
The Spirit of Inquiry Is To Ask Questions...

Won't field trips "get old"? *While field trips have always been a valued component of learning at Connect, the EXPO program's offsite field experiences will build on concepts and lessons introduced in the classroom. These experiences are designed to provide authentic, meaningful, and engaging learning opportunities. Once back in the classroom, students will reflect on the offsite experience and assess what has been learned, and why it's important.*

Will this prep students for high school and how? *Extensive research in experiential and place-based education has concluded that students who develop a strong sense of their role within the community and who participate in practical and relevant learning are not only prepared for high school but are also prepared for life beyond school through increased resilience, problem-solving capacity, and critical thinking skills.*

How will the EXPO program be staffed? *Two classes from a grade level will be on an EXPO rotation with humanities and math/science teachers. Educational Assistants or members of the school leadership team, as well as other non-teaching staff, may accompany field experiences as dictated by the need for supervision and the nature of the activity. Parent volunteers are always welcome and encouraged to accompany EXPO activities as well. We will develop a volunteer sign up system for next year that provides enough lead time for parents who may wish to schedule volunteer opportunities around other obligations.*

How will parents and students manage so many overnight trips? *The number of overnight trips in the EXPO program is unchanged from the current outdoor education schedule. Students participate in multi-day trips twice per year and the duration and destination is determined by the grade and specific learning outcomes being addressed by the activity. All other EXPO related trips are structured within a regular school day. Students will arrive at school at the regular time, take part in the EXPO activity, and will return to school for dismissal at 3:30.*

How many students are off campus at once? *There will be two pods (52 students) from two grades off campus at any given time, for a maximum of 104 students.*

What can parents expect to see? How can we best support the integration? *Parents can expect to see students excited about learning and making strong connections between the concepts they learn in the classroom and real applications in the community and environment outside the school. Experiential and place-based learning will offer a natural integration of humanities and math/science learning outcomes.*

The program seems to have changed a lot from when it was first introduced. Why is that? *Public charter schools in Alberta are expected to be centers of research and innovation that continuously evolve to provide significantly different educational programming that improves the nature and quality of student success. The EXPO program expands on the field experiences already done at Connect, and introduces place-based education, community service, and authentic learning experiences as a means of enriching and extending inquiry-based learning. Throughout the evolution of the EXPO program, we have listened and responded to feedback from stakeholders to ensure the needs of our students are put first.*

Will students still have one-to-one technology? *The one-to-one technology program will remain completely intact. Any changes to the tech program will be a result of changes to the availability of devices or other factors*

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beyond our control. For example, Apple has begun discontinuing the MacBook Air laptop. Over the next few years, this may result in Connect seeking a lower-priced alternative and consulting the school community about other technology options.

Can students have a break from technology when they are on these EXPOs? *Yes, on many field experiences there will not be the need for students to use technology and it will be left behind at the school. In some instances, the teachers may take only a few devices for students to record artifacts of learning.*

Will there be new students in the school? *There will be NO additional classes to the school. Each class will be capped at 26 students to a maximum of 624 students in the school. We currently have 613 students enrolled.*

How will parents locate EXPO groups if children need to be picked up early/dropped off late due to appointments or extracurricular activities? *We recognize that there will be times when parents need to pick up or drop off students during EXPO activities. The destinations will be communicated to parents ahead of time, and the school will develop a system to contact teachers on EXPO rotations.*

Will my child still be able to participate in band, theatre arts, sports and outdoor ed electives? *Students will still participate in electives, PVA, and extracurricular activities as they have always done. The revised 4-day timetable ensures that Fridays are available for assemblies, showcases, and performances that will reinforce a sense of community at the school.*

What are the contingency plans for weather and road conditions? *Inclement weather is always a determining factor when students will be off campus. Clear guidelines for travel have been developed for outdoor education trips and these same criteria will be applied to EXPO rotations. Teachers will develop alternative plans in the event they must postpone or cancel an EXPO trip.*

My child's grandparents would like to volunteer for some of these outings. Does the school allow that? *Grandparents are welcome to accompany trips as long as they have completed a security screening process and have participated in a volunteer orientation session, including a review of the role and responsibility of a volunteer.*

What about all the wasted time on the bus? *The time spent traveling to and from EXPO destinations will be considered instructional time as teachers will be able to engage students in discussion, preparation, and reflection while in transit. In addition, the concentrated and enriched learning that will be taking place during the EXPO activities will more than compensate for any time spent travelling.*

How can I help the school reach its goals (curricular and financial) for this program? *Parental support for EXPO is critical to the future success of the program. Parents are invited to help the school develop new community partnerships to support the goals of the program. The school community will also be invited to explore opportunities for corporate sponsorship, grants, and targeted fundraising to ensure financial sustainability and growth of the program, including purchasing a bus to mitigate the transportation costs associated with EXPO.*