

Faith in Our Future Proposal: Help Us Build a More Viable, Safe, and Inclusive Future for our Schools

On behalf of the Board of Trustees for Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools, we wish to reach out to you – our community of stakeholders – to solicit your feedback on a proposal we are calling ***Faith in Our Future***.

Greater St. Albert
Catholic Schools



Background

Your Board has recently reviewed the resourcing and capital planning needs of GSACRD moving forward. ***Faith in Our Future*** is our response to these needs, that not only supports the success, health and safety of students and staff, but creates a pathway to growing our school division. It is a draft proposal designed to meet the immediate and emerging fiscal, safety, inclusion, and growth-related needs of our school communities.

As Trustees, we are dedicated to maximizing classroom resources while addressing important goals for the future. We have identified a series of possible strategies to meet these needs, which are outlined in the ***Faith in Our Future*** business proposal. These strategies focus on fiscal responsibility, equity in programming opportunities and maximizing educational funding to support classroom needs. **I want to stress the fact that this proposal is not finalized, and your valued input is required.**



For this reason, we want to be transparent with our intent and processes for the future. We invite you to fully understand the business proposal behind Faith in Our Future in the attached document.

Through public consultation, we will be gathering input to inform our decision-making moving forward. It is critical that we understand if there are elements missing, possibilities we overlooked or areas for improvement we may not have considered. We will be asking for your thoughts, perspectives, and input, and will provide an opportunity for you to respond at any time throughout the consultation process.

Above all else, we are committed to **transparency** in this endeavour. We recognize the final outcome of the proposal impacts staff, students, and families within our school division. As such, we are looking to collect valuable input from you – our community – in making recommendations to support or enhance the success of the proposal in better serving the interests of current and future students.

Opportunities for Consultation & Engagement

1. Once you have had the opportunity to review the proposal, **we invite you to provide your thoughts and first impressions using our ongoing online discussion through ThoughtExchange, which can be accessed via our web page at www.gsacrd.ab.ca/faithinourfuture.**
2. **Attend our series of Open House events to provide input, ask questions and engage in discussion.** The first event will be on **October 30, 2019 from 5:00-8:00 p.m.** at St. Albert Catholic High School. For more information or to RSVP, please **visit our web page.**
3. Visit our **dedicated webpage** for regular updates, feedback summaries and upcoming event information. Remember, you can participate in the ongoing ThoughtExchange discussion at any time to express your support for the proposal, provide comments, or express concerns or questions.

We look forward to working collaboratively with you to better understand and address the educational needs of our students and families. Together, we can ensure a promising future for the students of today and tomorrow.

Thank you and God bless,

Joe Becigneul - Board Chair



Faith in Our Future – Business Proposal

Objective: To meet the immediate and emerging fiscal, safety, inclusion, and growth related needs of the Community.

Drivers:

Fiscal

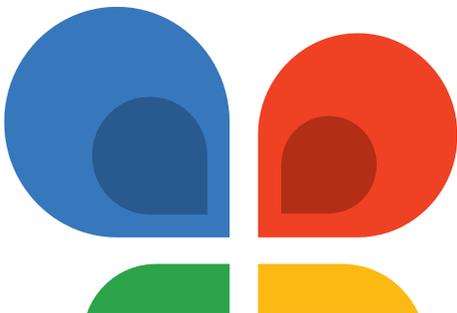
- Educational needs within the Division are best served when per-pupil funding reflects the actual cost of operating a classroom. At times, the Board assesses best mechanisms to ensure equitable funding and access to programming. This approach enables the Board to assure to its public that equitable access to educational funding occurs within every school.
- The Division annually maximizes its educational funding to support the needs of the classroom and has not diverted instructional dollars to fund capital needs that are not funded by the provincial government. These areas include renovation of office buildings and lease costs for outreach programming. Therefore, the Division currently relies upon the sale of other assets, such as land, to fund capital needs including the right-sizing of current facilities.

Safety

- We must address Occupational Health and Safety Recommendations that compel our Division Office Building to have protection from immediate public access. The Division Office is also facing the need to address essential upgrades to the building envelope. The cost of addressing this need is known to be between \$850,000 - \$1,000,000.
- A recent expert capital plan priority assessment has determined that École Father Jan is nearing the end of its life-cycle, where mounting infrastructure maintenance and renewal needs would be most appropriately prevented through an application for a new school. Fortunately, if we meet the site allocation requirements of the three partnering St. Albert school jurisdictions and the City of St. Albert, which includes maximizing the utilization of other schools, we will be best positioned in our application for a new site.

Inclusion

- Students, employees, and the public expect to have barrier free access to St. Gabriel High School in a building that is currently leased for a cost of \$130,650 per year.





Growth

- The District needs to be able to make a case that it has the anticipated enrollment needs for a new school and a school that is accessible to new growth areas in order to sustain the viability of Catholic education.

Strategies:

The Board expects that public consultation must verify its strategic intent or provide information regarding other possibilities dedicated to the attainment of the objective of ***Faith in Our Future***. As a starting point for such work, the following strategies are interconnected in addressing all of the drivers for the proposal:

- Transfer the entire ESSMY High School French Immersion and AP Programs to SACHS, where the school already provides French Immersion in order to appeal to the interests of an increasing number of French Immersion grade 9 students who want more robust and satisfying programming choices in order to meet personal post-secondary goals;
- To clarify the impact of transferring students from EMP to ESSMY, refer to the FAQs updated on a regular basis at our website: [Faith in Our Future Feedback](#).
- Utilize EMP as the Marie Poburan Education Centre, where the Division Office for the jurisdiction would be housed and the St. Gabriel High School would be relocated as an outreach school;
- Sell the existing Division Office for future financial benefit to the Division or other more immediate goals associated with this proposal;
- Obtain a new school site in the Riverside Area Structure Plan of St. Albert that serves French Immersion needs on the west side of the City, using health and safety, growth needs, and healthy utilization of other schools as the basis for obtaining the site;
- Plan to dispose of the current École Father Jan site with the goal of relocating the school to a new 900 student K – 9 school, which houses a dual track program for immersion and regular programming students within the new Riverside Area Structure Plan (a 13,000 resident growth area). Disposing of the site would involve selling the existing École Father Jan land for financial benefit to the Division or other more immediate goals associated with this proposal;
- Prioritize the investment of either cost savings (i.e. annual save in leasing costs) or value from land sales in a multi-year plan for the removal of as many as 14 portables in St. Albert. The associated cost would be approximately \$300,000, which would also achieve a reduction of overall maintenance costs, increase value for per-metre plant operation and maintenance dollars while increasing the utilization of St. Albert schools to the 75% or better range.



Anticipated Timelines:

- ***Phase 1 (2019 – 2020)***
 - While respecting the Provincial School Closure Regulation and associated Board Policy, engage in consultation with City management about the overall intent of this proposal and how it fits the municipal plan for new schools;
 - While respecting the Provincial School Closure Regulation and associated Board Policy, engage in consultation with Alberta Education about the overall intent of this proposal (i.e., the closure and re-location of grades 10 - 12 programming at ESSMY and K-9 programming at EMP, and sustaining feasibility and prioritization within the Division Three Year Capital Plan).
 - Arrange for the Board to approve the Group 2 Architecture Ten-Year Capital Plan Report as a planning resource to inform future capital planning decisions within the Division.
 - Engage with Division staff and internal stakeholder agents to understand the intent of *Faith in Our Future*.
 - While respecting the Provincial School Closure Regulation and associated Board Policy, engage with pre- prescribed consultation processes with external stakeholders.
 - Commence with application for a new school site for École Father Jan in the Riverside Area Structure Plan using health and safety and high utilization rates throughout the City of St. Albert as the primary motivators for obtaining the site;
 - Initiate planning for the renovation and relocation of Division Office and St. Gabriel High School to the Marie Poburan Education Centre (MPEC).

- ***Phase 2 (2020 – 2021)***
 - Transfer ESSMY and EMP students to their respective new locations for the same programs;
 - Initiate sale of the existing Division Office for funds to renovate MPEC;
 - Commence with renovation of MPEC while phasing Division Office Employees to MPEC;
 - Arrange for removal of 14 portables from existing school sites starting at EMP.

- ***Phase 3 (2021 – 2022)***
 - Complete renovation and parking at a newly renovated MPEC to facilitate St. Gabriel High School programming and enrolment;
 - Transfer St. Gabriel programming to the MPEC building site.

- *Phase 4 (2022 – 2024)*
 - Complete construction of École Father Jan;
 - Arrange for sale of Father Jan;
 - Complete the removal of 14 portables from existing school sites in St. Albert and bring into consideration the possibility that resources could be used to remove excess portables in Morinville.

Five-Year Financial Savings:

A five-year assessment that addresses savings to the Division should this proposal be supported, is as follows:

• Lease savings dedicated to St. Gabriel High School:	650,000
• Barrier Free needs for St. Gabriel High School:	130,000
• OH&S related costs for Division Office:	1,000,000
• Cost recovery of non-supported funding for Sr. High French Immersion:	<u>1,000,000</u>
	\$2,780,000

Conclusion:

The goal of acting on a proposal such as this is to convert existing capital planning and associated programming needs into fiscally responsible opportunities that predict excellence and innovation in student learning while enhancing the future viability of the Division. Understanding that the five drivers for this business proposal will not diminish in scope through time, the Board is investing in this proposal to strategically limit known liabilities and enhance multiple programming mandates in the years to come. The Board trusts that its public can be a valued resource in understanding and making recommendations in relation to this proposal. Ultimately, this proposal furthers Faith in Our Future by acting upon opportunities that will enable staff, students, and their families to optimize their involvement in Catholic education in the years to come.