



New Heights

school & learning services

**Education Plan
2023-2024 to 2025-2026**

Published May 31, 2023

Message from the Board Chair:

At the beginning the 2022-2023 school year the New Heights Parents Advisory Council hosted a Welcome Barbeque. For many of our parents, it was their first opportunity to have a chance to meet staff and tour our new building even though their children were not new to the school and New Heights has been in our building for two years. The COVID pandemic had significantly limited these opportunities and it was gratifying to be able to have an in-person gathering such as this. Events like this are not mere formalities; they are a vital element of the New Heights community. They give our families and staff a chance to interact and get to know and support one another. They are also a great way for our students to get a sense of the larger community they are a part of.

Getting back to some sense of normalcy was more than an opportunity for in-person events. It allowed us to refocus the energy and time that was being spent on adjusting to the pandemic to the long term planning and programming necessary for the success of New Heights. It has been a good year in that regard and we are excited about what lies ahead. It is good to be able to spend our creative energy looking to the future.

Over the past number of years, the awareness and value of autistic community members has been growing. We are fortunate to live in a part of the country that provides a variety of options and resources for our students. Nevertheless, there are challenges ahead. We will continue to grow the programming for our school aged children, but the challenges that face our young adult population are significant. Adapting to the workplace and greater society, building and maintaining meaningful relationships, and developing the life-skills that many of us take for granted are all areas that require further attention. We are excited about the opportunity and look forward to growing the New Heights Community.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Lepine". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Dr Gary Lepine

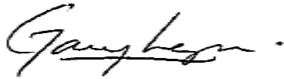
Chairman of the Board

Accountability Statement for the Education Plan:

The Three-Year Education Plan for New Heights School & Learning Services commencing September 1, 2023 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 2023/2026 on May 29th, 2023.



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, Woodworking Instructor and Educational Technologist 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, and a Transition to Adulthood (T2A) program for young adults with ASD who are graduating from or are alumni of New Heights School and stepping out and engaging in the Calgary community through employment, post secondary, and social wellness.

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
- Student 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)	Actual 2021-2022	Current Target 2022-2023	Target 2023-2024	Target 2024-2025	Target 2025-2026
Percentage of teachers, parents and students who agree that students are engaged in their learning at school	AE	94.9%	95%	90%	90%	90%
Overall agreement that students model the characteristics of active citizenship	AE	95.6%	95%	90%	90%	90%
Overall agreement that students are taught the adaptive functioning skills to be competent in accessing their community to be interdependent in life beyond high school.	NHS	n/a	75%	80%	85%	90%

Measure:	Provincial (AE) / Local (NHS)	Actual 2021-2022	Current Target 2022-2023	Target 2023-2024	Target 2024-2025	Target 2025-2026
Percentage of students on a modified program who achieved growth of at least one grade level on reading assessments over 3 years (overall cohort results Gr 3, 6, 9)	NHS	70.0%	80%	80%	80%	80%
Percentage of students on a modified program who achieved growth of at least one grade level on math assessments over 3 years (overall cohort results Gr 3, 6, 9)	NHS	n/a	70%	75%	80%	80%
Percentage of students on an adapted program who achieved growth of at least two grade levels on reading assessments over 3 years (overall cohort results Gr 3, 6, 9)	NHS	100%	80%	80%	80%	80%
Percentage of students on an adapted program who achieved growth of at least two grade levels on math assessments over 3 years (overall cohort results Gr 3, 6, 9)	NHS	n/a	75%	80%	80%	80%
Of the students writing, percentage of students who achieved the acceptable standard on Provincial Achievement Tests (overall cohort results)	AE/NHS	44.4%	50%	50%	50%	50%
High School completion rate of students on a Diploma or Certificate of Achievement route graduating within three, four, and five years of entering Grade 10.	AE	100%	85%	90%	90%	90%
High School completion rate of students on a Certificate of Completion route graduating within five years of entering Grade 10	NHS	100%	90%	90%	90%	90%
Of the students writing, percentage of students who achieved the acceptable standard on diploma exams (overall results)	AE	45.5%	50%	50%	50%	50%
High school to employment transition rate of students within six years of entering Grade 10	NHS	60.0%	65%	70%	75%	80%
High school to post secondary transition rate of students within 5 years of receiving their Diploma or Certificate of Achievement	NHS	60.0%	60%	60%	60%	60%

Measure:	Provincial (AE) / Local (NHS)	Actual 2021-2022	Current Target 2022-2023	Target 2023-2024	Target 2024-2025	Target 2025-2026
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	89.0%	90%	90%	90%	90%
Percentage of Grade 12 students participating in the New Heights T2A program.	NHS	80.0%	80%	80%	80%	80%
Percentage of alumni successfully transitioned to other Calgary area programming within three years of participating with T2A.	NHS	41.0%	60%	65%	70%	75%

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 third year of evidence gathering through this method for New Heights.
- Using the research and program planning from 2022-2023, begin teacher training and pilot our literacy program plan in our Elementary classrooms in 2023-2024, focusing on communication and interaction for our students with ASD. Continue with a plan for full implementation K-12 in 2024-2025.
- Continue to offer physical education, health, art, technology, and music as part of our regular programming. Continue to offer foods, drama, CTS (art/woodworking), and work experience as high school option courses.
- Continue to partner with the New Heights T2A program for effective transitioning for our students/alumni to adult life.

Note: Local strategies will be evaluated through surveys, before/after questionnaires, and/or 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 have the opportunity to secure employment or volunteering opportunities 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 a focus on Employment for our students in Grade 10+, and our T2A alumni. Through Work Experience courses, Employment programming, and the T2A program, our students have the opportunity to receive support and coaching as they seek, land, and maintain their first part-time after school or summer jobs or volunteer work while they are attending high school.

Outcomes:

- All students completing high school also graduate with the experience of having a part time job or volunteer work.
- 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 of 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)	Actual 2021-2022	Current Target 2022-2023	Target 2023-2024	Target 2024-2025	Target 2025-2026
Overall agreement that students are taught attributes and behaviours that will make them successful at work when they finish school	AE	97.4%	90%	90%	90%	90%
Percentage of job-motivated high school students participating in part time jobs or volunteering over the summer break	NHS	50.0%	50%	55%	60%	65%
Overall agreement that students are taught the adaptive functioning skills to be competent in accessing their community to be interdependent in life beyond high school.	NHS	n/a	75%	80%	85%	90%
Percentage of graduating students who have had experience in a part-time job in High School	NHS	50%	60%	65%	70%	75%

Measure:	Provincial (AE) / Local (NHS)	Actual 2021-2022	Current Target 2022-2023	Target 2023-2024	Target 2024-2025	Target 2025-2026
Percentage of work experience supervisors who agree that they would continue to have New Heights students in practicum placements at their business.	NHS	n/a	80%	85%	90%	90%
Percentage of employers of New Heights students who agree that they would hire another employee on the autism spectrum.	NHS	100%	80%	85%	90%	90%

Strategies:

- Evaluate the Work Experience courses and practicum placements, in collaboration with the T2A program. Develop a more comprehensive work experience program to cover the curriculum, and also grow the individual skills and widen individual opportunities within the course and practicums. Evaluate and redesign existing structures in Spring/Summer 2023, for piloting small group implementation in 2023-2024. Continue to evaluate in 2023-2024 for full implementation in the 2024-2025 school year.
- Grow partnerships for work experience practicums in the community for New Heights high school students.
- Develop a life skills program plan, informed by the identified gaps in the skills of our emerging adults in our Transitioning to Adulthood (T2A) program, to continue in high school small groups in 2023-2024, and pilot in junior high small groups in 2023-2024. Hire additional Program Assistants to effective implementation of this area. Set a plan for continued staff training 2023-2024, with a plan for full implementation K-12 by 2025-2026.
- Continue to build relationships with Calgary employers and provide access for communicating and learning about working with students on the autism spectrum through the Transition to Adulthood Program.
- Continue the focus on Employment, providing high school students and our alumni with the opportunity and skills to gain part-time employment during the summer, or on weekends, building confidence and capacity for these individuals.

Note: Local strategies will be evaluated through surveys, before/after questionnaires, and/or 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.

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)	Actual 2021-2022	Target 2022-2023	Target 2023-2024	Target 2024-2025	Target 2025-2026
Overall satisfaction with the quality of basic education	AE	94.6	90%	90%	90%	90%
Overall agreement that students have access to the appropriate supports and services at school	AE	96.6%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Overall percentage of teachers, parents and students who agree that their learning environments are welcoming, caring, respectful and safe.	AE	96.6%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Percentage of teachers reporting that in the past 3-5 years the professional development and in-servicing received from New Heights has been focused, systematic and contributed significantly to their ongoing professional growth.	AE	85.7%	90%	90%	90%	90%
Percentage of all staff (including Educational Assistants, Therapists, Program staff) reporting that in the past 3-5 years the professional development and in-servicing received from New Heights has been focused, systematic and contributed significantly to their ongoing professional growth.	NHS	n/a	80%	85%	90%	90%

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 continued in the 2023-2024 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.
- Provide further staff training to effectively address mental health concerns in the student population.
- Seek further training from autistic professionals in order to increase understanding and learn from the first person perspective to be better educators for autistic students.
- Increase staff collaboration through the established Professional Learning Community to effectively infuse indigenous perspectives and experiences in the classroom, creating heightened awareness to the whole school community of culture, history and issues. Create opportunities for this PLC to 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/or 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 coming out of the multi-year pandemic, and are relieved to be stepping out more confidently again to spread throughout our building and integrate into the community around us more regularly. Though we were creative and found pockets of the New Heights culture within this new way of living in restrictions, there is still much to re-build to find that special belonging that is such a safe-haven for our students, parents and staff.

We have also been experiencing growth of our student body for the past 3 school years in our new building, with our final classroom being grown this coming 2023-2024 school year. We know the importance of embracing our unique 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, strengthened and expanded, 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)	Actual 2021-2022	Current Target 2022-2023	Target 2023-2024	Target 2024-2025	Target 2025-2026
Overall agreement that students are safe at school, are learning the importance of caring for others, are learning respect for others, and are treated fairly in school	AE	97.1%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Percentage of parents and teachers who are satisfied that families are encouraged and supported in helping their family be successful through their child's educational journey	NH	n/a	85%	90%	90%	90%
Overall percentage of stakeholders satisfied with parental involvement in decisions about their child's education.	AE	88.5%	90%	90%	90%	90%

Measure:	Provincial (AE) / Local (NHS)	Actual 2021-2022	Current Target 2022-2023	Target 2023-2024	Target 2024-2025	Target 2025-2026
Overall percentage of stakeholders indicating that their school has improved or stayed the same the last three years	AE/NH	94.2%	90%	90%	90%	90%
Overall percentage of stakeholders indicating that the student voice is heard in their school community.	NHS	n/a	80%	85%	90%	95%
Percentage of staff and students who believe there is benefit, and want to continue, whole school activities at New Heights.	NHS	n/a	90%	90%	90%	90%
Number of active partnerships in the Calgary community who agree they would continue their placements with New Heights staff and students (including work experience partnerships and practicum student partnerships)	NHS	n/a	75%	80%	85%	90%

Strategies:

- Continue to re-establish, strengthen, and expand relationships with the network of partners and agencies. Continue with the Community Liaison role to navigate these relationships
- Continue to hold and grow Whole School Activities throughout the year, like the Science Fair and Talent Show, including student input through the re-established New Heights Student Council.
- Re-develop and 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 continue to support and participate in gatherings and events.
- 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.
- Continue to build New Heights Board capacity through revisiting, revising, and strengthening the Society’s long term strategic plan.

Note: Local strategies will be evaluated through surveys, before/after questionnaires, and/or 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 this year and over the past 3 years have been valuable in forming the 2023-2024 Education Plan. This Plan is evolving through review and targeted discussion with our Board and stakeholders as we continue learning the 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 third year of shifting to the Assurance Model, we have focused on communication and process, and plan to grow 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 and 2021-2022 school years. Due to this, data collected from focus groups over a few years inform this plan.

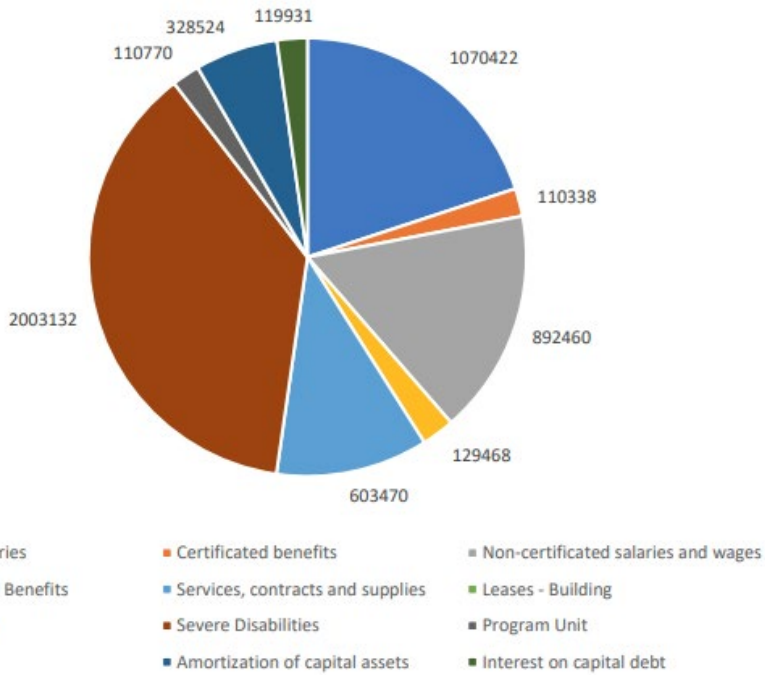
Future Challenges

- Continuing to make our building our home; using the space efficiently as we plan for future growth and future programming.
- Continuing 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 space to grow one more classroom in the 2023-2024 school year, with a maximum of 11 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. 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.

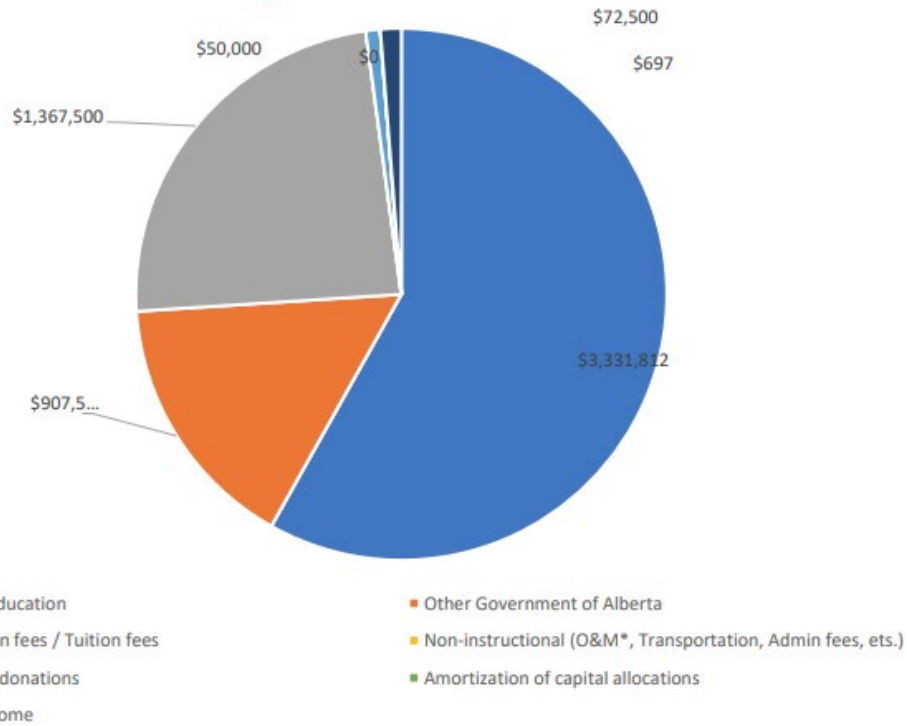
Budget Summary

For the 2023.2024 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, along with Program Assistants. We will also continue staffing that addresses the needs of our population, including the Transition to Adulthood (T2A) program. We will also ensure financial support for appropriate supplies and supports for growing and additional classrooms, programs, certificated and non-certificated staff, and students.

Budget Expenses 2023-2024



Budget Revenues - 2023-2024



Note: For additional financial information, including the Budget Report for 2023.2024, please contact the New Heights office at 403-240-1312 or at info@newheightscalgary.com.