



Three Year Capital Plan 2026-2029

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Table des matières

Section 1 – Introduction and Objectives	3
1. About the CSCE	3
2. Section 23 Rights	4
3. Publicly available census data to determine potential demand in French-language schools	8
4. Objectives of the Three-Year Capital Plan:	10
Section 2 – SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES	11
Section 3 – Priority 1	12
1. Project Request Summary	12
2. Project rationale	12
3. School and site profile	13
4. Enrollment Profile	14
Section 6 – Priority 2	18
1. Project Request Summary	18
2. Project rationale	19
3. School and site profile	19
4. Enrollment Profile	20
5. Partnership Opportunities	23
Section 7 – Priority 3	23
1. Project request summary :	24
1. Update	24
Section 8 – Priority 4	24
1. Project Request Summary	24
2. Update	25
Section 9 – Priority 5	25
1. Project Summary	25
2. Project Rational	26
Section 8 – Priority 6	28
1. Project Request Summary	28
2. Project Rational	28

Section 1 – Introduction and Objectives

1. About the CSCE

The Conseil scolaire Centre-Est (“CSCE”) is a publicly funded school district established in 1994. It provides French-language education guaranteed by section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (“Charter”), and French-language Catholic education protected by the intersection of section 23 of the Charter and section 17 of the Alberta Act, 1905. The CSCE has the shared obligation with the Province to provide an educational experience in its schools that is substantively equivalent to the educational experience offered in neighbouring English-language schools.

The CSCE offers a homogeneous French-language education to over 816 students in schools in St. Paul, Bonnyville, Cold Lake, Plamondon and Lac La Biche. The establishment of schools in these historically Francophone communities has been crucial in beginning to rebuild and restore the French language and culture in the CSCE’s region, thereby contributing to remedial purpose of section 23 of the Charter. However, the CSCE knows that parts of its region remain unserved as students eligible to enrol in French-language programming do not have reasonable access to a CSCE school. The CSCE’s catchment areas cover large territories and unreasonable travel times often discourage parents and students from exercising their constitutional rights. This Three-Year Capital Plan submission begins to address this disparity (see notably priority nos. 4-6).

The homogeneous French-language education program provided by the CSCE is entirely distinct and different from French-immersion programming offered by English-language school districts. The CSCE’s programming is intended for students whose parents are part of the Francophone minority and who are eligible to attend a CSCE school. French is taught as a first language and meant to help students develop their French language identity and culture.¹ In contrast, French immersion, offered by English-language school districts, is intended for the majority language population (often families where no parent is Francophone or has a French heritage) and where French is taught as a second (or third, or fourth, etc.) language.

Given its linguistic and cultural objectives, a CSCE school functions as a community centre and hub for the Francophone community used to facilitate and promote the transmission of language and culture.² As such, it is vital for the CSCE to have control over its facilities in order to ensure they are used to further the purposes of section 23 of the Charter, namely of promoting the French language and culture “by ensuring that [it] flourishes, as far as possible, [...] where it is not spoken by the majority of the population”³ and of “redressing

¹ *Solski (Tutor of) v Quebec (Attorney General)*, 2005 SCC 14 at para 50.

² *Mahé v Alberta*, [1990] 1 SCR 342 at p 363.

³ *Mahé v Alberta*, [1990] 1 SCR 342 at 362.

past injustices and providing the official language minority with equal access to high quality education in its own language, in circumstances where community development will enhanced.”⁴ The Court reiterated that “[s]hared facilities cannot fully play these roles, as they make it more difficult to achieve the objectives of s. 23.”⁵

Additionally, early childhood programming is crucial to the development of children’s French-language skills, even before they begin formal schooling. Childcare programming within a CSCE community school introduces and familiarizes children and their families with the CSCE community and often leads to children enrolling in the CSCE’s program once they reach school-age. Early childhood programming and childcare are vital to respecting the spirit of section 23 of Charter, which is to preserve and promote the development of French-language communities where French is spoken by a minority.

2. Section 23 Rights

Section 23 of the *Charter* grants the right, where numbers warrant, to an educational experience in French educational facilities that is substantively equivalent to that provided in majority language school facilities.

In 2020, the Supreme Court of Canada rendered a landmark decision, clarifying many aspects of section 23. The decision:

- i. sets out a framework providing French-language boards with a straightforward approach for determining where in the province there is an entitlement to a French-language school;
- ii. clarifies that, regardless of their size, all French-language schools must be substantively equivalent to neighbouring English-language schools; and
- iii. provides parameters for the timeliness requirement for meeting the obligations imposed by section 23.

The Supreme Court of Canada’s intention in providing clear guidance is to ensure that French-language schools can be provided without resorting to litigation:

⁴ *Arsenault-Cameron v Prince Edward Island*, [2000] 1 SCR 3 at para 27.

⁵ *Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique, Fédération des parents francophones de la Colombie-Britannique, et al v British Columbia (Education)*, 2020 SCC 13 at para 74[CSFCB, *Fédération des parents, et al v BC*, SCC

Our decision in this case must not be limited to making schools available to the appellants as if the case were one of a kind, as it is also necessary to ensure that future claimants are not forced to undertake interminable judicial proceedings in order to have their rights protected, recognized and enforced.⁶⁶

L. Determining entitlement: “numbers warrant”

The sliding scale determines the level of services to which an official language minority is entitled.

The first step in situating a number of students on the sliding scale is to determine how many students will eventually avail themselves of the contemplated service. This number lies between the known demand and the total number of students eligible to attend a CSCE school.⁷

The second step is to determine whether the proposed program is appropriate from the standpoint of pedagogy and cost for the number of students in question.⁸ The Supreme Court of Canada clarified the existence of a majority language school of similar size is the best indicator to determine the appropriateness of a program.⁹ For example, a homogeneous school, that is, a separate facility under the control of the official language minority, is warranted where such a school is available to a comparable number of majority language students anywhere in the province (setting aside exceptional circumstances).¹⁰ In the context of section 23, “comparable” does not mean “identical” and flexibility is required to give effect to its remedial purpose.¹¹

A preliminary analysis of enrolment in Alberta schools shows that there are many English-language schools with fewer than 50 students (in ECS-12 schools or parts thereof). Additionally, there are many more colony schools that are managed by English-language school districts with fewer than 50 students. The existence of these schools creates a presumption that the CSCE’s small schools of comparative size are pedagogically viable.¹² Additionally, through the provision of the Rural Small

⁶ CSFCB, *Fédération des parents, et al v BC*, SCC at para 20.

⁷ CSFCB, *Fédération des parents, et al v BC*, SCC at para 58, 60.

⁸ CSFCB, *Fédération des parents, et al v BC*, SCC at para 61.

⁹ CSFCB, *Fédération des parents, et al v BC*, SCC at para 63.

¹⁰ CSFCB, *Fédération des parents, et al v BC*, SCC at paras 57, 67-69.

¹¹ CSFCB, *Fédération des parents, et al v BC*, SCC at para 73.

¹² CSFCB, *Fédération des parents, et al v BC*, SCC at para 69.

Schools grant¹³, Alberta Education recognizes that small schools are a vital component of the education landscape in the Province and ensure that small communities' needs are met.

A breach of section 23 arises where the level of service offered does not match the level of service warranted by the numbers. In such a case, the CSCE and the Province must act without delay to remedy the breach.

ii. Substantive equivalence

CSCE students have a constitutional right to an educational experience that is substantively equivalent to the educational experience offered in majority language schools in the same catchment area.¹⁴ This applies irrespective of where a community falls on the sliding scale.¹⁵

In determining whether the educational experience is equivalent, it is necessary to take a contextual and holistic approach, considering physical facilities, including their appearances (aesthetic qualities), as well as other factors that may contribute to the quality of the education such as travel times and extracurricular activities.¹⁶ The comparative exercise should be done with the neighboring majority language schools that represent a realistic alternative for rights holders.¹⁷ When assessing substantive equivalence, it is necessary to consider the educational choices available from the perspective parents who have the right to enroll their children in minority language schools.¹⁸ To assist in this analysis, the FCSFA and Alberta Education jointly developed factors to consider when assessing the infrastructure needs of French-language regional authorities (submitted to Alberta Education in March 2019). The applicable factors were considered by the CSCE in the preparation of this capital plan submission. Where the CSCE determined that substantively equivalent education is not being offered to its students, it identifies Alberta Education's "Legal" factor as a key project driver.

The CSCE has seen immediate enrolment growth following the construction of new schools, which is a testament to the impact of appropriate, well-functioning and

¹³ Alberta Education, [Funding Manual for School Authorities 2022-2023 School Year](#) at 35.

¹⁴ *Association des parents de l'école Rose-des-vents and Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique v British Columbia*, 2015 SCC 21 at para 33 [*APÉ Rose-des-Vents and CSFC-B*].

¹⁵ *CSFCB, Fédération des parents, et al v BC*, SCC at para 240.

¹⁶ *APÉ Rose-des-Vents and CSFC-B* at paras 38-39.

¹⁷ *APÉ Rose-des-Vents and CSFC-B* at para 37.

¹⁸ *APÉ Rose-des-Vents and CSFC-B* at paras 34-35.

attractive facilities on French-language education. Likewise, the CSCE has seen its enrolment diminish when neighboring English-language schools have been upgraded, while the CSCE's school remains substandard. This situation constitutes a breach of section 23 of the *Charter*.

iii. Timeliness requirement

Where a lack of equivalency discourages parents from enrolling their children in a French-language school, the Province and the CSCE have an obligation to remedy the breach without delay.¹⁹¹⁹ Indeed, minority language communities are particularly vulnerable to government delay or inaction because for every school year that governments do not meet their obligations under section 23, there is an increased likelihood of assimilation which carries the risk that numbers might cease to “warrant”.²⁰

The Province may not delay meeting its constitutional obligation, even in an adverse economic situation.²¹ Section 23 “places positive obligations on governments to mobilize resources and enact legislation for the development of major institutional structures” and contains an “affirmative promise” that requires “timely compliance.”²² The Province must comply with the timeliness requirement articulated by the Supreme Court of Canada,²³ meaning that communities must receive the education to which they are entitled within ten years of that entitlement being communicated to Alberta Education. It is up to the CSCE to indicate to the Province the order in which facilities for French-language education need to be secured, replaced, or expanded. However, prioritization cannot be used to unduly delay the implementation of section 23.²⁴

Section 23 will be breached in all instances where there is an unmet s. 23 entitlement (in terms of the level or quality of services provided). While the Supreme Court of Canada did not stipulate an exact timeline for remedying such s. 23 infringements in a “timely fashion”, it is evident from its decision that anything beyond ten years does not meet the timeliness requirement:

¹⁹ *APÉ Rose-des-Vents and CSFC-B at para 35; Doucet-Boudreau v Nova Scotia (Education)*, 2003 SCC 62 at para 39 [Doucet-Boudreau].

²⁰ *Doucet-Boudreau at para 29*

²¹ *Conseil des écoles séparées catholiques romaines de Dufferin and Peel v Ontario (Minister of Education and Training)* (1996), 30 OR (3d) 681 (Ont Div Ct) at para 8; *CSFCB and Fédération des parents at para 153*.

²² *Doucet-Boudreau at para 29*.

²³ *CSFCB, Fédération des parents, et al v BC, SCC at paras 141-142*.

²⁴ *CSFCB, Fédération des parents, et al v BC, SCC at paras 141-142*.

[I]t is clear that, because of the lower courts' interpretation of *Mahé* and the interminable judicial proceedings that must be initiated in order to assert language rights, the exercise of those rights is too often delayed, if not diminished. The case at bar is a clear example of this. More than ten years has elapsed between the date of filing of the proceedings and this Court's judgment. As the intervener Canadian Association for Progress in Justice points out, “[t]en years of litigation to determine entitlement is simply not viable” (citation omitted). Nearly two generations of elementary school students have thus been denied their language rights, and this has contributed to the erosion of British Columbia's French-speaking community.²⁵ (emphasis added)

The Supreme Court of Canada also stressed that:

Section 23 rights are particularly vulnerable to foot-dragging by public authorities because of the “numbers warrant” requirement in that section. The force of assimilation is such that the number of children of rights holders could fall irreversibly below the number needed to warrant the provision of services in a linguistic minority community while the authorities delay fulfilling their constitutional obligations (*Doucet-Boudreau*, at para. 29). As this Court recently noted, “there is a critical need both for vigilant implementation of s. 23 rights, and for timely compliance in remedying violations.”²⁶

Alberta Education and the CSCE must work together to ensure that no section 23 need goes unmet for longer than ten years. Of course, the case-by-case timeliness assessment required by the Supreme Court of Canada will often call for more urgent action consistent with the CSCE's identified priorities.

Two of the CSCE's capital projects, École Beauséjour and the new proposed elementary school in Athabasca, have been brought to Alberta Education's attention through the capital planning process for more than 10 years. This situation is particularly egregious.

3. Publicly available census data to determine potential demand in French-language schools

There are three categories of rights-holders under s. 23 of the Charter:

²⁵ CSFCB, *Fédération des parents, et al v BC*, SCC at para 56.

²⁶ CSFCB, *Fédération des parents, et al v BC*, SCC at para 142.

- i. individuals who have French as a mother tongue (para 23(1)(a));
- ii. individuals who received their primary instruction in French in Canada (para 23(1)(b)); and
- iii. individuals who have a child who have received or is receiving instruction in French (subs. 23(2)).

Statistics Canada only started gathering information with respect to all three of these categories in the 2021 Census. Prior to the 2021 Census, Statistics Canada only gathered information regarding the first category of eligible parents: parents who have French as a mother tongue (para. 23(1)(a) of the Charter). Statistics Canada did not gather any information regarding the other two categories.

The CSCE has used publicly available 2021 Census data to provide a clearer but incomplete estimate of the minimum number of students eligible to receive French-language education in the CSCE's schools.

Despite this considerable improvement with the 2021 Census, even that Census continues to underestimate the first category of eligible parents, namely individuals who have French as a mother tongue. This is so because the Census form itself suggests that persons must give a single answer to the mother tongue question. This leads many persons with more than one mother tongue to give only a single answer. More specifically, this leads many persons who have French and English as mother tongues, and who live in highly English-dominant environments to answer only "English" to the mother tongue question. Moreover, in exogamous couples, where only one parent has French as a mother tongue, English generally becomes the couples' dominant language. This leads to two results: (1) persons with French as one of their mother tongues indicating only "English" because it is their dominant language; and (2) the spouses of persons for whom French is a mother tongue indicating only "English" for those persons because that is the language in which they always, mostly or regularly communicate with them. Those are some of the reasons why the 2021 Census continues to undercount s. 23 rights-holders.

Additionally, the publicly available data does not allow to count precisely and accurately the children of s. 23 rights-holders eligible to attend CSCE schools, as the areas captured by 2021 Census do not cover the complete catchment area of CSCE schools. This means that the CSCE has to rely upon data from Census areas that are typically smaller than the catchment areas for the relevant schools or proposed

schools, which means that this data undercounts the number of children eligible for admission to the CSCE's schools.

Moreover, this data does not count other categories of children who may be eligible for admission to the CSCE's schools, on a case-by-case basis, despite not having a parent who is a s. 23 rights-holder, such as young children who regularly speak French at home. Nevertheless, the incomplete and partial data that is publicly available demonstrates that eligible parents are entitled to the capital projects requested in this Capital Plan Submission.

Based on publicly available Census data that does not tabulate all eligible students, as explained above, it is clear that the CSCE is in need of the capital projects requested in this Capital Plan Submission. Statistics Canada determined that there is a minimum of **1,665** children eligible for instruction in French between the ages of 5 and 17 living in the Census Division that makes up the a significant portion, although not all, of the CSCE's territory.²⁷ Recall that in the 2024-2025 school year, only 812 students are registered in the CSCE's schools, from prekindergarten to grade 12.

4. Objectives of the Three-Year Capital Plan:

- a. Provide facilities that allow for the provision of the provincial curriculum as required by the *Education Act*;
- b. Provide the facilities necessary to give effect to the rights of separate school electors stemming from section 17 of the *Alberta Act, 1905*;
- c. Provide facilities from which to offer an educational experience that is substantively equivalent to that offered by majority language school districts by providing facilities that are functional, attractive, and that do not discourage parents from exercising their constitutional rights;
- d. Take into account the remedial purpose of section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* by promoting the development of French language communities and changing the status quo;
- e. Ensure that the section 23 right to management and control is respected;
- f. Ensure that the CSCE has ownership or sufficient control over assets to meet its students needs; and
- g. Ensure that the Three-Year Capital Plan is consistent and supports the CSCE's long term capital planning.

²⁷ Census Division No. 12 is largely contained and represents a significant portion, but not all, of the CSCE's territory.

Section 2 – SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES

School Name and Location	Project Type	Key Drivers	#yrs in Capital Plan	Priority	Project start date		
					2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029
École Voyageur Cold Lake (ECS-12)	Addition or new additional elementary school	• Enrolment pressure • Functionality and programming • Community renewal	4	1	X		
École Beaux-Lacs Bonnyville (ECS-12)	Addition or new additional elementary school	• Enrolment pressure • Functionality and programming • Community renewal	1	2	X		
École Beauséjour Plamondon (ECS-12)	Modernisation	• Legal (lack of substantive equivalency with neighboring English-language schools) • Efficiency Solutions • Health and Safety • Building Condition • Functionality and programming • Community renewal	16	3	design	X	
École Sainte-Catherine Lac La Biche (ECS-6)	Modernisation & Replacement School	• Legal (lack of substantive equivalency with neighboring English-language schools) • Efficiency Solutions • Health and Safety • Building Condition • Functionality and programming • Community renewal	10	4	Pre-planning of new school		
Athabasca	New Community School	• Legal (numbers warrant the establishment of a school, accessibility, travel times) • Functionality and programming • Community renewal	18	5			Pre-planning
Elk Point	New community School	• Legal (numbers warrant the establishment of a school, accessibility, travel times) • Functionality and programming • Community renewal	3	6			Pre-planning

Section 3 – Priority 1

École Voyageur, Cold Lake (ECS-12) : Addition or new additional elementary school

1. Project Request Summary

- a. **PROJECT REQUEST:** Addition to existing facility (ECS-12) or new additional elementary school
- b. **KEY PROJECT DRIVERS:**
 - i. Legal (violation of s. 23 of the *Charter* and s. 17 of the *Alberta Act, 1905*)
 - ii. Enrolment pressure
 - iii. Functionality and Programming
 - iv. Community renewal
- c. **PROJECT SCOPE:** Construction of permanent addition at École Voyageur or new additional elementary school in Cold Lake to relieve enrolment pressure and accommodate future growth.
- d. **NO. OF YEARS LISTED IN THE CAPITAL PLAN:** 4
- e. **PROJECT PRIORITY:** 1

2. Project rationale

École Voyageur has been operating in a homogeneous, purpose-built facility since 2005. It offers ECS to grade 12 instruction. Enrolment at École Voyageur has increased by over 50 % in the last five years. The CSCE anticipates that enrolment will continue to increase in the years to come. École Voyageur is not able to accommodate its ECS to grade 12 programming needs in the current facility.

Additional space is required to relieve the existing enrolment pressure and to accommodate future growth. In particular, the Canadian Armed Forces Base in Cold Lake is expected to generate rapid and unpredictable growth in the community, especially due to major federal investments announced since 2020.²⁸

Accommodating the mobility of parents who have rights under section 23 of the *Charter* is aligned with the unifying purpose of section 23, as it enables citizens to move anywhere without fearing that they will have to abandon their language and

²⁸ <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2020/08/government-awards-design-contract-for-future-fighter-infrastructure-in-cold-lake.html>.

culture.²⁹ This is especially important in communities with a Canadian Armed Forces Base like Cold Lake. The CSCE requests the construction a permanent addition. In the interim, the CSCE requested another modular classroom for the 2023-2024 year to try and temporarily relieve some pressure. Funds were granted to move the existing modular to a more accessible area, but these funds had to be refused by CSCE since no viable options were identified to move the modular closer to the school.

Since operating in a new facility, enrolment has grown by 78%, with 50% of the growth occurring over the last five years. The recent growth is not surprising, as the program has developed and matured over the last 16 years. It may take up to 13 years for a program to become fully established in a community (i.e. the time it takes for one full cohort to complete its schooling in the new facility).

A budget for the proposed addition and or a site and budget for a new elementary school are yet to be determined.

3. School and site profile

a. Site Profile

Location : 4719, 69 Avenue Cold Lake, Alberta, T9M 2E6

Site Acquisition: The École Voyageur site is a non-reserve site belonging to the CSCE. A site for the new elementary school is yet to be identified.

b. Infrastructure Profile

Construction of a permanent addition or a new school is necessary to relieve enrolment pressure and accommodate future growth at École Voyageur. The CSCE is not able to accommodate its programming needs nor future growth in the current facility. Every space at École Voyageur is used. The École Voyageur facility was built to accommodate one classroom per grade level. The CSCE requires at least two classrooms per grade level.

The CSCE has had to modify many spaces within the facility to try to accommodate the increased enrolment. For example, the teacher's lounge was transformed into a classroom. Elementary-aged students must be housed in the secondary wing, which raises a number of challenges for the younger students who feel intimidated by the

²⁹ CSFCB, *Fédération des parents, et al v BC*, SCC at para 15.

older students. Likewise, the older students do not appreciate the presence of elementary-aged students in their part of the school, making them feel as if they are still in elementary school, and creating challenges for retention at the secondary level. There is a lack of flexible space, limiting teaching opportunities. There is a lack of multipurpose rooms and one-on-one teaching spaces, making the coordination of spaces to meet individual students' needs a challenge.

A detached modular classroom was installed on the site in 2018 to try to alleviate some of the enrolment pressure. However, this is not sufficient to solve the current overcrowding and does not help with future growth.

Alberta Education calculates the utilization rate of École Voyageur at 54% (in the 2020/21 school year). As Alberta Education knows well, the CSCE disagrees with this assessment as the capacity utilization rate calculated by Alberta Education is misleading because it does not reflect the actual space requirement and space use at École Voyageur.

The CSCE requires the construction of a permanent addition to École Voyageur, at least to the elementary wing as a first step. There is ample space on the school site for such an addition.

4. Enrollment Profile

a. Potential Enrolment

As held by the Supreme Court, the relevant number to consider when determining enrolment potential is the number of students who will eventually avail themselves of the CSCE's programming. This number lies somewhere between the known demand and the total number of children who have at least one parent with a right under s. 23 of the *Charter*.³⁰

There are three categories of rights holders under s. 23 of the *Charter*:

- i. individuals who have French as a mother tongue (para 23(1)(a));
- ii. individuals who received their primary instruction in French in Canada (para 23(1)(b)); and

³⁰ *CSFCB, Fédération des parents, et al v BC*, SCC at paras 58–60.

- iii. individuals who have a child who has received or is receiving instruction in French (subs. 23(2)).

Statistics Canada only started gathering information with respect to all three of these categories in the 2021 Census. Prior to the 2021 Census, Statistics Canada only gathered information regarding the first category of eligible parents: parents who have French as a mother tongue (para. 23(1)(a) of the *Charter*). Statistics Canada did not gather any information regarding the other two categories. However, as explained above in Section 1, subsection III of this Capital Plan Submission, Statistics Canada continues to undercount this category by suggesting that respondents may only select one mother tongue.

The CSCE has used publicly available 2021 Census data from Census areas that are contained within the Catchment Area. This means that the Census data in Table 2 below undercounts the number of eligible students since it does not provide data for the entirety of the Catchment Area. Moreover, this data does not count other categories of children who may be eligible for admission to the CSCE's schools, on a case-by-case basis, despite not having a parent who is a s. 23 rights-holder, such as young children who regularly speak French at home.

B. Impacted Schools

The closest CSCE elementary and secondary program, École des Beaux-lacs, is located in Bonnyville, approximately 47 kilometers from École Voyageur. The construction of a permanent addition at École Voyageur will not affect enrolment at École des Beaux-lacs as their catchment areas are distinct and very large.

C. Projected Enrolment

The following table presents the historic (7-year period), current and projected enrolment at École Voyageur:³¹

	ECS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2015/ 2016	45	26	21	17	15	12	11	7	7	8	4	3	4	180
2016/ 2017	57	25	26	22	21	17	12	8	8	3	5	3	3	210
2017/ 2018	65	33	23	21	21	22	18	11	8	7	3	3	0	235
2018/ 2019	60	25	28	23	20	21	15	13	10	8	3	1	3	230
2019/ 2020	52	32	31	29	26	21	24	13	15	7	7	2	5	264
2020/ 2021	57	21	29	29	27	21	21	21	13	15	8	7	3	272
2021/ 2022	54	29	17	26	26	23	14	18	18	8	13	7	8	261
2022/ 2023	57	18	28	21	23	24	18	12	16	18	8	11	7	261
2023/ 2024	56	27	20	29	20	19	22	17	12	13	14	8	16	273
2024/ 2025	59	11	23	19	26	16	17	18	16	15	12	15	9	256
2025/ 2026	60	27	26	26	18	28	17	18	19	14	8	10	14	286
2026/ 2027	62	28	27	26	26	18	22	17	18	15	12	8	10	289
2027/ 2028	64	29	28	27	26	26	14	22	17	15	12	12	8	299
2028/ 2029	68	29	29	28	27	26	21	14	22	17	12	12	12	317
2029/ 2030	71	31	29	29	28	27	21	21	14	22	13	12	12	331
2030/ 2031	74	33	31	29	29	28	21	21	21	14	18	13	12	344
2031/ 2032	77	34	33	31	29	29	22	21	21	21	12	18	13	361
2032/ 2033	79	35	34	33	31	29	23	22	21	21	17	12	18	376
2033/ 2034	82	37	35	34	33	31	24	23	22	21	16	17	12	387

³¹ The ECS numbers represent the total of students enrolled in pre-kindergarten (3 years old), pre-kindergarten (4 years old) and kindergarten, as space is needed in our facilities to host these students. The decrease in student numbers between the ECS column and the grade 1 column is therefore not indicative of the retention rate of kindergarten to grade 1 at the school.

Except for the incoming ECS cohort, the CSCE's projected enrolment is based on a cohort-retention model.

Crucially, this projection is based on the assumption that Alberta finally approves this requested project and that an addition is built. The CSCE has used a cohort-based approach to estimate the growth in enrolment at its existing schools and the impact of its requested projects. The projections are largely based on the following assumptions:

- i. **Assumption 1:** The CSCE's cohort retention model assumes that no new students will join an existing cohort as it progresses through the school.
- ii. **Assumption 2:** The size of incoming cohorts will partly depend on the quality of the school's facility, which partly depends on its size.
- iii. **Assumption 3:** Cohorts will see a degree of attrition towards the end of the elementary level and as they transition from grade 9 to 10.

This projection method is conservative as it assumes no new students will join a cohort as it progresses through the school. However, in Cold Lake, it is common for students to join a cohort, at any grade level, given the frequent mobility of families that live and work at the Canadian Armed Forces Base.

This projection method is also conservative because it assumes a 20% attrition rate as students transition between grades 5 and 6, and a further 20% attrition rate as they transition between grades 9 and 10. This attrition is based on historic enrolment. However, fewer students would leave École Voyageur at the secondary level if its dedicated secondary space was not being overtaken by elementary programming.

With respect to the incoming ECS cohort, the projections assume that the CSCE's request for a permanent addition is approved in 2024, leading to an increase in ECS enrolment in the coming years as new families witness the growth and success of the school. This assumption is once again conservative as the increase in enrolment will likely be greater and across multiple grade levels (not only ECS).

The population of Cold Lake has been steadily growing for decades. It is anticipated that this growth will continue in the coming years.

5. Partnership Opportunities

There is an opportunity for potential partnerships in the community. Parents, supported by the Fédération des parents francophones de l'Alberta, have approached the CSCE to request space for childcare programming (i.e. daycare) at École Voyageur. Although there is no space for such programming at the moment, any expansion would need to consider the childcare needs of the community, as there is no French-language childcare in Cold Lake. From the CSCE's perspective, French-language childcare located within École Voyageur is very much desired as introducing children to the French language and culture at a young age is crucial to the vitality and development of the community and aligns with the CSCE's mandate and section 23 objectives. It will also increase enrolment. An addition to École Voyageur will promote the development of the French-language community.

With respect to project funding, there is the potential to seek federal funding to supplement the cost of the project, specifically related to community/culture and childcare spaces. The government of Canada supports the development of official-language minority communities across Canada by projects related to the development of the official language minority (i.e. through the *Protocol for Agreements for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction* and the *Canada-Alberta Agreement for Minority-language Education and Second-language Instruction*).

Section 6 – Priority 2

École Beaux-Lacs, Bonnyville (ESC-12) : Addition to Existing School or new additional elementary school.

1. Project Request Summary

- a. **PROJECT REQUEST:** Addition to existing facility (ECS-12) or new additional elementary school
- b. **KEY PROJECT DRIVERS:**
 - i. Legal (violation of s. 23 of the *Charter* and s. 17 of the *Alberta Act, 1905*)
 - ii. Enrolment pressure
 - iii. Functionality and Programming
 - iv. Community renewal
- c. **PROJECT SCOPE:** Construction of permanent addition at École Beaux-

Lacs or construction of a new additional elementary school to relieve enrolment pressure and accommodate future growth.

d. **NO. OF YEARS LISTED IN THE CAPITAL PLAN: 1**

e. **PROJECT PRIORITY: 2**

2. Project rationale

École Beaux-Lacs has been operating in a homogeneous, purpose-built facility since 2010. It offers ECS to grade 12 instruction. Enrolment at École Beaux-Lacs has increased by over 50 % in the last five years.

A budget for the proposed addition and or a site and budget for a new elementary school are yet to be determined.

3. School and site profile

a. Site Profile

Location : 4312, 34 Street, Bonnyville, Alberta

Site Acquisition: The École Beaux-Lacs site is a non-reserve site belonging to the CSCE. A site for the new elementary school is yet to be identified.

b. Infrastructure Profile

Construction of a permanent addition or a new school is necessary to relieve enrolment pressure and accommodate future growth at École Beaux-Lacs. The CSCE is not able to accommodate its programming needs nor future growth in the current facility. Every space at École Beaux-Lacs is used. The facility was built to accommodate one classroom per grade level. The CSCE requires at least two classrooms per grade level at the elementary level.

The CSCE has had to modify many spaces within the facility to try to accommodate the increased enrolment. The older students do not appreciate the presence of elementary-aged students in their part of the school, making them feel as if they are still in elementary school, and creating challenges for retention at the secondary level. There is a lack of flexible space, limiting teaching opportunities. There is a lack of multipurpose rooms and one-on-one teaching spaces, making the coordination of spaces to meet individual students' needs a challenge.

Alberta Education calculates the utilization rate of École Beaux-Lacs at 56%

(in the 2024/25 school year). As Alberta Education knows well, the CSCE disagrees with this assessment as the capacity utilization rate calculated by Alberta Education is misleading because it does not reflect the actual space requirement and space use at École Beaux-Lacs.

The CSCE requires the construction of a permanent addition to École Beaux-Lacs, at least to the elementary wing as a first step. There is ample space on the school site for such an addition.

4. Enrollment Profile

a. Potential Enrolment

As held by the Supreme Court, the relevant number to consider when determining enrolment potential is the number of students who will eventually avail themselves of the CSCE's programming. This number lies somewhere between the known demand and the total number of children who have at least one parent with a right under s. 23 of the *Charter*.³²

There are three categories of rights holders under s. 23 of the *Charter*:

- a. individuals who have French as a mother tongue (para 23(1)(a));
- b. individuals who received their primary instruction in French in Canada (para 23(1)(b)); and
- c. individuals who have a child who has received or is receiving instruction in French (subs. 23(2)).

Statistics Canada only started gathering information with respect to all three of these categories in the 2021 Census. Prior to the 2021 Census, Statistics Canada only gathered information regarding the first category of eligible parents: parents who have French as a mother tongue (para. 23(1)(a) of the *Charter*). Statistics Canada did not gather any information regarding the other two categories. However, as explained above in Section 1, subsection III of this Capital Plan Submission, Statistics Canada continues to undercount this category by suggesting that

³² *CSFCB, Fédération des parents, et al v BC*, SCC at paras 58–60.

respondents may only select one mother tongue.

The CSCE has used publicly available 2021 Census data from Census areas that are contained within the Catchment Area. This means that the Census data in Table 2 below undercounts the number of eligible students since it does not provide data for the entirety of the Catchment Area. Moreover, this data does not count other categories of children who may be eligible for admission to the CSCE's schools, on a case-by-case basis, despite not having a parent who is a s. 23 rights-holder, such as young children who regularly speak French at home.

B. Impacted Schools

The closest CSCE elementary and secondary program, École Voyageur, is located in Cold Lake, approximately 47 kilometers from École Beaux-Lacs. The construction of a permanent addition at École Beaux-Lacs will not affect enrolment at École Voyageur as their catchment areas are distinct and very large.

C. Projected Enrolment

The following table presents the historic (4-year period), current and projected enrolment at École Beaux-Lacs:³³

	ECS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2020/ 2021	37	21	17	19	13	15	17	8	10	13	7	4	17	272
2021/ 2022	45	14	23	16	20	14	16	16	8	7	8	7	5	199
2022/ 2023	34	30	14	24	16	21	13	17	18	6	7	5	6	211
2023/ 2024	39	14	32	16	22	17	25	12	16	18	5	8	6	230
2024/ 2025	49	21	15	32	21	24	17	24	12	16	12	5	8	255
2025/ 2026	55	27	26	26	18	28	17	18	19	14	8	10	14	286
2026/ 2027	60	28	27	26	26	18	22	17	18	15	12	8	10	289
2027/ 2028	64	29	28	27	26	26	14	22	17	15	12	12	8	299
2028/ 2029	68	29	29	28	27	26	21	14	22	17	12	12	12	317
2029/ 2030	71	31	29	29	28	27	21	21	14	22	13	12	12	331
2030/ 2031	74	33	31	29	29	28	21	21	21	14	18	13	12	344
2031/ 2032	77	34	33	31	29	29	22	21	21	21	12	18	13	361
2032/ 2033	79	35	34	33	31	29	23	22	21	21	17	12	18	376
2033/ 2034	82	37	35	34	33	31	24	23	22	21	16	17	12	387

Except for the incoming ECS cohort, the CSCE's projected enrolment is based on a cohort-retention model.

Crucially, this projection is based on the assumption that Alberta finally approves this requested project and that an addition is built. The CSCE has used a cohort-based approach to estimate the growth in enrolment at its existing schools and the impact of its requested projects. The projections are largely based on the following

³³ The ECS numbers represent the total of students enrolled in pre-kindergarten (3 years old), pre-kindergarten (4 years old) and kindergarten, as space is needed in our facilities to host these students. The decrease in student numbers between the ECS column and the grade 1 column is therefore not indicative of the retention rate of kindergarten to grade 1 at the school.

assumptions:

- A. Assumption 1:** The CSCE's cohort retention model assumes that no new students will join an existing cohort as it progresses through the school.
- B. Assumption 2:** The size of incoming cohorts will partly depend on the quality of the school's facility, which partly depends on its size.
- C. Assumption 3:** Cohorts will see a degree of attrition towards the end of the elementary level and as they transition from grade 9 to 10.

This projection method is conservative as it assumes no new students will join a cohort as it progresses through the school. However, in Bonnyville, it is common for students to join a cohort, at any grade level, given the frequent mobility of families that live and work in the Bonnyville area.

This projection method is also conservative because it assumes a 20% attrition rate as students transition between grades 5 and 6, and a further 20% attrition rate as they transition between grades 9 and 10. This attrition is based on historic enrolment.

With respect to the incoming ECS cohort, the projections assume that the CSCE's request for a permanent addition is approved in 2026, leading to an increase in ECS enrolment in the coming years as new families witness the growth and success of the school. This assumption is once again conservative as the increase in enrolment will likely be greater and across multiple grade levels (not only ECS).

The population of Bonnyville has been steadily growing for decades. It is anticipated that this growth will continue in the coming years.

5. Partnership Opportunities

There is an opportunity for potential partnerships in the community. These will be explored as the project moves forward.

Section 7 – Priority 3

École Beauséjour, Plamondon (ECS-12) : Modernisation

1. Project request summary :

- a. **PROJECT REQUEST:** Modernization of existing facility
- b. **KEY PROJECT DRIVERS:**
 - ☐ Legal (violation of s. 23 of the *Charter* and s. 17 of the *Alberta Act, 1905*)
 - ☐ Health and Safety
 - ☐ Building Condition
 - ☐ Functionality and Programming
 - ☐ Community Renewal
- c. **PROJECT SCOPE:** Either replace existing portable structures and links (1014 m²) with a permanent masonry structure, and modernize 591.60 m² of existing space, or replace the entire facility.
- d. **NO. OF YEARS LISTED IN THE CAPITAL PLAN:** 16
- e. **PROJECT PRIORITY:** 3

1. Update

This Capital Planning Priority has received funding for the pre-planning phase and a general contractor for this phase has been selected by Alberta Infrastructure. The Working Group is being convened in early April to begin the work involved in this phase. The project should then move on to the next phase.

For all background information and project rationale, please refer the CSCE's 2025-2028 Capital Plan.

Section 8 – Priority 4

Ecole Sainte-Catherine, Lac La Biche (ECS-6), Modernisation and new replacement school.

1. Project Request Summary

- A. **PROJECT REQUEST:** Acquisition of School Site and immediate necessary work (e.g., replace the roof), and replacement school for a homogenous Catholic community school (ECS-6)

B. KEY PROJECT DRIVERS:

- ☐ Legal (violation of s. 23 of the *Charter* and s. 17 of the *Alberta Act, 1905*)
- ☐ Building Condition
- ☐ Community Renewal
- ☐ Efficiency Solutions
- ☐ Functionality and Programming
- ☐ Health and Safety

C. PROJECT SCOPE:

- i. Acquisition of the former Central Elementary School site and facility (declared surplus by Northern Lights School District) and immediate necessary work to use the facility (at least \$700,000); and
- ii. Construction of replacement school on the current site (\$11,948,642)

D. NO. OF YEARS LISTED IN THE CAPITAL PLAN: 10

E. PROJECT PRIORITY: 4

2. Update

The school building and school site have been transferred from Northern Lights School Division to CSCE since summer 2024. This Capital Planning Priority has received funding for its urgent and emergent modernisation needs as well as for the preplanning phase of the new school build. To date, CSCE has replaced the roof, has also made major upgrades on interior finishes. A general contractor has been appointed and plans for the other major modernisation work are ongoing.

For the history of the Capital Planning Priority, please refer to previous CSCE Capital Plans.

Section 9 – Priority 5

New Community School, Athabasca – New School (ECS-6)

1. Project Summary

A. PROJECT REQUEST: New school (ECS-6)

B. KEY PROJECT DRIVERS:

- i. Legal (violation of s. 23 of the *Charter* and s. 17 of the *Alberta Act*,

1905)

- ii. Functionality and programming
- iii. Community renewal

C. PROJECT SCOPE: Identify a location in Athabasca from which to offer substantively equivalent French-language programming to serve children in Athabasca and surrounding communities.

D. NO. OF YEARS LISTED IN THE CAPITAL PLAN: The CSCE has identified a need for a new Community School in Athabasca for 17 years, and has consistently identified such a need since at least 2014.

E. PROJECT PRIORITY: 5

2. Project Rational

The CSCE knows that the numbers warrant the establishment of a homogeneous school to serve Athabasca and its surrounding communities. The CSCE and the Province have an obligation to provide French-language programming in Athabasca without further delay.

The CSCE requests funding (in year three of this capital plan) to secure a site and facility from which it can offer substantively equivalent French-language education. The CSCE intends to begin offering French-language ECS to grade 1 or 2 programming, expanding to grade 6 (at least) in subsequent years. Eventually, the CSCE will offer a French-language secondary program in Athabasca.

There is no French-language program in Athabasca. The closest French-language school is École Beauséjour in Plamondon, approximately 72 kilometers from Athabasca. The distance between Athabasca and Plamondon makes travel times unreasonable and discourages eligible parents from exercising their section 23 *Charter* rights. This situation must be remedied as soon as possible.

There is a long history of French in the Athabasca region. Today, there is a significant Francophone population in Athabasca and its surrounding communities. In fact, Athabasca University offers programming in French other than language classes (e.g. Bachelor of Arts taught in French). However, without access to French-language ECS to grade 12 programming, the vitality of the community has suffered over decades, leading to assimilation and cultural erosion with each passing year. Establishing a French-language community school in Athabasca is necessary to respect the obligations imposed by section 23 of the *Charter*. Section 23 has three

purposes: preventive, remedial and unifying. It is intended to prevent the erosion of official language communities, to redress past injustices and promote the development of those communities. Its purpose is unifying in that it accommodates mobility by enabling citizens to move anywhere without fearing that they will have to abandon their language and culture.³⁴ A French-language community school in Athabasca will renew the vitality of the French-language community, reverse assimilatory tendencies, and promote the development of the French-language and culture.

The CSCE is undertaking a site search to identify a location for its future school. Additional information (regarding enrolment potential, budget, etc.) will be provided to Alberta Education once it is available.

The closest French-language school is École Beauséjour in Plamondon, approximately 72 kilometers from Athabasca. École Beauséjour's current elementary catchment area includes Athabasca. There are currently no students who travel from Athabasca to Plamondon to attend École Beauséjour, as the distance between Athabasca and Plamondon makes travel times unreasonable and discourages eligible parents from exercising their section 23 *Charter* rights. École Beauséjour will not have an impact on the enrolment of students in a new community ECS-6 school in Athabasca. Similarly, a new community ECS-6 school in Athabasca will not have an impact on École Beauséjour's enrolment.

With respect to funding for a new French-language program in Athabasca, there is the potential to seek federal funding to supplement the cost of the project, specifically related to community/culture and childcare spaces. The CSCE is also interested in offering childcare spaces and early childhood programming, which is very much desired as introducing children to the French language and culture at a young age is crucial to the vitality and development of the community. Enhanced community space will benefit students of all ages as it will increase their exposure to the French language and culture, which aligns with the CSCE's legislative mandate and obligations under section 23 of the *Charter*. It will also increase enrolment. A new school facility will serve as the hub for French-language events in the region and promote the development (renewal) of the French-language community. The government of Canada supports the development of official-

³⁴ CSFCB, *Fédération des parents, et al v BC*, SCC at para 15.

language minority communities across Canada by projects related to the development of the official language minority (i.e. through the *Protocol for Agreements for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction* and the *Canada-Alberta Agreement for Minority-language Education and Second-language Instruction*).

The CSCE will determine if other partnership opportunities are available, for example, with Athabasca University or other French-language or cultural organisations.

Section 8 – Priority 6

New Community School, Elk Point – New School (ECS-6)

1. Project Request Summary

A. PROJECT REQUEST: New school (ECS-5)

B. KEY PROJECT DRIVERS:

- a. Legal (violation of s. 23 of the *Charter* and s. 17 of the *Alberta Act, 1905*)
- b. Functionality and programming
- c. Community renewal

C. PROJECT SCOPE: Identify a location in Elk Point from which to offer substantively equivalent French-language programming to serve children in Elk Point and surrounding communities.

D. NO. OF YEARS LISTED IN THE CAPITAL PLAN: 4

E. PROJECT PRIORITY: 6

2. Project Rational

The CSCE has identified a need for a new Community School in Elk Point. The CSCE is studying the viability of its proposed new program in Elk Point and will provide Alberta Education with additional information (enrolment potential, budget, etc.) once available.

Subject to further information regarding viability, the CSCE requests funding (in year three of this capital plan) to secure a site and facility from which it can offer

substantively equivalent French-language education. The CSCE intends to begin offering French-language ECS to grade 1 or 2 programming, expanding to grade 6 (at least) in subsequent years.

There is no French-language program in Elk Point. The closest French-language school is École du Sommet in St-Paul, approximately 35 kilometers from Elk Point.

Located on the North Saskatchewan River, Elk Point is historically significant as part of the fur trade route. French fur traders and eventually settlers were prominent in the area. Unfortunately, over decades the French language and culture in and around Elk Point has diminished. Without reasonable access to French-language education, the vitality of the community has suffered over decades, leading to its progressive erosion and assimilation. Establishing a French-language community school in Elk Point is necessary to respect the obligations imposed by section 23 of the *Charter*. Section 23 has three purposes: preventive, remedial and unifying. It is intended to prevent the erosion of official language communities, to redress past injustices and promote the development of those communities. Its purpose is unifying in that it accommodates mobility by enabling citizens to move anywhere without fearing that they will have to abandon their language and culture.³⁵ A French-language community school in Elk Point will renew the vitality of the French-language community, reverse assimilatory tendencies, and promote the development of the French-language and culture.

The CSCE's proposed school would serve children in Elk Point and surrounding communities.

A new community school in Elk Point will not impact the CSCE's school in St-Paul, which is not easily accessible for students and parents (especially at the elementary level) living in Elk Point and in surrounding communities south and east thereof.

The CSCE is undertaking a site search to identify a location for its future school. Additional information (regarding enrolment potential, budget, etc.) will be provided to Alberta Education once it is available.

³⁵ *CSFCB, Fédération des parents, et al v BC*, SCC at para 15.

