



# Cherry Coulee Christian Academy's (CCCA) Education Plan, May 31, 2023

## Acknowledgement

This plan is written under the guidance provided in Alberta Education's Assurance Framework as described in the 2022-23 Funding Manual for Schools. While this plan in part fulfills the requirements of the Ministry, CCCA has determined that an Education Plan is of greater importance than simply a compliance document. It serves a number of purposes. It is intended to provide our stakeholders with a plan that outlines our key priorities over the next three years and beyond. It further guides the staff of CCCA, providing them with a unified focus for their work of helping students be successful. In publicizing our priorities for a minimum of three years, CCCA is publicly stating our commitment to continually improving what we do, but not in the sense of continually adding new initiatives and strategies. Rather, it is making a commitment to consistent outcomes, through continuously improved processes. This plan holds out for the staff of the school a set of priorities that will guide their community of practice as they seek to create learning environments that promote outstanding student achievement.

## Accountability Statement

The Education Plan for Cherry Coulee Christian Academy, CCCA, commencing August 29, 2023 was prepared under the direction of the Board in accordance with the responsibilities under the Education Act, the Private School Regulation, and the Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act. 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 three years on May 31, 2023.

  
C – Adolf Friesen, CCCA Board Chair

# Setting the Context

## Vision

We will be distinctively Christian in our community, curriculum, character, and convictions. To be the best school, academically, in our area.

## Mission

Cherry Coulee Christian Academy exists to assist families by providing a quality, Christ-centered, Bible based education to equip students for life, and to influence the world around them for Christ.

## Beliefs

The educational philosophy of the 40-Mile Christian Education society is based on a God-centered view of man and truth as presented in the Bible. Since God created and sustains all things through His Son, Jesus Christ, the universe and all life are dynamically related to God and have the purpose of glorifying Him. This is pointedly true of man, who was made in God's image different in kind from all other creatures, with the unique capacity to know and respond to God, personally and voluntarily.

The authority for education comes from God's command that children be taught to love God and place Him first in their lives, and from the fact that parents are responsible for the education and training of their children. The school was founded on this principle, and this continues to be a focal point of its operation. We further believe education is to be taught from a Biblical perspective. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

CCCA has a distinctively Biblical "Statement of Faith," that all staff, parents and students agree to and support. This document is made available to all families through the student handbook.

We believe that every child is made in the image of God and has inherent worth, just as God loves and values each one of us giving each unique talents and needs.

Based on these beliefs the following goals are pursued in the spiritual, personal and social, and the academic development of the student. These goals are stated in the constitution of the 40-Mile Christian Education Society.

## Profile

CCCA began in 1989 when a group of parents decided they wanted the education for their children to be based on a Christian worldview and not a secular worldview. For the last 31 years Cherry Coulee has worked hard to provide a strong Biblical base for students in our community and abroad. CCCA serves predominantly an agricultural-based community. Students come to the school from as far away as Etzikom and Medicine Hat. The town of Bow Island has a population of just over 2000. The town has three other schools, a public school (ECS-12,) a Catholic school (ECS-12) and a Holdeman Mennonite school (ECS-9). A public school in Burdett (11 km East) serves the needs of many Mennonite students in the area.

Five full-time teachers, all of whom are certified, and 2 non-certified teachers serve this school. The principal is allotted 0.30 full-time equivalent administrative time as well as serving fulltime as the Home School Coordinator. The school program is for students, ECS through grade twelve.

The Alberta Curriculum guide is followed. Curriculum from Math Makes Sense and Jump Math are used for Math. Social Studies, Science, Art, and Physical Education use board approved textbooks and materials from Christian Publishers are used as primary and supplementary resources for some subjects. Bible is taught as a required course for all grades. Junior High options are: Outdoor Education, Home Economics, Computers, Robotics, Art and Drama (alternating years). Computer technology, Art, Drama, and Music have been taught from Grades 3-6.

An early literacy program was added to enhance the reading program primarily at the ECS through Grade 2 levels. A majority of our students come from a Mexican Mennonite background and are also ESL students as their parents still speak mostly Low German at home.

### **Trends**

- 98% of our school population is comprised of ESL students.
- This year we had 2 grade 12 grads.
- Increasing education costs.

### **Issues**

- Significant number of ESL students
- Low-income families – The Board works with all low-income families who want a Christian Education for their children, and decisions are made on an individual basis. We stress that our main goal is to provide every child to with a Christian education.
- Cost of upkeep of facilities

### **Strategies**

- Student/teacher ratio provides extra assistance for ESL students.
- Transitioning to two grade splits in the elementary from three grade splits.
- Provision of extra instruction through parent helpers and Early Literacy Program.
- Dialogue with ESL parents concerning the value of education to increase awareness.
- ESL parents on the school board.
- Provision of alternate opportunities for tuition payment.
- Renovation of the new school building completed.
- Enhancing public relations in order to make the school better known in the area.

## **Special Programs**

We have had several German-speaking students enrolled in Cherry Coulee. Some of these students have had to receive instruction at a different grade level within their classroom. Others were moved to a lower grade level than their age group until they gained a better understanding of the language. Most of these students are now working at the correct grade level and achieving adequately. Provisions are being made available to accommodate ESL students who are currently functioning below grade level.

# Home School

Cherry Coulee Christian Academy oversees about 130 home school students throughout the province, under 40 Mile Home Education. Families are visited twice a year by a certified teacher as per Alberta Education regulations, with curriculum content and tests scores being recorded. The home school coordinators also provide several other forms of contact with families—quarterly newsletters, email and telephone communication, day school events, etc. Each family is to supply the supervisors with a detailed account—Part D of the “Notification of Intent” form—indicating their instructional methods, resource materials, and nature of evaluation. The families are also strongly encouraged to take the Canadian Achievement Tests to their children each spring, and many do.

In terms of Grade 12 completion, most of these Home School families have opted “to achieve the outcomes contained in the Schedule included in the *Home Education Regulation*” (found in Part B in the Notification of Intent). Most students complete Grade 12, either by fulfilling the requirements set out by Alberta Education for homeschoolers, and/or by completing the GED test. To that end, learning outcomes for homeschoolers, provided by Alberta Education, are likewise included as part of the individual student's plan for the year.

## **Grade 12**

Approximately 75% - 85% of students that notify their home education intention through Cherry Coulee complete Grade 12 while being under the school's jurisdiction. The remaining 15% - 25% either move on to other boards, go back to day school, leave the province, or simply shift into the workplace early.

Normally, those who complete Grade 12 doing home school through 40 Mile Home Ed. do so in one of two ways: Either they fulfill the learning outcomes supplied by Alberta Education for homeschoolers, or they complete the Grade 12 Equivalency Diploma (GED), either of which we strongly encourage. This coming year we have a few families, who have registered with us, who are wanting their children to achieve an Alberta Diploma.

## **Community**

- Several experts from the community are involved in our school program.
- We have been forming relationships with community leaders and becoming more involved in ways to help our community (i.e. Community clean-up projects, Youth in Philanthropy program through Community Foundations, Prairie Gleaners, the Lethbridge Soup Kitchen and Food Bank.)

## **Curriculum**

- All courses offered meet the curriculum requirements set out by the Province of Alberta. Cherry Coulee integrates Biblical principles into all subject areas.

## **Future**

- As small private school we continually seek ways to improve. Student recruitment continues to be a priority. A higher enrolment will provide more revenue, which in turn, will enable the expansion of programs. For the last several years we have looked for a way to separate ourselves academically from the other schools in the area. We have been working with Master's Academy in Calgary to change the learning environment of our school. Based on the belief that instead of trying to change our education system, which is broken, we are working on changing our teaching methods with our students. The way students learn has changed dramatically over the years, and we have been working under the guidance of Master's to help our students to become imaginal learners. To prepare themselves for whatever career they choose, to think for themselves.

- We continue to make God and His principles the center of everything we do in our school.

The original portables, which had been here since the school's inception, have been replaced. The elementary classes will be under one roof in the new facility as well as some Jr./Sr. High classes, which will create a more efficient timetable, which will allow teachers to use their time more judiciously. Last summer we put in sidewalks around the main building, and this summer we are putting concrete between the two buildings, a sprinkler system for the playground, and an addition to our storage building.

## Summary of Accomplishments

The school authority's accomplishments – impact of major activities/strategies

Cherry Coulee Christian Academy recently celebrated 30 years of providing a quality, Christian-based education to the Bow Island community and surrounding area. Cherry Coulee is in its seventh year of offering a high school program to help encourage students, who normally would not finish grade 12, to get their diploma. This year we celebrated two more graduations.

CCCA has programs in place for boys and girls (Boys on Fire, Girls-With-Swords, and God Girls) to build community within the school as well as serve the community in which we live. These, along with our buddy system where the older students are matched up with and mentor the younger students.

Since its completion in 2009, the gymnasium, along with the kitchen, has provided an excellent venue for community use, such as tournaments (including volleyball provincials this year), banquets, team practices, and church services. This year we were thrilled to be able to host the community Good Friday Service after four years of not being able to do so.

In order to accommodate much more storage also making it more accessible to get items in and out of storage, we sold our sea-can and built a storage building.

The student council had been saving for years in order to make a big contribution to the student body, and in 2021 I made some calls and was able to make it happen. We had a half-court outdoor basketball court build so that students would have another option at recess and for PE.

The school was able to purchase two class sets of Chrome Books in order to relieve some of the stress for students, teachers, and parents in the event that there is another lockdown and students need to be able to do their work from home.

In order to help with the visibility of the school, we mounted a couple of spotlights to light up the school name and logo on the side of the building, as well as hired a local artist to paint a massive mural on the east end of our gym building to minister to those driving west on the #3 highway.

The students fundraised in order to be able to purchase a class set of ukuleles to enhance our elementary music program.

Installation of new playground apparatuses was completed over the Easter break 2022 which is enjoyed not only by our students but increased usage from families from the neighborhood and community.

Purchased a third set of chrome books for the lower elementary to assist in literacy and numeracy enhancement.

**In recent years new teachers hired have brought considerable expertise in music, computers, physical education, special education, Second Language, etc. and are very keen to use their experience and skills to enhance the educational experience of the students in our school. The Board and administration remain positive and are determined to continue supplying a Christian-based education to the children of this area into the foreseeable future.**

## Community Involvement

Apart from all the service opportunities that the various clubs and Jr/Sr high partake in, this year is the second time the high school students had the opportunity to participate in the YiP (Youth in Philanthropy) program through the Community Foundations of Canada. The students were given a certain amount of money, and had to research, and report on different charitable organizations they wanted to potentially donate to that organization. Then the students narrowed it down to one or two organizations and then had the privilege to present the cheque to the organization they chose. What a great experience for the students and a way to bless a community organization.

## Identification of Priorities

The CCCA board along with the school's administrative team and staff are committed to creating and maintaining a school community that encourages excellence. They are united in their view that excellence is not achieved by continually changing what we do, but by identifying what we do well and then seeking to continually refine our delivery of these services. This creates a sense of stability in the organization. Parents who selected the school for its strong focus on Biblical Worldview, literacy and numeracy development or its commitment to encouraging students to live as disciples of Christ and become future ready, will find that this is consistent throughout the different divisions and over time.

Alberta Education has identified five domains of Assurance to guide schools in planning and reporting. These are:

- Student Growth and Achievement
- Teaching & Leading
- Learning Supports
- Governance
- Local & Societal Context

Cherry Coulee Christian Academy is committed to reporting on each of these using data that is collected through Alberta Education's processes. It will furthermore report on all required provincial, and local measures.

CCCA has also established its own priorities for its 2022 Education Plan. These priorities will remain in place over the next three years and beyond.

**2023 to 2026 Assurance Framework Education Plan for Cherry Coulee  
Christian Academy**

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| <b>School Priorities</b>                   | <i>Develop Students Into Imaginal Learners</i>   | <i>Building a Supportive Community</i>  |
| <b>Matching Assurance Framework Domain</b> | <i>Student Growth &amp; Achievement<br/>Teaching &amp; Leading<br/>Learning Supports</i>   | <i>Governance<br/>Local &amp; Societal Context</i>  |
| <b>Outcomes</b>                            | <i>CCCA students demonstrate mastery in their school subjects</i><br><br><i>Students being future ready, profound learners prepared for life beyond school</i> | <i>Parents and teachers collaborate</i><br><br><i>Community professionals are accessed</i><br><br><i>Families feel welcome</i><br><br><i>Families develop positive relationships within the school community</i><br><br><i>Parental input into school planning is encouraged</i><br><br><i>Parents can access learning that better enables them to support student wellbeing &amp; academic success</i> |

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| <p><b>Context</b></p>  | <p><i>Since its beginning, CCCA has strived to give an excellent level of education to help students excel not only academically, but more importantly spiritually. Developing our students to become future ready learners (profound) will prepare the students for whatever situation they find themselves, and open up opportunities they might never have had. Also, to help them withstand many of the pressures to live out their lives for Christ to the world around them</i></p> <p><i>People learn differently and giving the students the tools and choices to affect their own learning to get the most out of their learning</i></p> | <p><i>Learning happens best in a supportive community and environment where students sense that the school, the home and the community are all working together to encourage success and support students achievement</i></p> |
| <p><b>Budgetary Principles:</b></p> <p><b>(The school's budget summary can be accessed at</b></p> <p><b><a href="http://www.cherrycoulee.ca/about">www.cherrycoulee.ca/about</a></b></p> | <p><i>Cherry Coulee will budget in a way that ensures the appropriate resources are available for developing the teacher skills and student supports needed to build future ready students</i></p> <p><i>Budget in a way that ensures structures are in place and support is available for students to pursue avenues or interests beyond what is typically available to them</i></p>   | <p><i>Cherry Coulee will budget in a way that facilitates strong parental and community engagement</i></p>  |
| <p><b>Strategies</b></p>   | <p><i>Identify and train a lead teacher to champion &amp; coach others</i></p> <p><i>Staff professional learning via Master's Academy during dedicated professional development sessions (continuing)</i></p>   | <p><i>Host an annual meet the teacher event</i></p> <p><i>Create an online, social media presence</i></p>   |



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|                        | <p><i>Monthly teacher check-ins through professional learning community (continuing)</i></p> <p><i>Staff field trips to Master's Academy</i></p> <p><i>Teach students to self-assess using learning maps (continuing)</i></p> <p><i>Teach students to use vocabulary of self-assessment, and identifying "I Can" statements (short-term)</i></p> <p><i>Create and implement learning adventures (opportunity for students to incorporate and demonstrate understanding from various subjects in real life situations) that culminate in a student, parent showcase (continuing)</i></p> <p><i>Orient all teachers to understand the school's approach to imaginal learning (short term)</i></p> <p><i>Create a school culture where students are confident in their learning to the point of effectively articulating and sharing with others (continuing)</i></p> <p><i>Annually identify and recognize students who are achieving mastery and pinpointing areas of improvement to help support those who continue to work on achieving mastery (continuing)</i></p> | <p><i>Share a questionnaire with parents to share expectations and goals for their children's development</i></p> <p><i>Host at least two parent teacher nights annually to discuss student progress</i></p> <p><i>Participate in AISCA's student support initiative</i></p> <p><i>Host Mixer Events in conjunction with school events such as Christmas Concert, Fall and Spring Fundraiser events</i></p> |
| <p><b>Measures</b></p> | <p><i>Student results on the PAT's and Diploma Exams. This is a long-term objective. The results from 2022-23 will provide baseline data (just getting back on track with no exams)</i></p>   | <p><i>Satisfaction Surveys</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Parents, students &amp; teachers satisfied that students with</i></li> </ul>   |

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|  | <p><i>written last year or the previous two years before, due to COVID)</i></p> <p><i>Anecdotal reporting of progress in other strategies</i></p> <p><i>Parent &amp; Student Satisfaction that students have the opportunity to achieve mastery and showcase their knowledge and understanding</i></p> | <p><i>learning needs can access the supports they need to be successful</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• Parents, students &amp; teachers satisfied that students becoming future ready learners</i></li><li><i>• Parents satisfied that the school provides opportunities for them to meet other parents</i></li><li><i>• Parents satisfied that they have the opportunity to meaningfully participate in program decisions that impact their children</i></li><li><i>• Parents satisfied they have the opportunity to provide input that impacts the overall direction of the school</i></li></ul> |
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**2021 to 2024 Assurance Framework Education Plan for Cherry Coulee  
Christian Academy**

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| <b>Provincial Priority</b>                 | <p><i>First Nation Metis, and Inuit students are successful.</i></p> <p><i>All students, teachers and school leaders learn about First Nations, Metis and Inuit foundational knowledge, including perspectives, experiences, treaties, agreements, and the history and legacy of residential schools.</i></p>  |
| <b>Matching Assurance Framework Domain</b> | <p><i>Student Growth &amp; Achievement</i></p> <p><i>Teaching &amp; Leading</i></p> <p><i>Learning Supports</i></p> <p><i>Governance</i></p> <p><i>Local &amp; Societal Context</i></p>  |
| <b>Outcomes</b>                            | <p><i>While historically, CCCA has not had any self-identified FNMI students, our goal is that all self-identified FNMI students at the school are provided with the supports they need to be successful.</i></p> <p><i>Students in all grades participate in grade appropriate learning that introduces students to indigenous foundational knowledge, perspectives, experiences, treaties, agreements, history and legacy of residential schools.</i></p> <p><i>Teachers are satisfied that they have the training, confidence, resources and supports to provide learning opportunities for their students.</i></p> |
| <b>Measures</b>                            | <p><i>Satisfaction Surveys - Students, Teachers and Parents report satisfaction that students have opportunities to learn about FNMI foundational knowledge, perspectives, experiences, treaties, agreements, and the history &amp; legacy of residential schools. Teachers report satisfaction that they have the confidence levels and adequate levels of training, support and resources to teach FNMI foundational knowledge.</i></p> <p><i>Anecdotal reporting on progress of strategies</i></p>  |
| <b>Strategies</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Targeted professional learning for classroom teachers</i></li> <li>● <i>Acquisition of library and learning resources</i></li> <li>● <i>Collaborative sharing on teaching strategies, learning activities</i></li> <li>● <i>Develop strategic partnerships with indigenous and Metis leaders/schools</i></li> </ul>  |

\*\*\*The school budget can be found on the Cherry Coulee Christian Academy website at [cherrycoulee.ca](http://cherrycoulee.ca) under the connect tab and parent subpage.