

Celebrating Catholic Education



Catholic Education Week (May 6-10) and World Catholic Education Day (May 30) is quickly approaching. It is with great anticipation that we look forward to the opportunity to celebrate publicly funded Catholic education and its distinctiveness as Christ centered learning.

Historically, publically funded Catholic education, operating in Alberta since the 1840's, has held both a unique and distinct role in Alberta's public education system. Father Albert Lacombe at Lac St. Anne and the Grey Nuns in St. Albert, established the first schools. Unbeknownst to them, 160 years later, publically funded Catholic education is presently serving 181, 000 students in 483 schools employing close to 11,000 teachers.

In Canada there are generally speaking three types of Catholic schools: Those that are publicly funded , such as those in Northwest Territories, Yukon, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta; those that receive partial funding (British Columbia, Quebec, and Manitoba); and those that receive no funding (Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island). With this in mind, it remains urgently important that advocacy for publicly funded Catholic education in Alberta remain a priority.

There is much to celebrate and showcase in publically funded Catholic education. Our schools provide a world class education to students and their families both academically and spiritually. Christ is the reason for Catholic schools and serves as role model for all. Every student is a child of God, with inherent dignity and worthy of respect, deserving abundant compassion and care.

Catholic Education Week and World Catholic Education day provide excellent opportunities to share with the broader community and stakeholders the unique gift of publicly funded Catholic education. Each of us is critically important in advocating and articulating this importance. What can you do?

- ✓ Wear blue to publicly demonstrate your support for publicly funded Catholic education,
- ✓ Bring awareness by sharing information on website, newsletters, posters, emails, and social media,
- ✓ Tell your story of Catholic education – articulate to others the importance of faith based, education, why did you attend a Catholic school, why did you choose a Catholic school for your child. Dialogue brings awareness and better understanding. Join the conversation,
- ✓ Participate in activities happening at your child's school,
- ✓ Share, like, retweet on social media the importance of publicly funded Catholic education, Follow groups such as Catholic school districts, Catholic schools, the Diocese, Grandin Media, ACSTA, GrACE to get started. Use the hashtag #IBelieveinCatholicEd.
- ✓ Pray for publicly funded Catholic education
- ✓ We invite you to view, share, discuss, materials on websites such as:
 - ✓ <https://acsta.ab.ca/resources>
 - ✓ <https://www.ocsta.on.ca/resources/catholic-education-week-resources/>
 - ✓ <https://www.scsba.ca/catholic-education-week/>

May the Holy Spirit inspire each of us to celebrate and pray for publicly funded Catholic education!