Calgary

2025-2026

# City Hall School

## Report to partners



In partnership with:

CAMPUS CALGARY

# Contents


1 Land Acknowledgement
2 Building relationships through exploring community
4 How does City Hall School work?
6 How we might live well together: Caring for ourselves
8 How we might live well together: Caring for each other
9 How we might live well together: Caring for community
10 City Hall School: Big ideas 2025-2026
11 2025-2026 statistics
12 Thank you to the 2025-2026 City of Calgary staff
14 Thank you, Calgary: 2025-2026 Community experts
15 Continuing to build relationships and connection




Sketching historic buildings in Calgary and making connections to what they tell us about Calgary's story as a city.



Reflecting on what popular landmarks in Calgary can tell us about our story as a city.



Journalling at the Municipal building has students thinking about the significance of public art and memorials in this space.

**On the cover**

Students pause for a moment in historic City Hall.

# Land acknowledgement

Every day, we engage in learning on this land. Acknowledging the land and the relationship that exists within Moh-kins-tsis/Calgary, and these spaces that we explore, helps us build an understanding of how history and story have shaped our city as we know it today. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to live, work and play on this land.

We acknowledge the stories, ceremony, traditions, culture, song and ways of knowing and being that continue to influence us today and recognize the significant value of this knowledge and traditions.

Calgary is located on Treaty 7, the traditional territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy – Siksika, Piikani and Kainai First Nations; the Îethka Nakoda Wîcastabi First Nations, comprised of the Chiniki, Bearspaw and Wesley First Nations; and the Tsuut'ina First Nation. It is also home to the Metis Nation, districts 5 and 6. As treaty people, we acknowledge and value the oral practices and traditions of these communities, and strive to uphold the reciprocity and respectful relationships, along with deep gratitude for being able to share stories and engage in learning on this land.



Taking the Forest Bathing Trail has students thinking about the connection between nature, the environment and mental health.



Overlooking the Confluence, where the Bow and Elbow Rivers meet.

Pausing at the Confluence to take in the sounds of the Bow River.



# Building relationships through exploring community

There is a buzz in the air as Calgary Transit charter bus pulls up in front of the municipal building. Students file off the bus, eager to begin their five-day experience downtown, exploring the community and learning outside their classroom. In excited voices, some students begin pointing out the things they see, while others look around at the sights and sounds that may be quite different from their everyday life.

Once inside the City Hall School classroom, a brief check-in has students recognizing if they are excited, curious or nervous. Some students identify with all the feelings; the anticipation of upcoming explorations and the possibilities for the week, the unfamiliarity of a new-to-them place and the wondering about who they will see and that that will be like.

As their week unfolds, confidence grows and thoughtful insights about their observations from community explorations are shared. Most students are pleasantly surprised at how connected they feel to our city.

Over the course of the year, City Hall School welcomed 617 students to explore downtown and learn about municipal government and civic engagement. This experience provides an opportunity to engage meaningfully with the civic spaces and systems that shape their city. They visit places they may never have encountered before and reflect on how these spaces are designed, used and experienced by different people. In doing so, they begin to understand how their voice, experience and perspectives have value in shaping the future of Calgary.

> My students left with a stronger understanding that they are important members of their own community and city. The experience made them aware that even the youngest citizens matter and have a voice and that they can contribute in so many ways to make their community better.
>
> Grade one teacher,
> Capitol Hill School



Taking a moment to pause and notice the city, from the vantage point of the Plus15 network.



Reimagined spaces like High Park demonstrate community and innovation.

City Hall School is an investment in youth as active participants in community life. Through community explorations, guided reflection and journalling, students investigate questions around community, wellness, change and identity. They learn how to view their city through multiple lenses and develop the confidence to engage in conversations about how the city may evolve to support the people who live here.

Whether navigating the Plus 15 network, touring the Traffic Management Centre or climbing into a new garbage truck at Fleet and Inventory, students gain a deeper awareness of the stories behind how The City works. They enjoy peaceful moments by the Bow and Elbow Rivers, forest bathing at Inglewood Bird Sanctuary and playing in reimagined spaces like High Park. In every location, they ask questions like: who is this space for? How has this space changed? What is the story of this space and what does it tell us about the Calgary we know now?

City Hall School gives young people a chance to connect with their city in personal, thoughtful ways—building a sense of ownership, inclusion and civic pride. By fostering curiosity and encouraging deeper engagement with place and policy, it lays a foundation for a future generation of informed, compassionate and involved citizens.



Learning about Calgary's inventory of service vehicles and how they help keep our city maintained and cared for.



Students enjoyed a short visit with alpacas at ACE Child Development Centre.



# How does City Hall School work?

City Hall School is a five-day field study program that is developed by and funded in partnership between The City of Calgary's Recreation & Social Programs business unit and Campus Calgary/Open Minds. Each spring, teachers submit a proposal for the following school year about how a field study with City Hall School would be incorporated within their year-long plans. All Calgary schools are welcome, which include public, Catholic, independent or charter schools.

The City Hall School program is guided by a big idea, which connects students' work at school throughout the year to their week downtown. Teachers are involved in many professional development opportunities throughout the year which provide knowledge that they may find helpful when participating in City Hall School and the skills their students will need.

> I thought voting was the only way to have a say... now, I think you have many ways to speak your voice.
>
> Grade seven student, Nickle School

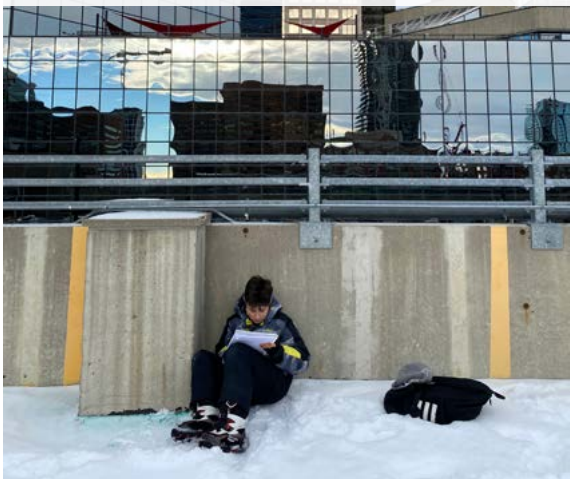


Teachers attending the Fall Pedagogy workshop at Central Library. Jenn, part of the Campus Calgary/Open Minds Operations Team and Janice, Library School Coordinator, tell about Calgary's Story at the Central Library. This evening is a collaboration between City Hall School and Library School.

> Please go. It is an invaluable experience, even for adults.
>
> Parent/volunteer



Taking a moment to reflect on what we see, think and wonder in different public spaces.



> "I have been telling everyone I talk to since my trip there, about how much I enjoyed it.
>
> Parent/volunteer

Every field study is personalized to each class, their big idea and their learning needs. Approximately six to eight weeks before their time downtown, there is a planning meeting with the teachers to set intentions and expectations. Using the information gathered, a five-day field study experience is curated for the group. Every class meets Mayor Farkas and their Councillor and attends part of a meeting in the Council Chambers. When meeting the Mayor and Councillors, students ask questions about their roles, inquire about solving community issues, and seek to understand current events. Students learn from many experiences throughout their time downtown, including presentations from City of Calgary employees, community experts, community explorations, observation and journalling.

In October, the province's teacher lockout impacted programming, and schools were required to be adaptable to scheduling and programming changes. With support of all those involved, we were able to fulfill the entire 25 weeks committed to student learning at City Hall School.

City Hall School's mission is to offer a look into municipal government, how decisions are made, how The City is run and how we are connected to all of it. Through this experience, we aim to inspire students to become active citizens in their communities and to see themselves as an important and valuable part of our city.

> I used to think The City was bland, but now I know there are so many interesting things.
>
> Grade six student, Olympic Heights



On a community walk, students sketch some of the public art they notice downtown.




Students visit the Council Chambers and learn about the decision-making process.



Reflecting on how public spaces can help us, as citizens, to thrive.

# How we might live well together: Caring for ourselves

This year, many of the big ideas were connected to well-being and mental health. Students asked questions on how to live well and care for ourselves, as well as the relationship that exists between our own mental health and how that can influence the ways we show up for others.

Noticing the many connections between recreation and mental health, some classes visited the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary to use the forest bathing trail, as well as visiting a nearby river sport area in Calgary. Students noted the importance of having a variety of opportunities available for people to engage in a diverse range of activities, as a way of supporting mental health and the well-being of Calgarians.

Engaging in creative endeavours was also at the top of interest for students. They participated in artist-run workshops with Calgary Arts Development (CADA), meeting with a variety of artists who work with different media. Students often shared how much they surprised themselves with their creations. They recognized how it involved taking risks and problem-solving which led to feelings of pride as they were able to express themselves and their ideas in a different way. Even the adult volunteers participated, sharing how rejuvenating it was to get to learn alongside the students and engage in art in a thoughtful and intentional way.



A parent volunteer partakes in learning alongside the students during an artist workshop with artist Andrea Lau.



Having access to a variety of public spaces, such as the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, gives diverse recreation options to Calgarians.



Brainstorming ideas during a printmaking workshop with artist La Güita (Josee Palacio).



Students connect access to public piano at Devonian Gardens to support personal wellness and positive mental health.



Learning printmaking techniques from artist La Güita (Josee Palacio).

Nature journalling helps us to slow down throughout the day and to reflect on what we see around us.





Enjoying public spaces downtown, such as Century Gardens.

> I felt quite good after City Hall school. I learned a lot more than I thought I would, especially in relation to the public hearing and public art. I knew the +15 was expansive, but I didn't realize by how much. This program gave adults a really great opportunity to learn as concepts weren't "dumbed" down, and the students were treated as being capable of learning and understanding.
>
> Parent/volunteer

# How we might live well together: Caring for each other

Throughout the year, another theme surfaced—how we care for each other. Questions centered around intentional community design and how it can influence feelings of belonging and quality of life. We explored how learning about and appreciating different perspectives and lived experiences from our own builds empathy and contributes to stronger, more resilient communities.

Students met with Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) and learned about the process behind designing the community of East Village, and how involving a variety of community members can lead to spaces and places that meet the needs of their diverse residents.

Exploring the historic Francophone district of Rouleauville, now recognized as the communities of Mission and Cliff Bungalow, helped build an appreciation for how the past has helped to shape our city and why it may be important to preserve historical places as a means of being able to keep those stories alive.

Walking through downtown often had students pointing out examples of public art, finding murals or art they felt connected to or represented their own personal stories or interests. Feeling seen and valued in this way encouraged students to share their own experiences and ideas and had them curious about other ideas and stories they could find while exploring.

Learning from staff at The Mustard Seed and The City's Fair Entry program also had students thinking about the different ways we care for each other through programs that help citizens to meet their basic needs and influence their quality of life as a Calgarian.




Visiting Fair Entry lets students know about one of the ways that Calgarians are supported by City services.

Exploring Rouleauville, the historic Francophone district of Calgary.





Students reflecting on the question of who, besides humans, also uses this space.

# How we might live well together: Caring for community

Care in community was another theme that many classes were interested in exploring this year, including the ways in which we understand the design of spaces and how we interact meaningfully with the world. Students discovered how the choices we make have impact and how our actions can make a difference in our communities.

Some students had the opportunity to visit The City of Calgary's Mobility and Fleet & Inventory to learn about the systems that help our city operate and how this can help connect us to the spaces and places we often visit. Being in the Traffic Management room to learn about how The City can mitigate the flow of transportation had students thinking about how many different parts there are to get us to where we want to go safely and as efficiently as possible.

Meeting with one of The City's communications leaders, Jose Rodriquez, and independent journalists, Jeremy Klaszus and Asad Chishti from Sprawl Calgary, had students thinking about the information that we consume and how this connects to the ways in which we care about our community. Learning about current events and differing opinions helped them consider many perspectives, learn about engaging ways to share information and think about how we communicate with each other.

Strolling through the Beltline and Inglewood communities had students asking questions about history and change in our city and the reasons for those changes, as well as amenities and access to resources that help support care in the community. Themes included the benefits of public transportation, efficient waste and recycling services (including the landfills) and the presence of public gathering spaces to help to meet the needs of Calgarians in their daily lives.




A visit from Sprawl Calgary and the Pop-Up Press.

Observing which Indigenous plant species can still be found in public spaces.





Getting a behind-the-scenes look at our city's traffic management system.



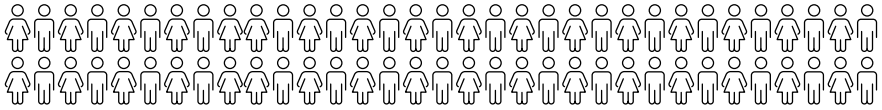
Taking in the +15 Public Galleries of the Werklund Centre.

# City Hall School big ideas 2025-2026

| Big idea | Grade | School | Ward |
|---|---|---|---|
| How can kids help make Calgary a better place? | 5 | Riverside School | 9 |
| How does our sense of wellness and mental health shape the way we connect with ourselves, others and our community? | 6 | Simons Valley School | 3 |
| How can we use our voices and actions to make a difference? | 7 | Nickle School | 14 |
| Why is our school experience the way that it is and how can it be different? | 7 and 8 | Ian Bazalgette School | 9 |
| How does Earth support life in our community? How can we, as citizens, take care of it? | 4 | West Springs School | 6 |
| How is abstraction used to interact meaningfully with the world? | 6 | Olympic Heights School | 6 |
| How and why do communities change over time? | 4 | Woodlands School | 13 |
| Where do I belong in Calgary? | 5 | Sherwood Community School | 9 |
| How does being an active citizen connect us to our community? | 5 | Coventry Hills School | 3 |
| How does the history, art and stories of people in Calgary shape our identity? | 5 | Dr. Freda Miller School | 13 |
| How can playing and learning outside (and outside the box) help people live well and thrive? | 3 | Kenneth D. Taylor School | 2 |
| How do stories plant seeds of empathy? | 2 | Hidden Valley School | 3 |
| Sustainability, problem solving and urban planning/design | 10/11/12 | Discovering Choices II | 10 |
| How am I connected? | 3 | Buffalo Rubbing Stone School | 3 |
| How can we live well together? | 4 | Buffalo Rubbing Stone School | 3 |
| How do the choices we make contribute to stronger connections to ourselves, each other and our world? | 3/4 | Lake Bonavista School | 14 |
| I belong to a community and I can help care for it. | 1 | Capitol Hill School | 7 |

# 2025-2026 statistics

**617 students**





**25 classes**

**16 schools**

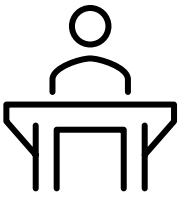


**30 teachers**

**10** staff **4** student teachers

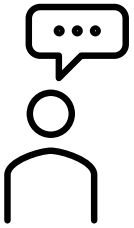
**211 volunteers**





**8 Councillors**
and the Mayor

**19** City of Calgary experts



**28 community experts**

> The biggest take-away is, for some, "government" is no longer a distant, ethereal concept and is a more tanglible, accessible thing.
>
> Grade 6 teacher, Simons Valley School

> The tour of the council chamber with The Mayor was a surprise and a highlight.
>
> Parent/volunteer

# 2025-2026 City of Calgary staff

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

We are deeply grateful to The City of Calgary for its continued support of City Hall School throughout the year.

Special thanks to The City Transit staff for ensuring students arrive safely and reliably each day, and to the Corporate Security – Visitor Management team at the Municipal Building for helping create a welcoming and safe environment for all.

Thank you to The City Clerk's Office for coordinating meaningful experiences in Council Chambers and for being a consistent source of knowledge and support.

Finally, a heartfelt thank-you to all City of Calgary staff who generously shared their time and expertise with students, your stories and insights brought learning to life and inspired the next generation of engaged citizens.

> "I felt it was a wonderful experience for the kids and adults alike. I feel like the kids really enjoyed it and learned a lot."
>
> Parent/volunteer

### 311 & Insights
Katie Yeung
Michael Cox

### City Clerk's Office
Daniela Pascan
Civic Engagement and Protocol team
Legislative Services team
Council Services team

### Community Planning
Bita Hatami
Chris McCaw

### Councillors and staff
Former Councillor Gian-Carlos – Carra (ward 9)
Councillor Yule (ward 3)
Councillor Johnston (ward 14)
Councillor Clark (ward 9)
Councillor Pantazopoulos (ward 6)
Councillor McLean (ward 13)
Councillor Wyness (ward 2)
Councillor Chabot (ward 10)
Councillor Atkinson (ward 7)

### Facilities
Alvin Nepunan
Regine Mak
Gyula Danka

### Fair Entry
Terrie Regier

### Fleet & Inventory
Matthew Perera

### Intergovernmental Relations
Ali Jakubec

### Marketing & Communications
Jose Rodriguez

### Mobility
Jason Kuo
Jackie Oriold

### Municipal Building Security
Corporate Security Teams

### Office of the Mayor
Mayor Jeromy Farkas
Former Mayor Jyoti Gondek
Noa Spivak
Diane Bjornson

### Parks & Open Spaces
Leah Elford

### Public Spaces Delivery
Peter Philips

### Recreation & Social Programs
Arlas Gillies
Debbie Belgrave
Rodney Noel
Wendy Sliworsky

### Waste & Recycling
Michelle Dias
Emma Stalker

# 2025-2026 community experts

## Thank you, Calgary, for being a city full of inspiration, stories and opportunities to learn.

We are especially grateful to the many community members who generously shared their time, knowledge, enthusiasm and experiences with City Hall School. Your contributions helped students see the city through new eyes and understand the many ways people make a difference in their communities every day.

### ACE Child Development Centre
Chrys Tan

### Alexandra Centre Society
Debbie Short

### Calgary Arts Development
Sharon Stevens
Sydonne Warren
Valentina Caraballo
Vanja Kragulj
Andrea Lau
Tyler Lemermeyer
Audrey Lane
Tiffany J. Harper
Daniel J. Kirk
Natalia Ionescu
Katie Green
Leslie Bell
Josee Palacio
Bethel Afework

### Calgary Board of Education
Joanne Pitman
Jennifer Turner
Garry Tink

### Calgary Catholic School District
Bryan Szumlas
Kirk Linton
Kevin DeForge

### Calgary Fire Department
Officer Todd Berry
Officer Randy Chevrier

### Calgary Municipal Land Corporation
Allison Davelaar
Jewel Chan

### Calgary Public Library
Janice Parker
Sonya Guha-Thakurta
Central Library staff
Memorial Park Library staff

### Campus Calgary/Open Minds
Jenn Meredith
Natasha McKay
Marta Albertin

### Contemporary Calgary
Yilu Xing
Shaghayegh Poppy Ghasemi
Dandan Gu

### The Mustard Seed
Cecily Letendre
Danielle Burns

### Rich Dogs: Mobile Catering Cart
Rich Nesbitt

### The Sprawl
Jeremy Klaszus
Asad Chishti

# Continuing to build relationships and connection

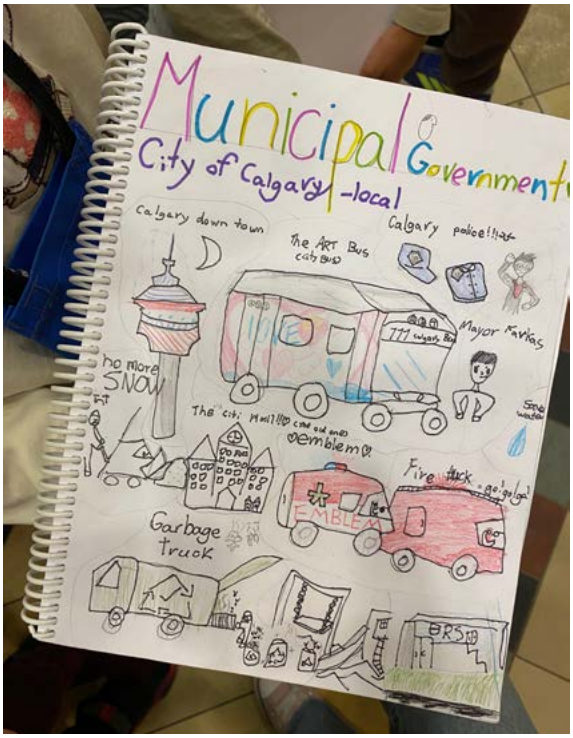
After the five-day field study at City Hall School, students head back to their schools with a deeper understanding of their big question or idea in the context of our city. Students share their enthusiasm about continuing to explore with family and parent volunteers often comment on how they feel more connected to the city as well. Students report that they are aware of who their Mayor and Councillor is and how to connect with them, how to participate in civic events and can identify ways they can contribute to their community. Appreciation for this place, the stories that were shared and the knowledge they gained about municipal governance and civic engagement continue to resonate. They feel valued, welcome and have built an understanding of how connected we all are to this city.

With the continued support of City staff and community members, these learners gain an understanding of the significance we all have in making this city great. They each walk away from the week knowing that their viewpoints, experiences and ideas matter in contributing to communities that are vibrant, safe and welcoming for all. For today and for the future of our city.

> I used to think City Hall wasn't meant for everyone, but now I think anyone can be involved.
>
> Grade four student, Woodlands School




Students use their visual journals to document roles and responsibilities of municipal government.





Building a relationship with a place requires us to notice what is around us.

Exploring St. Patrick's Island.

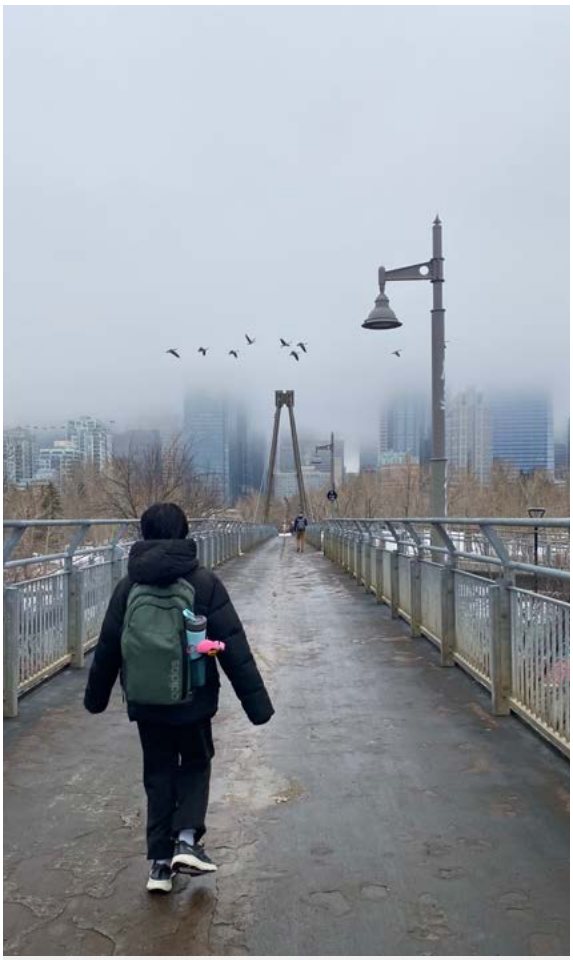




Attending a Council meeting helps students learn about decision making and the importance of civic engagement.



Looking west from the Platform has students learning about change in Calgary, as seen through the architecture and use of space.



Community walks help us connect ideas learned in class to where they live in our world.

# Production Tag

Approval of the attached proof constitutes approval of the specifications listed below, as well as the artwork. Please review thoroughly and ensure all information is correct.

**Docket#** 26-0056667 CRV-47766

**Project Title** R&SP City Hall School Report

| | |
|---|---|
| **Client** Desiree Smith | **Audience** General public |
| **CSA** N/A | **Art Director** N/A |
| **Designer** Daniel Blais | **Production Artist** Daniel Blais |
| **Writer** N/A | **Videographer** N/A |

| | | |
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| **Colour** RGB | **Number of pages** 17 | **Quantity** n/a |
| **Stock** PDF | | |
| **Finishing** PDF | | |

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| **Publication** | **Ad Number** | **Insertion Date** |
| **Ad Size** | **Section** | **Colour** |

**Approved** ☐ **Approved With Changes** ☐

**Back to Creative** ☐ **Back to CSA** ☐ **Back to Communicator** ☐ **Review Tomorrow** ☐

**Signature** **Date**

**Miscellaneous**