021 was prepared under the direction of the Board of Directors in accordance with the responsibilities under the Private Schools Regulation and the Education Grants Regulation.

This plan was developed in the context of the provincial government's business and fiscal plans. The Board has used its performance results to develop the plan and is committed to implementing the strategies contained within the plan to improve student learning and results.

The Board approved the Education Plan for 2021/2024 on May 28th, 2021.



Gary Lepine
Chairman of the Board



Brent Williams
Executive Director

A Profile of New Heights School & Learning Services:

OUR VISION: A community dedicated to pioneering a bright future for individuals on the autism spectrum to live independent, confident, and purposeful lives.

OUR MISSION: Preparing our kids for the community, and the community for our kids.

We opened our doors in 1999 to 12 students in our preschool and early intervention programs. We started with the simple goal of giving families a safe, friendly community to support their needs and build their family capacity. We expanded into our school programs in 2006.

Motivated by families who believed there could be more for their children, we grew to offer programming that ranges from preschool to early adulthood. In 2018, the New Heights Board secured our new school building in our current neighbourhood of Currie, and moved us in over the summer of 2020. There were a number of renovations that occurred over the summer and have continued through this year to prepare the space for our programming. We have a timeline of future renovations over the next few years to bring the building to our ideal space for programming.

Our goal is, and always has been, to equip each student with the skills they need to engage in and contribute to the community around them. At New Heights, our students develop strong interpersonal relationships so they can live confident and purposeful lives.

New Heights is a Designated Special Education Private School (DSEPS) reaching students ages 3 to 20, and is equipped to offer education using the Alberta Program of Studies from Kindergarten through Grade 12. Curriculum material is differentiated for each student through their Individualized Program Plan. We focus on our students' strengths and educational needs to help them become confident, productive, and responsible citizens.

We are relentlessly committed to creating a welcoming environment that focuses on the individual needs and goals of each student. Our small class sizes ensure students receive ample time and attention from their teachers, therapists, and peers. In addition to classroom teachers and educational assistants, our diverse team includes: Speech Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, and Psychologists, onsite throughout the week strengthening our classrooms through their knowledge, expertise, and practical support. As well, a Music Instructor, Educational Technologist, and Employment Coordinator work with the students and teachers, and a Family School Liaison Counselor works with our families.

In addition to the School, New Heights also has a Home & Community Support program for preschool aged children and their families, a Transition to Adulthood program for young adults with ASD who are graduating from or are alumni of New Heights School, and an Employment Program for our high school students to obtain and maintain part time employment in the city as they are completing high school.

Planning and Priorities

Key Priorities: The New Heights School Education Plan is grounded in four priority areas

- Student Success and Transition
- Collaboration for Professional Growth
- Employability
- A Welcoming Community

There are strong connections between the priority areas. Each of the areas overlap to meet the needs of our students.

Assurance Model

Planning and reporting for New Heights School is based on continuous improvement and includes:

- Ensuring plans are aligned with provincial and community priorities
- Incorporating stakeholder input through a variety of methods
- Preparing a budget that reflects resources to build the priority areas
- Implementing strategies to maintain or improve student learning and achievement
- Monitoring implementation and adjusting methods as needed
- Measuring, analyzing and reporting results
- Using results to identify areas for improvement and to develop strategies and targets for future plans
- Communicating with stakeholders about education plans and results

Key Priority: Student Success and Transition

The successful journey of a student from when they enter New Heights, through to high school completion and beyond.

At New Heights, success is defined as growth in academic achievement, social-emotional learning, and student engagement and participation in the community around them. Student success at New Heights is not just about completing high school, but about transitioning effectively and confidently into life beyond high school. This has led us to develop the New Heights Transition to Adulthood (T2A) program. We walk alongside our high school students, and continue to meet and provide coaching to connect our emerging adults to resources in the community, as they graduate from high school and enter adulthood (up to 25 years old).

Outcomes:

- Students demonstrate growth in provincial learning outcomes, demonstrating improvement in numeracy and literacy.
- Students experience effective transitions throughout their school journey and into adult life.
- Students are supported in their growth in literacy and numeracy through the research, development, staff training and implementation of a literacy and numeracy program (or combination of literacy programs and numeracy programs) throughout the New Heights K-12 program.
- Success defined as growth in education, employment, social development, independent living, and self advocacy will be evident in the culture of New Heights School.
- Students demonstrate growth in personal academic achievement, employment skills, social development, and self determination.

Measure:	Provincial (AE) / Local (NHS)	Target 2021-2022	Target 2022-2023	Target 2023-2024
Overall satisfaction with the quality of basic education	AE	90%	90%	90%
Overall satisfaction with the opportunity for students to receive a broad program of studies, including fine arts, careers, technology, health and physical education	AE	90%	90%	90%
Overall agreement that students model the characteristics of active citizenship	AE	95%	95%	95%

Percentage of students who have an Emotional Regulation goal included on their IPP.	NHS	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of students who have an Executive Functioning Skill goal included on their IPP.	NHS	80%	80%	80%
Percentage of students on a modified program who achieved growth of at least one grade level on reading and math assessments (overall cohort results Gr 3, 6, 9)	NHS	80%	85%	90%
Percentage of students on an adapted program who achieved growth of at least three grade levels on reading and math assessments (overall cohort results Gr 3, 6, 9)	NHS	80%	85%	90%
Percentage of students who achieved the acceptable standard on Provincial Achievement Tests (overall cohort results)	AE	n/a*	20%	25%
Percentage of students who achieved the standard of excellence on Provincial Achievement Tests (overall cohort results)	AE	n/a*	0%	0%
High School completion rate of students within three, four, and five years of entering Grade 10	AE	85%	90%	95%
Overall agreement that students are prepared for the next grade group level, who feel students will complete high school, and who feel students are prepared for a life beyond high school.	NHS	80%	85%	90%
Percentage of students who achieved the acceptable standard on diploma exams (overall results)	AE	n/a**	25%	30%

Percentage of students who achieved the standard of excellence on diploma examinations (overall results)	AE	n/a**	0%	0%
High school to post-secondary transition rate of students within six years of entering Grade 10	AE	25%	25%	30%
Overall percentage of New Heights alumni who are actively involved or pursuing growth in Education, Employment, Social Groups, and Independent Living, and Health & Wellbeing.	NHS	80%	85%	90%
Percentage of Grade 12 students participating in the New Heights T2A program.	NHS	80%	80%	80%
Percentage of alumni successfully transitioned to other Calgary area programming within three years of participating with T2A.	NHS	80%	85%	90%

*New Heights has paused our participation in the Provincial Achievement Tests due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**New Heights has paused our participation in the Diploma Exams due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strategies:

- Develop and implement student specific strategies to regulate emotions (match our energy to the context) to increase students' capacity to be available for learning; as well as focus on tools and strategies to promote executive functioning skills, especially in the areas of planning, memory retention, persistence, task initiation, and organization (ongoing staff development focuses).
- Continue to grow staff knowledge, skill and confidence in the use of communication and information technology in the classroom environment by having an Educational Technologist on staff and in the classrooms for consultation and staff development. Integration of technology in the classroom positively promotes executive functioning skills and literacy for our students, better preparing our students for the community.
- Continue to implement a more structured routine of when assessment of the Gr 3, 6, and 9 cohort in reading and math will occur, moving into the second year of evidence gathering through this method for New Heights.
- Research and develop a literacy and numeracy program plan, focussing on communication and interaction for our students with ASD. Set a plan for teacher training and piloting in 2022-2023, with a plan for full implementation K-12 in 2023-2024.
- Evaluate and enhance Option courses using student input and ideas.

- Continue to offer physical education, outdoor education, health, art, technology, and music as part of our regular programming. Reintroduce foods, drama, and work experience as pandemic restrictions allow.
- Continue to partner with the New Heights Transition to Adulthood (T2A) program for effective transitioning for our students/alumni to adult life.

Note: Local strategies will be evaluated through surveys, before/after questionnaires, and focus groups with stakeholders including classroom teaching teams and school therapists, and also by observing increased use of visuals, tools and technology present in the classroom environments.

The Transitioning to Adulthood branch is evaluated through program specific goals, student qualitative interviews, parent/guardian qualitative interviews, and feedback surveys, as well as being shaped from current research and networking within the ASD community.

Key Priority: Employability

The ability of students to effectively and confidently step out into the community and contribute to the world around them.

Without support, a staggering 70% of individuals with ASD, even with postsecondary degrees, struggle to find and maintain employment. Our goal is that every New Heights student will secure paid employment while they are still at New Heights, and will receive the coaching they need to keep that job or find meaningful employment after graduating. Research shows that the greatest predictor of youth having a paid job at or above minimum wage after leaving high school is having a paid job while attending high school. This has led us to develop the New Heights Employment Program for our students in Grade 10+. Through this Employment Program, our students receive support and coaching as they seek, land, and maintain their first part-time after school or summer jobs while they are attending high school.

Outcomes:

- All students completing high school also graduate with the experience of having a part time job.
- Each student has the opportunity for growth and success in the workforce.
- Students are contributing citizens in the Calgary community.
- Employers gain experience in working with individuals with ASD, and gain an understanding of the benefit of having employees on the spectrum.
- Students are supported in their growth in employment skills and life skills through the introduction programming in elementary and junior high, expanding on the current programming in high school.
- Students are able to access the supports and services they need to achieve success through the reduction of barriers.

Measure:	Provincial (AE) / Local (NHS)	Target 2021-2022	Target 2022-2023	Target 2023-2024
Overall agreement that students model the characteristics of active citizenship	AE	95%	95%	95%
Overall agreement that students are taught attitudes and behaviours that will make them successful at work when they finish school	AE	90%	95%	95%
Overall satisfaction that students demonstrate the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning	AE	90%	95%	95%

Overall agreement that students are prepared for the next grade group level, who feel students will complete high school, and who feel students are prepared for a life beyond high school.	NHS	80%	85%	90%
Percentage of high school students participating in the Employment Program within their years of high school	NHS	80%	85%	90%
Percentage of high school students participating in part time jobs in 2021-2022*	NHS	70%	75%	85%
Percentage of graduating students who have had experience in a part-time job in High School*	NHS	80%	85%	90%
Percentage of employers of New Heights students who agree that they would hire another employee on the autism spectrum.	NHS	90%	90%	90%

*The success of this measure is impacted by the restrictions and shutdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. Targets have been adjusted to account for the economy re-opening.

Strategies:

- Encourage connection for all Grade 10s, and all students entering New Heights in high school, with the Employment Program Coordinator in early Fall.
- Re-establish partnerships for work experience practicums in the community for all New Heights high school students as the economy reopens.
- Implement the Employment Skills Program (ESP) for students in high school, and students on modified programs in junior high.
- Evaluate and continue to develop a life skills program plan to pilot in junior high small groups. Reinststate a Program Assistant staff position for effective implementation. Set a plan for staff training and further implementation in 2022-2023, with a plan for full implementation K-12 in 2023-2024.
- Continue to build relationships with Calgary employers and provide access for communicating and learning about working with students on the autism spectrum through the Employment Program.
- Continue the Employment Program, providing high school students with the opportunity and skills to gain part-time employment after school and on weekends, building confidence and capacity for these individuals.

Note: Local strategies will be evaluated through surveys, before/after questionnaires, and focus groups with stakeholders including classroom teaching teams and school therapists, and also by observing increased use of visuals, tools and technology present in the classroom environments.

The Transitioning to Adulthood branch is evaluated through specific goals, student qualitative interviews, parent/guardian qualitative interviews, and feedback surveys, as well as being shaped from current research and networking within the ASD community.

The Employment Program is evaluated through specific goals, student qualitative interviews, parent/guardian qualitative interviews, and feedback surveys, as well as being shaped from current research and networking within the ASD community.

Key Priority: Collaboration for Professional Growth

As a team, striving for success for all students through: excellence in differentiated instruction, support for students, and a reduction in barriers. This includes continuous learning from each other and our students, as staff seek to grow in understanding of experiencing the world with ASD.

At New Heights, we have a strong emphasis on growing our staff understanding of the human experience of ASD. Our professional development is rooted in building strong relationships, and often includes growth in strategies and tools to develop social communication, emotional regulation, and effective practical supports, including integrated assistive technology, to bridge executive functioning differences. We seek to infuse student interests into the curriculum. This individualization requires teachers and staff who are confident experts in differentiation throughout the school and who are confident in collaborating and sharing feedback with each other.

Outcomes:

- All staff have the ability to meet the diverse needs of all students through excellent instruction.
- Students are supported in their academic and social emotional wellbeing.
- Students are able to access the supports and services they need to achieve success through the reduction of barriers.

Measure:	Provincial (AE) / Local (NHS)	Target 2021-2022	Target 2022-2023	Target 2023-2024
Overall agreement that students are safe at school and learning the importance of caring	AE	95%	95%	95%
Overall percentage of stakeholders indicating that their school and schools in their jurisdiction have improved or stayed the same the last three years	AE	90%	95%	95%
Overall percentage of students and parents who feel students are cared for and accepted at school	AE	95%	95%	95%
Percentage of teachers, parents and students who are satisfied that each child and youth belongs, is supported and is successful in their learning	AE inclusive measure	95%	95%	95%

Percentage of students on a modified program who achieved growth of at least one year on the cohort (Gr 3, 6, 9) reading and math assessments	NHS	80%	85%	90%
Percentage of students on an adapted program who achieved growth of at least three years on the cohort (Gr 3, 6, 9) reading and math assessments	NHS	80%	85%	90%
Overall percentage of staff showing goals and targeted areas of growth in their professional learning plans for the 2021-2022 school year	NHS	100%	100%	100%

Strategies:

- Collaborate with specialists on the multidisciplinary team to design and provide targeted and specialized supports to enable achievement of the learning outcomes; using appropriate universal and targeted strategies and supports to address each students’ strengths, learning challenges and areas for growth.
- Create meaningful, collaborative learning opportunities for teachers and staff to cultivate and develop a shared responsibility for the success of all students. Emphasize practical, play-based methods, through SCERTS (social communication, emotional regulation, transactional supports) in staff development for the 2021-2022 school year.
- Provide opportunities throughout the school day for students to meet with supportive adults in their school environment (e.g. psychologist, principal, OT, SLP, T2A)
- Focus on tools and therapy support to promote social development, group work, and perspective taking, increasing student social engagement in both academic and social environments, including using evidence based curriculum such as SCERTS, Social Thinking and PEERS.
- Increase teacher collaboration to effectively infuse First Nations, Metis and Inuit (FNMI) perspectives and experiences in the classroom, creating heightened awareness of culture, history and issues.
- Create a Professional Learning Community to attend Professional Development opportunities in the province and bring their learning to the whole staff community to effectively teach FNMI perspectives and experiences, treaties, agreements, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
- Enhance our school library to promote effective teaching of diversity in community, including FNMI perspectives and LGBTQ2S+ resources.

Note: Local strategies will be evaluated through surveys, before/after questionnaires, and focus groups with stakeholders including classroom teaching teams and school therapists, and also by observing increased use of visuals, tools and technology present in the classroom environments.

Key Priority: A Welcoming Community

New Heights is known by students, parents, and staff as a place that is safe and welcoming. We strive for an environment where our students can build their own identity being wildly themselves, as well as connect with the people and environment around them; allowing the community to benefit from their talents, skills, and a different way of thinking.

We, along with the world, have been experiencing life during a pandemic the past 14 months, and learning how to do life in a new way. Much of the way we had built our school experience, had to pivot quickly. Though we have been mostly in-person during the 2020-2021 year, we have shifted to a more virtual world, as we cohort in our classrooms; instead of having the opportunity to spread throughout our building and integrate into the community around us regularly. Though we have been creative and are finding pockets of the New Heights culture within this new way of living in restrictions, there is much to re-build to find that special belonging that is such a safe-haven for our students, parents and staff.

In addition to the pandemic, we are experiencing growth of our student body for the first time in years, and know the importance of embracing that culture, as well as expanding it within this growth. This is why 'A Welcoming Community' is known as a key priority for our Society over the next few years.

Outcomes:

- Community connections are re-established and strengthened, including work experience placements, school networks and partnerships, and other agencies in the ASD community, such as the Ability Hub.
- New Heights parents are active participants in their child's program and in the school community.
- New Heights students and staff are actively building a greater school community through connecting and interacting across age-groups and classrooms.
- A sense of community, identity and belonging is evident in the culture of New Heights School and Learning Services.

Measure:	Provincial (AE) / Local (NHS)I	Target 2021-2022	Target 2022-2023	Target 2023-2024
Overall agreement that students are safe at school and learning the importance of caring	AE	95%	95%	95%
Overall percentage of students and parents who feel students are cared for and accepted at school	AE	95%	95%	95%

Percentage of teachers and parents who are satisfied that families are encouraged and supported in helping their children be successful in their learning	AE inclusive ed measure	95%	95%	95%
Percentage of teachers, parents and students who are satisfied that each child and youth belongs, is supported and is successful in their learning	AE inclusive ed measure	95%	95%	95%
Overall percentage of stakeholders satisfied with parental involvement in decisions about their child's education.	AE	90%	95%	95%
Overall percentage of stakeholders indicating that their school and schools in their jurisdiction have improved or stayed the same the last three years	AE	90%	95%	95%
Overall percentage of stakeholders indicating that the student voice is heard in their school community.	NHS	80%	85%	90%
Number of active partnerships in the Calgary community for student work experience practicum placements.*	NHS	10	12	15

*The success of this measure is impacted by the restrictions and shutdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. Targets have been adjusted to account for the economy re-opening.

Strategies:

- Re-establish and maintain relationships with the network of partners and agencies as they pivot to re-open according to provincial direction during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Continue to hold and grow Whole School Activities throughout the year, including the Science Fair and Talent Show, including student input through the New Heights Student Council. Develop how these will look when they can return in-person, in our new space.
- Strengthen the New Heights Student Council to ensure infusion of student voice in school decisions.
- Enhance our school library to promote effective teaching of diversity in the community, including LGBTQ2S+ resources.
- Collaborate with the Parent Advisory Council to continue their mission of building community among New Heights families, and work with them to develop what this may look like when in-person gatherings are a possibility again.
- Increase opportunities for parent education through our Family School Liaison counselor, as well as our therapy team. Partner with other ASD agencies to facilitate and keep from duplicating programming and resources.

- Build New Heights Board capacity through revisiting, revising, and strengthening the Society's long term strategic plan.
- Re-establish and re-imagine integral staff positions that strengthened program capacity, but were reduced for 2020-2021 due to the COVID-19 restrictions pivoting the program and/or due to the new funding model.

Note: Local strategies will be evaluated through surveys, before/after questionnaires, and focus groups with stakeholders.

Communication and Stakeholder Engagement

The feedback and information gathered from students, staff and parents through surveys, before/after questionnaires, focus groups, and discussions have been valuable in forming the 2021-2022 Education Plan. This Plan is evolving through review and targeted discussion with our Board and stakeholders as we enter this new Assurance Model with Alberta Education, as well as build our programming and grow our student body in our new building. Elements of this Plan are a work in progress. The evolution of the Plan will require continued stakeholder engagement and the use of meaningful data to inform decision making. In this first year of shifting to the Assurance Model, we have focused on communication, and plan to build our stakeholder engagement as we learn the model, create the baseline that will develop a data culture, and continue to improve our programming, with measures to track each priority area.

This Education Plan is shared via newsletters and our website, to the New Heights community. Priorities and evidence are shared and discussed in meetings with stakeholders, and will be examined and analyzed in strategic planning with the New Heights Board of Directors.

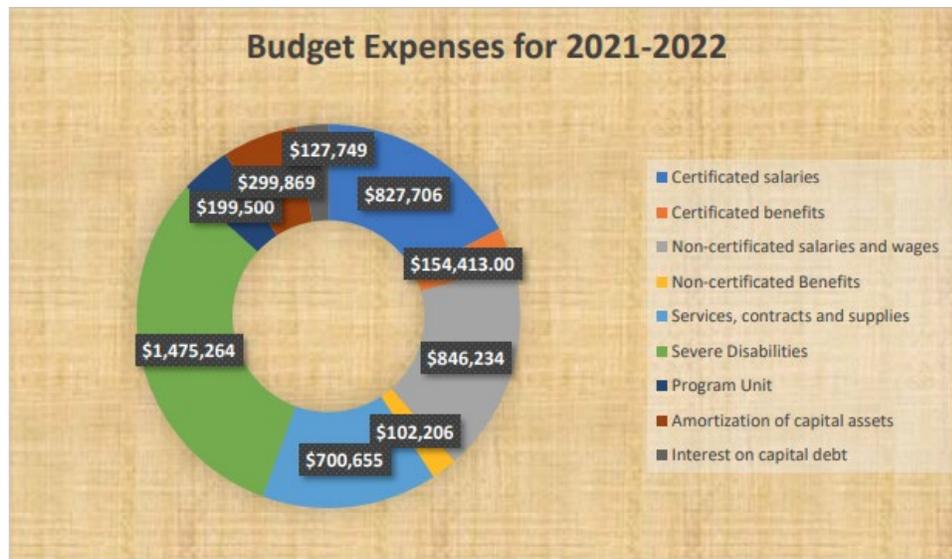
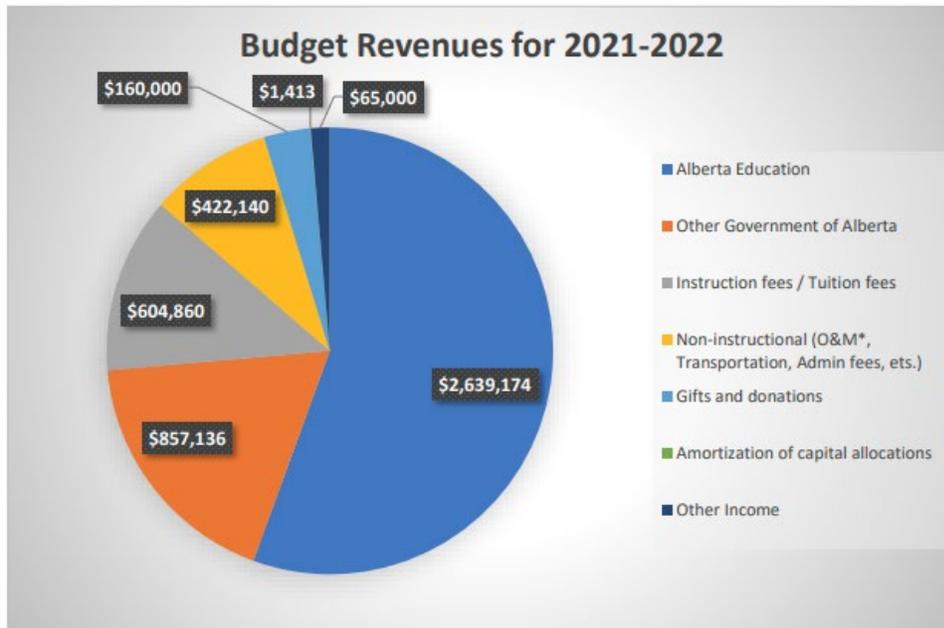
Stakeholder involvement has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2020-2021 school year. Due to this, data collected from focus groups from 2019-2020 have also informed this plan.

Future Challenges

- Making our new building our new home; using the space efficiently as we plan for future growth and future programming.
- Preparing to responsibly increase enrolment in our new space, keeping in mind training and integrating new staff and effectively sharing resources such as therapists. We have grown 2 additional classrooms with our move and will now return to the original growth model of one classroom per year, with a maximum of 10 students per classroom, with a Teacher and an Educational Assistant.
- Keeping tuition at an affordable level for all school families, and also at a level that meets the needs of our programming. There is a need to adjust our current tuition with the change in the Alberta Education funding model, especially during our years of projected growth. Providing financial assistance for families who otherwise would not be able to send their children to our school.
- Continuing our focus on addressing the changing needs of our students as they mature and transition into adulthood.

Budget Summary

- For the 2021.2022 school year, New Heights will continue its financial support of our support staffing that includes Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Psychology, Family School Liaison Counselor, Music Instructor and Educational Technologist. We will also ensure financial support for appropriate supplies and supports for growing and additional classrooms, programs, certificated and non-certificated staff, and students. In order to do this with the new Alberta Education funding model, some positions have been consolidated, reduced hours, or put on hold during our growth years. The Board has implemented a tuition adjustment during the next two years, increasing in steps, in order to continue to provide the levels of staffing that best meet the needs of our students.



Note: For additional financial information, including the Budget Report for 2021.2022, please contact the New Heights office at 403-240-1312.