

Calgary



2024-2025

City Hall School

Report to partners



In partnership with:



Land acknowledgement

The city of Calgary sits on fertile land where two rivers meet, where Indigenous Peoples have been gathering for thousands of years, sharing knowledge and storytelling, and planning for future generations. The traditional names for this place we know as Calgary are Moh-kins-tsis, Wíchispa Oyade, Otos-kwunee and Guts-ists’i — the land that has given so much to so many.

Elders teach us the importance of acknowledging the land where we gather, settle or visit, and offering gratitude for the generosity of the gifts that Mother Earth has shared with us. With this, we offer respect for those who traditionally lived on this land, and welcome those who have made Calgary their home.

Calgary is located on the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta. This includes the Blackfoot Confederacy, made up of the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations; the Îethka Nakoda Wícastabi First Nations, comprised of the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations; and the Tsuut’ina First Nation. Calgary is also homeland to the historic Northwest Métis and to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3. We acknowledge all Indigenous urban Calgarians who have made this city their home. Together, their spiritual and practical relationships to the land create rich lessons for our life as a community.

We are thankful for the opportunity that this sacred place provides us to engage in reconciliation and to make life better every day for all who call Calgary home.



Grade 5 students slow down at a wetland on the Bow River and watch a muskrat.



Grade 5 students take a tour of Stampede Park and see an osprey nest along the Elbow River.

On the cover

Students look at the Calgary Tower from the top of the Bow Tower.

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Falconridge School students sketch the views on top of Platform Parkade.



Richmond School students watch the C-Trains go in and out of the Central Library.



Copperfield School students play tetherball at High Park in the Beltline.

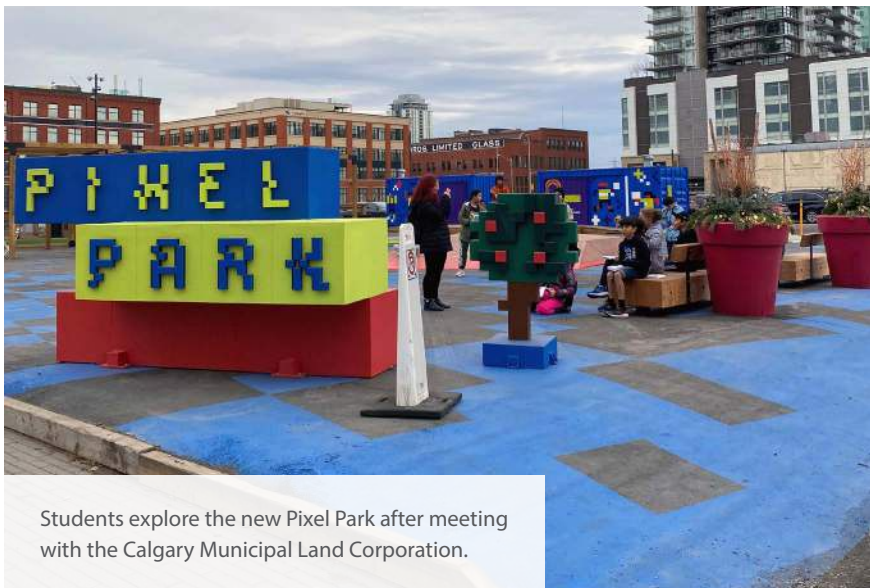
Exploring our city

City Hall School continued to be a highlight for almost 600 students this year.

They entered the Municipal Building with curious eyes and felt a little out of place, but after their week, they felt comfortable and were experts of their city. Their excitement began everyday on a city transit charter bus. Students had the opportunity to explore many iconic downtown locations and numerous hidden gems of Calgary. City Hall School is grounded by journaling and observing. Students get to slow down and notice spaces.

When students explore the downtown area, they notice everything around them. They notice what's above them, below them, and they look far and close. While noticing, they consider different perspectives and use empathy to understand how a space is used. They investigated historical layers of the downtown core by comparing historic buildings and the newest buildings. They participated in exciting moments, such as watching construction in Eau Claire, feeding the fish at the Devonian Gardens, going to the top of Bow Tower and touring the haunted space at The Grand.

Each class used a big idea to focus their week at City Hall School. This idea influenced the activities, community walks and the experts that students met. This year, the main themes were learning through space, being an active citizen, identity, building community and finding unspoken voices.



Students explore the new Pixel Park after meeting with the Calgary Municipal Land Corporation.

I understand that to have a relationship with a place you have to know the people that reside in it you have to understand the history.

Student



A student from Sibylla Kiddle School seeing where Mayor Gondek put the braille sticker he gave her to help make her office more accessible.

How does City Hall School work?

City Hall School is a five-day field study that is jointly run by The City of Calgary's Recreation & Social Programs business unit and Campus Calgary/Open Minds. Teachers submitted a proposal in May 2023 about how the field study would be incorporated within their year long planning. All Calgary schools are welcome, which includes public, Catholic, independent or charter schools. City Hall School is a full-year experience that is guided by a big idea. This big idea connects the students' work at school to their week downtown. Teachers are involved in many professional development opportunities throughout the year that provides knowledge that they will need to participate in City Hall School and the skills that their students will need. Every week is personalized to each class, their big idea and their needs. Two months before their time downtown, there is a planning meeting with teachers to set intentions and expectations. Using this information, a program is designed for each group.

This program has many different facets. Every class meets Mayor Gondek and their councillor. Students asked many questions about their jobs, questions that help solve problems in their community, and questions to help them understand current events. Students learned from many experiences, including presentations from City of Calgary experts, community experts, community walks, observation and journalling.

City Hall School's mission is to offer a look into the municipal government, how decisions are made and how the city is run. This experience hopes to encourage students to become active citizens within their communities.

A space is not just an inanimate object. They have a voice. Students use their emotions and empathy to understand the significance of a space. What is the space saying to all people? Is everyone welcome? Do I feel safe? Students learned about hostile design and architecture to read a space. They worked with Calgary Municipal Land Corporation to understand how a space is created. When we sat in spaces, students thought about the emotions that the spaces made them feel and they asked themselves. Who is here? What are they doing? Students then brainstormed ideas to improve the space to make it more inclusive and be of use to more people.

Students, like all citizens, want to know that their voice is valued. They are shocked to learn that even though they cannot vote, they can still impact city decisions. City Hall School classes had opportunities to participate in public engagement with the city. Students had a chance to give opinions about Calgary parks, the pathway system and Local Area Plans. Students used questions to share what was important to them while meeting Mayor Gondek and their councillor. They are interested in understanding homelessness, community safety and having more spaces for children throughout Calgary. A student from Sibylla Kiddle School who is visually impaired shared his experience with Mayor Gondek and Councillor Spencer. He gifted them a walking stick beaded key chain and a braille sticker of their name.

What I really liked about City Hall School was how we were always journalling and doing activities. We did so many cool things inside the school like riding the elevator and talking to the peace officers.

Student



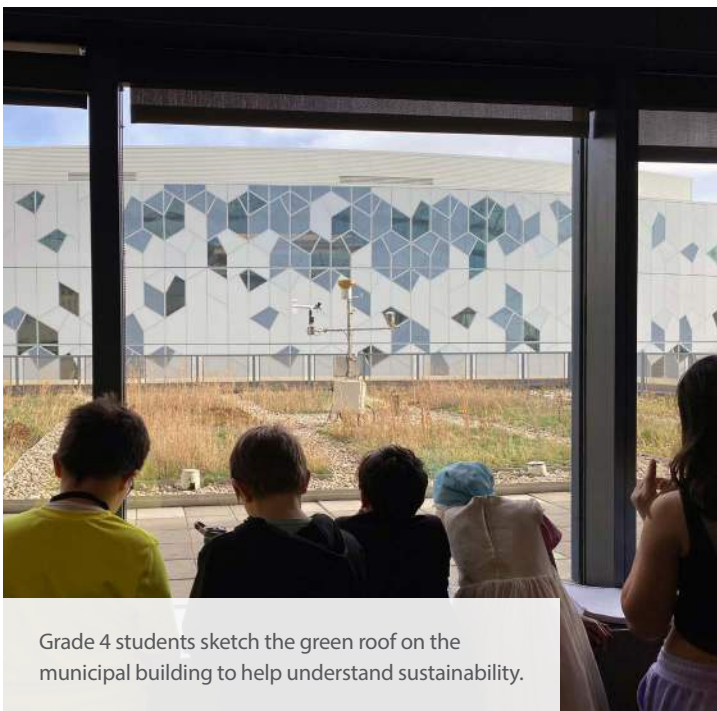
A grade 5 student's sketches of the artifacts in the atrium in the municipal building.



Andrew Sibbald School volunteer by sorting clothing at Good Neighbour thrift store.



Richmond School meets a firefighter and learn about fire safety.



Grade 4 students sketch the green roof on the municipal building to help understand sustainability.

“ City hall school built my understanding for the big idea by giving us many lessons about different problems in the city and how we can fix it. We also learnt about many new organizations that help the city.”

Student

Calgary Arts Development

City Hall School and Calgary Arts Development collaborated with many schools this year. We wanted to create a connection to a class' big idea and local artists that work in Calgary. Students were able to explore the community and their identity through different art media. Calgary Arts Development were able to bring in artists that could showcase their work and create art with the students. They also shared about how public art works in Calgary.

Katie Green created masks with students. The masks represented a word and the individual student. Students used shapes and colours to express themselves and the word they chose.

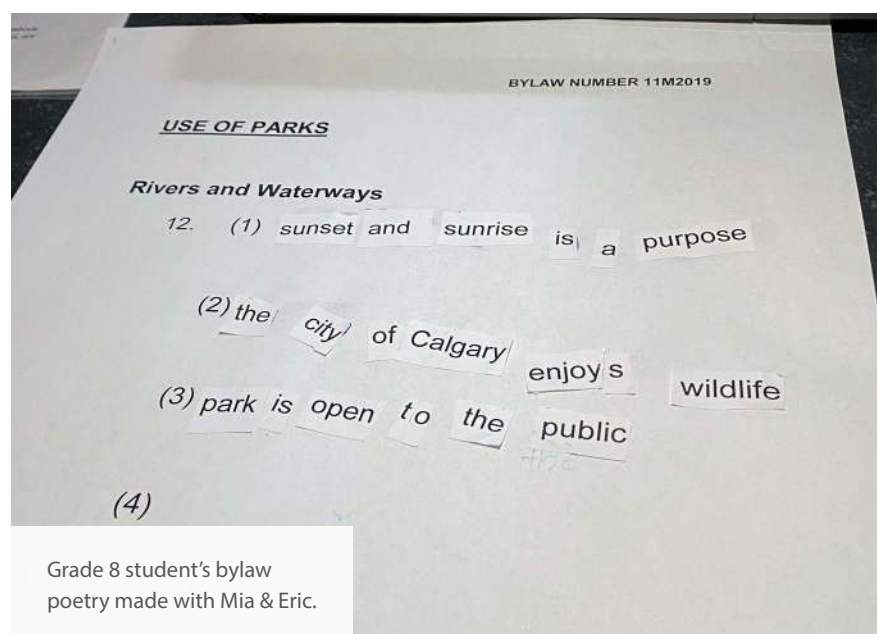
Mia & Eric, an artistic pair named **Mia Rushton** and **Eric Moschopedis**, rewrote city bylaws with grade 8 students. They began by cutting up Calgary bylaws and then using the cut up words to create new poetic bylaws.

Sydonne Warren showed students how she works with a community to create a mural. Students acted as community members and artists to brainstorm a mural for their community.

Valentina Carabello shared how important community is to the artistic process. She talked about how collaborating with community groups brings out stories to share. The students then created art on a puzzle piece that would show them as an individual. The class then put their pieces together to see their community's identity.

“ Participating in Calgary Campus impacted my teaching practice positively. It reminds you that amazing learning can happen outside of the classroom in non-traditional settings.”

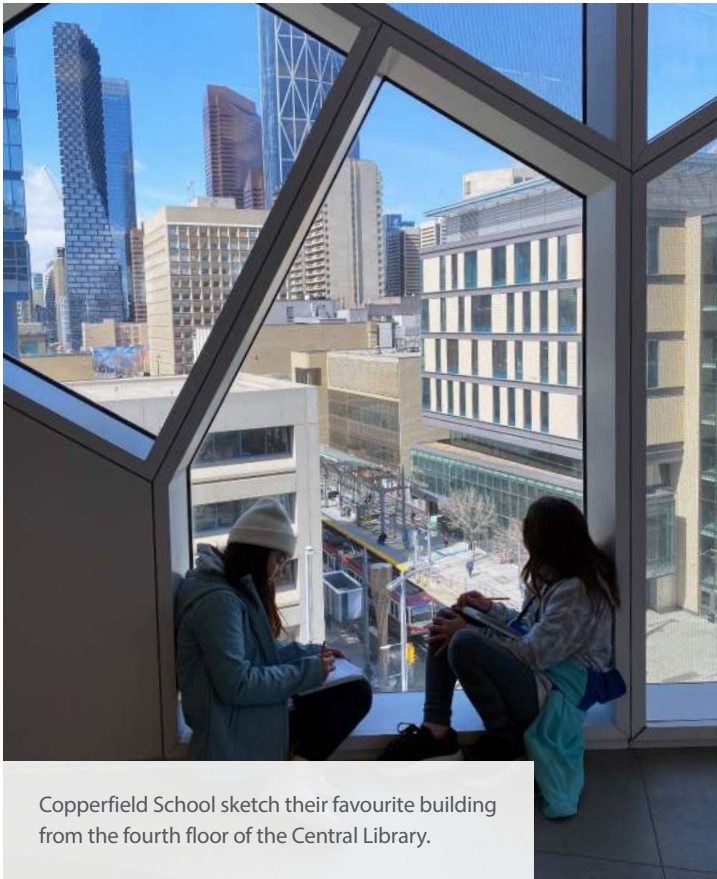
Teacher



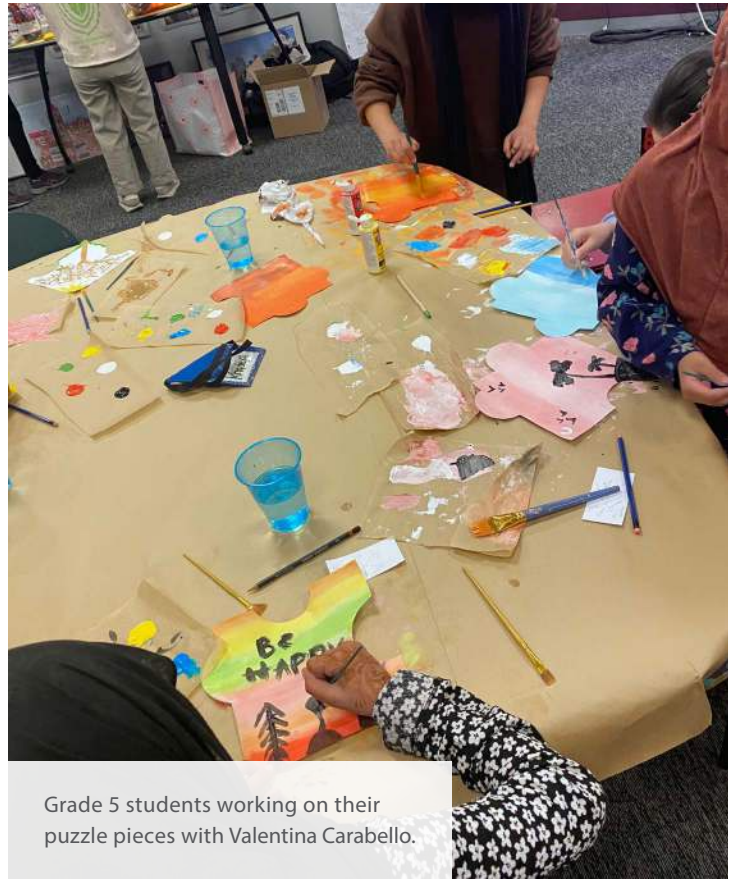
Grade 8 student's bylaw poetry made with Mia & Eric.



Grade 6 student's mask representing desperation with Katie Green's mask workshop.



Copperfield School sketch their favourite building from the fourth floor of the Central Library.



Grade 5 students working on their puzzle pieces with Valentina Carabello.



Sydonne Warren brainstorming with grade 5 students about their mural idea.

“ We learned about different types of communities (classroom, school, neighbourhood and then the extended Calgary community) — City Hall School was such a wonderful way to learn about the work, care and planning that is required to ensure Calgary is a safe, interesting and fun place to live. ”
Teacher

Celebrating student learning

After their week downtown, **Simons Valley School** students understood how they can encourage others to become better citizens. Students created a physical representation of an issue, theme or place they visited. During their week, they met with a presenter from the Equity Program at the city. Students chose to represent racism in their project.



St. Augustine School listens to Cassie Suche share about her art, Touch Traces, that is in East Village.



Grade 5 students enjoying an Indigenous Placemaking Tour at the Central Library.



Level Up Calgary Minecraft Challenge

After participating at City Hall School, students from Dr. Oakley School used their ideas and learning to create space in the Level Up Calgary Minecraft Challenge. One student from their school placed in the top 3 finalists for division III. Students at Dr. Oakley School are part of a specialized program for complex learning disabilities. While downtown, they noticed the lack of accessibility for their disability. Their Level Up Challenge designs reflected the change they wanted to see in Calgary.

City Hall School schedule 2024-2025

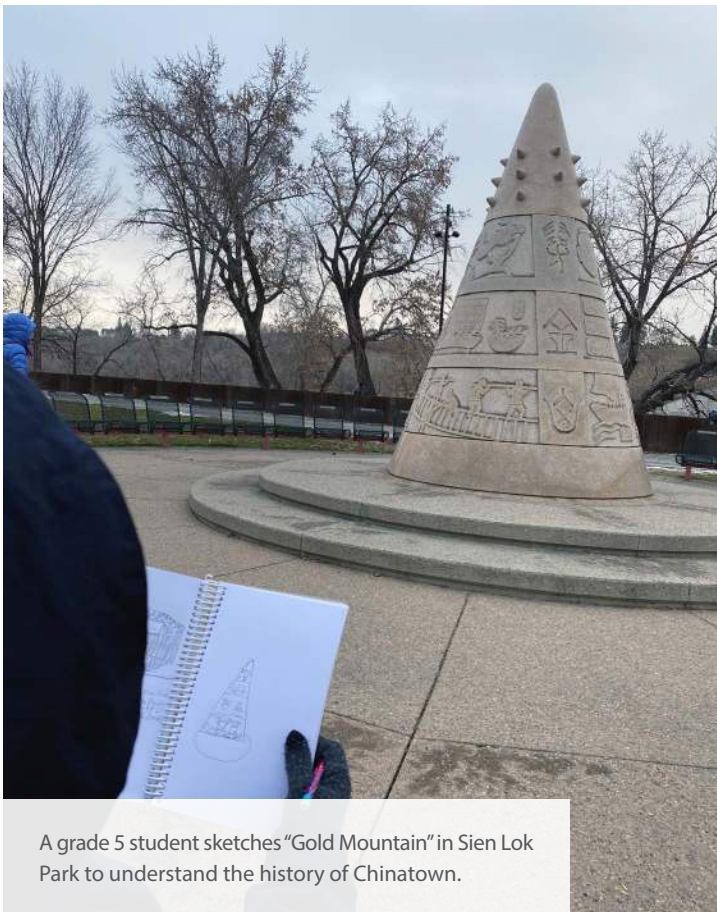
Week	School	Grade	Ward	Focus of study
Oct 4-5 and 11-13	Bishop Carroll	10-12	8	What do we cultivate?
Oct 16-19 and Nov 6	St. Augustine	5/6	11	How do we use art to share our identity?
Oct 23-27	St. Augustine	6	11	How do we use art to share our identity?
Oct 30 – Nov 3	North Haven	4/5	4	How do we meet our needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs?
Nov 7-8 and 15-17	Andrew Sibbald	5	14	How do we create a welcoming and inclusive community?
Nov 20-23 and Dec 18	Chaparral	4	14	What does it mean to be a Canadian today?
Nov 27 – Dec 1	Copperfield	5	12	How does resilience impact our lives?
Dec 4-6 and 19-20	Copperfield	5	12	How does resilience impact our lives?
Dec 11-15	Andrew Sibbald	5	14	How do we create a welcoming and inclusive community?
Jan 16-19 and Feb 12	Chaparral	6	14	Unspoken voices, what place do other perspectives have in democracy?
Jan 22-26	Chaparral	6	14	Unspoken voices, what place do other perspectives have in democracy?
Jan 29 – Feb 2	Falconridge	6	5	How can you use your voice to effect change?
Feb 5-9	Simons Valley	6	3	How do we inspire people to become better citizens of our city?
Feb 13-14 and 20-22	Simons Valley	6	3	How do we inspire people to become better citizens of our city?
Feb 26 – Mar 1	St. Ambrose	8	2	What is my unique voice?
Mar 4-8	Dr. Oakley	7	8	How does the (social) media you consume impact you?
Mar 11-15	St. Ambrose	8	2	What is my unique voice?
Mar 18-20 and Apr 17-18	Copperfield	5	12	How does resilience impact our lives?
Apr 3-5 and 15-16	Sibylla Kiddle	5	12	How do we develop relationships with a place?
Apr 8-12	Sibylla Kiddle	5	12	How do we develop relationships with a place?
Apr 22-26	Sibylla Kiddle	5	12	How do we develop relationships with a place?
Apr 29 – May 3	Richmond	1	8	How do I fit within my community?
May 6-10	Richmond	2	8	How do I fit within my community?
May 13-16 and 21	Falconridge	5	5	How does the land we live on shape our story?
May 27-31	Falconridge	5	5	How does the land we live on shape our story?



A grade 1 student enjoys the wind at the Bow River.



A Dr. Oakley School student does a pencil rubbing of the carvings along Stephen Avenue.



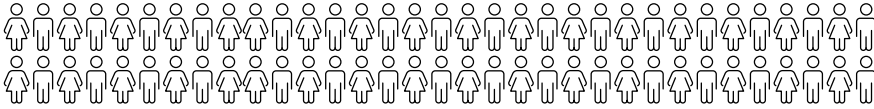
A grade 5 student sketches "Gold Mountain" in Sien Lok Park to understand the history of Chinatown.

“ Students thrive academically when they have the opportunity to interact with experts and while exploring the resources found outside of school. In this context, City Hall School was an inspiring learning experience for my students, who through their questions, observations and comments proved their deep engagement in the topics related with sustainability.”

Teacher

2024-2025 statistics

593 students



25 classes

20 from Calgary Board of Education **5** from Calgary Catholic School District



28 teachers

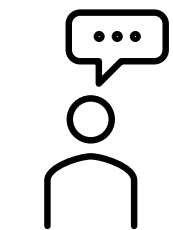
4 school staff **5** student teachers

158 volunteers



10 Council members

plus Mayor Gondek



37 City of Calgary experts
29 community experts

“My students will take away a stronger understanding of our local municipal government, as well as their potential role within it. They will see themselves as active within the community, and hold deeper recognition of how they can create change.”

Teacher



At Ambrose School interacts with a large-scale claw crane game sculpture creator that was part of the Three Dimensions exhibition at Contemporary Calgary.

Thank you to The City of Calgary

Thank you to all The City of Calgary staff who shared their expertise with City Hall School.

Calgary Community Standards

Hayley Ashton
Bradley Johnson

Calgary Fire Department

Gustavo Avila de Araujo
Todd Berry
Randy Chevrier
Alexander Kwan

Calgary Transit

Mandeep Dhési
Amanvir Sarao
Jaskaran Singh

City Archives

Susanne Clark
Kristine Lehw
Andrew Webster

City Clerk's Office

Shauna Noble
Trisa Zimmerman

City Manager's Office

David Duckworth
Jo Jacques

Collaboration, Analytics & Innovation

Community Planning

Jenna Davidson
Stephanie Lake
Fraser McLeod
Neil Roy Choudhury
Ravi Siddhartha
Sara Wilson

Infrastructure Services

Jen Malzer
Zane Hartman
Ethan Hill

Community Strategies

Bashir Mohamed
Jaspreet Sandhu
Arevik Tokmajyan

Councillors and Staff

Councillor Gian-Carlo Carra
Councillor Peter Demong
Councillor Raj Dhaliwal
Councillor Jasmine Mian
Councillor Kourtney Penner
Councillor Evan Spencer
Councillor Courtney Walcott
Councillor Jennifer Wyness

Climate & Environment

Aaron Boulton-Chaykowski
Roberta Waddell
Kyle White

Customer Service & Communications

Natalie Coombes

Emergency Management & Community Safety

John Acheson
Kelsey Boekelheide
Amy Cage
Kathy Coleman
Marc Elwakeel
Camilo Gil Gonzalez
Christine Thatcher

Facility Management

Gyula Danka

General Manager's Office

Carolyn Bowen
Kristen Wishlow

Indigenous Relations Office

Harold Horsefall
Devin Siebold

Office of the Mayor

Mayor Jyoti Gondek
Trina Hurdman
Amalie Ramcharan
Catherine Seymour
Jenelle Wohlberg

Public Engagement

Catriona White
Angela Catenacci
Ali McMillan

Mobility Safety

Jacquelyn Oriold

Municipal Building Security

Recreation & Social Programming

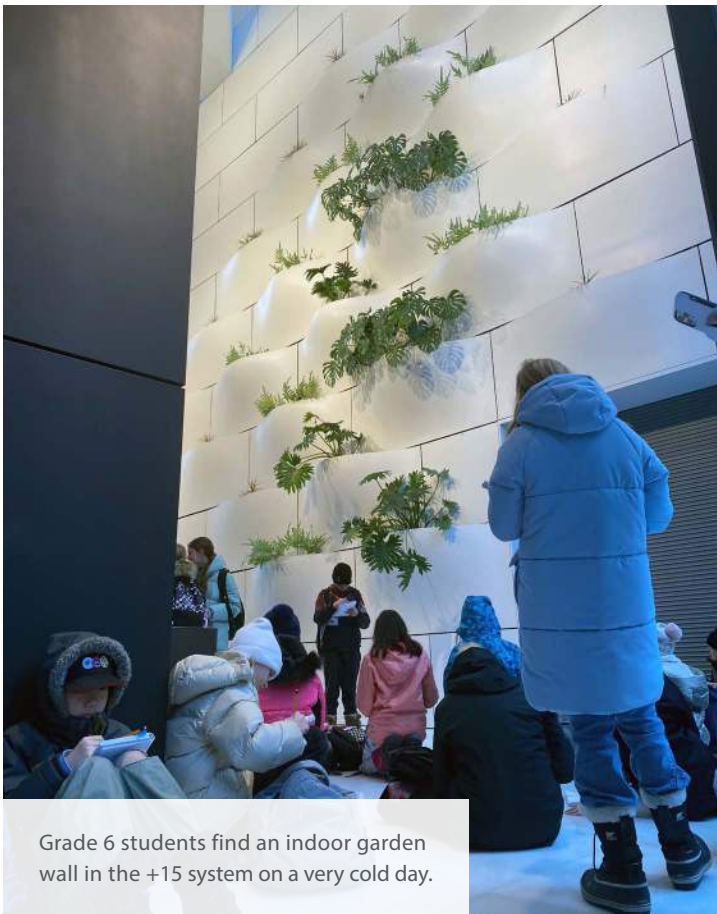
Rasheedat Ajeigbe
Debbie Belgrave
Ian Chiasson
Arlas Gillies
Peter Ma
Jackie Morley
Terrie Regier
Wendy Sliworsky
Bojan Tosic

Waste & Recycling

Michelle Dias



Grade 1 students match colours in Devonian Gardens.



Grade 6 students find an indoor garden wall in the +15 system on a very cold day.

“ I learned that the municipal government discusses what is right and what is wrong so they can make all our wards better. ”
Student



Grade 5 students visit a podcast studio at the Headversity offices.

“ City Hall School taught me that if you really go somewhere often, you can make a connection or relationship with the place. ”
Student

Thank you, Calgary

Thank you to all the Calgary community members who shared their expertise with City Hall School.

Calgary Arts Development

Parisa Radmanesh
Alex Lingnau
Katie Green
Sydonne Warren
Mia Rushton
Eric Moschopedis
Valentine Carabello

Calgary Board of Education

Gary Strother
Joanne Pitman
Mike Nelson
Garry Tink

Calgary Catholic School District

Bryan Szumlas
Helmut Kaiser
Kirk Linton

Calgary Police Commission

Heather Campbell
Deborah Petriuk
Heather Spicer

Calgary Public Library

Jasmine MacGregor
Leanne Hooper

Calgary Municipal Land Corporation

Allison Davelaar
Jack Olson
Jewel Chan

Calgary Stampede

Andrew Morrow

Campus Calgary/Open Minds

Marta Albertin
Natasha McKay
Jennifer Meredith

Contemporary Calgary

Yilu Xing

Good Neighbour Community Market

Alice Lam

The Grand

Nate Chiang
Ryan Gray
Autumn Sali

Global News

Adam MacVicar

Headversity

Rebecca Waroway

Hudson's Bay Downtown

Junior Achievement

Christine Meaden
Dominic Krile

Mustard Seed

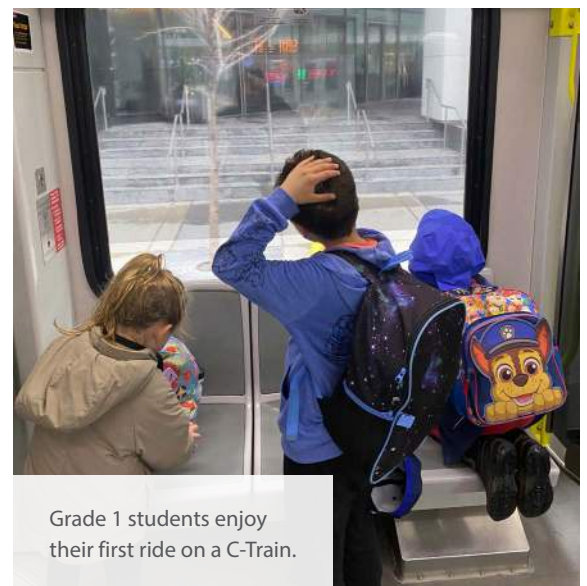
Cecily Letendre
Danielle Burns

National Music Centre

Paige Foley

“Students have been exploring media as a form of communication throughout our school year. Next, we are participating in the Level Up Calgary Minecraft challenge and students will need to incorporate what they have learned to ensure accessibility for all (including, people with learning disabilities/people who are unable to read).”

Teacher



Grade 1 students enjoy their first ride on a C-Train.

Conclusion

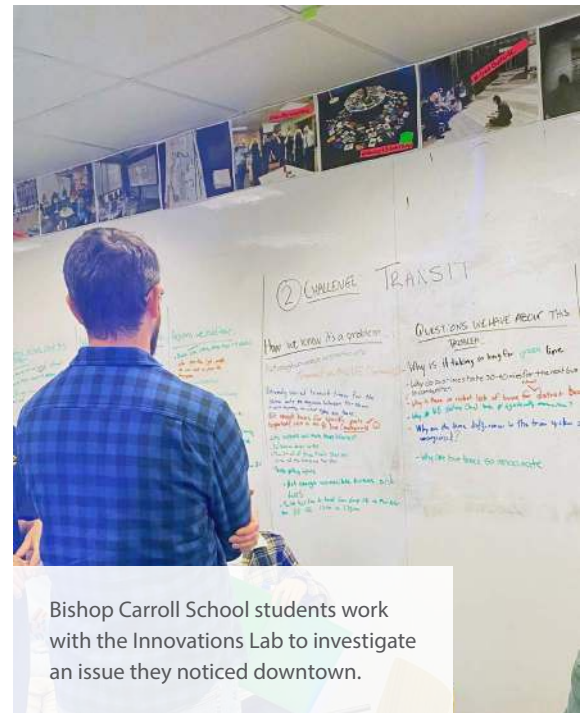
City Hall School opens up the city to hundreds of students every year. They leave their personal communities and venture out to see all that Calgary has to offer. Students find places to connect and problems they want to solve. When students engage in experiential learning at City Hall School, it leads to more active citizens. Through empathy, they will find what they are passionate about and learn tools to have their voice heard. Students are always amazed by the architecture, art, spaces and people that make up our city. Teachers gain the confidence to expand their classrooms into the community. City Hall School participants continue to leave the five-day field study with a new sense of citizenship.



Grade 7 students watch a media scrum with Mayor Gondok.

“ I appreciate how the mayor and one of the councillor took time out of their calendar to talk to us.”

Student



Bishop Carroll School students work with the Innovations Lab to investigate an issue they noticed downtown.

“ City Hall School taught me that I should be passionate about something if I wanted to make a change.”

Student