



Airdrie Christian Academy

Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.
1 Corinthians 10:31



Annual Report 2024-25



Table of Contents

Letter from the Head of School & Board Chair-----	3
Earl Driedger, Head of School-----	3
Gerald Andres, Board Chair-----	3
Faith Development and Discipleship-----	5
Jaime Young, Director of Discipleship-----	5
Elementary & Secondary-----	7
Cristie Watt, ACA Principal-----	7
Alternative Programs-----	9
Jason Schuler, ACA@Home Principal-----	9
Facilities, IT & Equipment-----	10
Lucas Daley, Director of Operations-----	10
Finance / Human Resources-----	11
Rahul Solomon, Finance Director-----	11



Letter from the Head of School & Board Chair

Earl Driedger, Head of School
Gerald Andres, Board Chair



Dear Society Members,

In a world of turmoil and uncertainty, we are so thankful that our God is steady and unchanging. The same God who provided for the Israelites as they wandered in the wilderness is the same God that provides for the needs of His own today. From the splendor of His creation, to the revelation of Himself in His written Word, to the provision of His great salvation, and the blessing of raising children to know the Lord; His mercies are new every morning and perfect are His gifts! While ACA has grown and changed over the past couple of years, our anchor is tied to the unchanging one and we remain committed to proclaiming the goodness of His salvation to the students of ACA.

ACA has been a single branch tree for many years, with full-time programs for Elementary and Secondary grades. In the last two years, more branches have been added through ACA@Home. We now have families and children from around Alberta connected to our Christian school mission and vision through home education and in-person learning enrichment days. In all, we have over 1,100 students receiving Christian education through Christian teachers in nine different programs, through the ministry of ACA.

In each program, we keep Christ at the centre of all we plan and pursue, with God's Word, the Bible,

as our core and foundational document. (I Corinthians 10:31) We continue to be humbled, amazed and thankful for God's hand of provision over our school - we have prayed that He will bring the students and staff that He wants here, and He is doing so!

We began our 2024-25 school year with our Back-to-School BBQ in the school playground, with over 500 people in attendance. It was a blessing to come together as a society and experience the sense of community we value within ACA. We eagerly anticipate our upcoming Annual General Meeting, an important ACA Society event for all ACA parents and staff, and ask that you make that a calendar priority at 7 pm on Wednesday, March 27, 2025. Join us for this time of reporting, future visioning and celebration!

Enrollment

From the last year to this current school year, our student body has grown significantly. While our full-time program population was just over 300 students in 2022-23, that number has increased to over 340! Additionally, ACA@Home launched into its first full year in 2022-23 with almost 200 students, and there are now over 750 students

registered in this program. Over half of these ACA@Home students are enrolled in weekly in-person enrichment days or the Hybrid High School Program.

Please keep our enrollment over all our programs in your prayers as we move forward with optimizing the gift of 77 Gateway Drive. We are so thankful for all the boys and girls who are learning and growing their faith and abilities through their connection with ACA programs.

Financial Stewardship and Viability

Strengthening our finances remains a key priority of the Board. We will continue to prioritize the reduction of our debt load while also growing our donor and investor base. Our financial health will allow us to continue having a lasting impact for generations to come. Rising interest rates have presented challenges over the past years, so securing a standard mortgage with set interest rates was a critical answer to prayer. We rejoice in seeing God's blessing in our commitment and actions taken to repay our private lenders. Within the 2024-25 school year, the private lender debt amount will drop to less than \$800K! We invite you to partner with your school to completely eliminate this private lender amount within the next three years!

Yes, there are changes occurring within our school, but our deeply rooted commitment to following Biblical principles, striving to live as Christ followers, and listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit will keep us stable and focused on our **main thing** - providing excellent Christian education for children and teens for decades to come, or until the Lord returns.

Earl Driedger
Head of School



Gerald Andres
ACA Board Chair



Providing
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Christian
education
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Faith Development and Discipleship

Jaime Young, Director of Discipleship

We began September with our traditional Junior and Senior High retreats in the second week of classes. Junior High students kicked off the week at Circle Square Ranch, where chapels were led by Mr. Valde, who also led the Junior High worship team. For two and a half days, students worshiped, prayed, played, and built relationships. A key takeaway from the messages - "God doesn't need you; He wants you" - has resonated with students throughout the year. With many new students joining us, the retreat was a valuable time of connection.

On Wednesday, the Senior High students arrived at noon as the Junior High group returned to school. The Senior High retreat was led by Grade 12 student Seth Horwood and Mrs. Young. Seth delivered a spirit-filled testimony, emphasizing God's faithfulness and calling students to rise up in their faith as the body of Christ.

The following week, 14 of our SWORD students attended the ACSI Student Leadership Conference at Camp Caroline. Four of our students led workshops, and Mrs. Young served as the keynote speaker for the two main sessions. It was a powerful time - students from other schools gave their lives to Christ for the first time, and we left the conference in awe of God and excited for the year ahead.

Worship and Chapels

Our worship teams continue to grow under the leadership of Mr. Valde (Junior High) and Mr. Wong (Senior High). Currently, five rotating teams lead the musical portion of our Wednesday worship chapels, with many students stepping up

to serve. It has been a joy to see their leadership strengthen our High School program.



Weekly chapels provide a mid-week corporate devotional time, featuring speakers from our Board of Directors, parents, students, Bible colleges, and local youth pastors. Elementary chapel begins at 8:50 am, followed by Secondary at 9:50 am. Each week, students are challenged to take ownership of their faith, trust in God's promises, and live for His glory.

Elementary worship teams, led by Mr. Hoffmann and Mrs. Joy, engage students with lively songs and actions. Weekly SWORD drills encourage students to dive into Scripture, making Bible study interactive and fun.

One of this year's highlights was a Junior High worship team leading Chapel for the Elementary school. Students gathered in a circle around the worship team, singing, dancing, and sharing Scripture and testimonies. It was a beautiful time of praise and encouragement.

Prayer Teams

Our ACA Parent Prayer Team meets every Tuesday morning in the Chaplaincy office, faithfully interceding for our school. They receive prayer requests online, through classroom submissions, and from prayer boxes in the Senior Commons, front office, and ACA@Home. We are deeply grateful for their dedication.

We also have two Student Prayer Teams. The High School prayer team, made up of Grade 7-12 students, meets Mondays at lunch in the Chaplaincy office. They take turns leading and approach their time with reverence. In Elementary, Ms. Smith leads a weekly Lunchtime Prayer Team in her classroom, teaching students the power of prayer for our school and families.

Project Positivity

Project Positivity, a student-led initiative, meets weekly to encourage students to live for God in meaningful ways. In December, they organized a coat drive, delivered cookies to neighboring businesses, and created an inspirational video for our Christmas chapel. This spring, they plan to collect new clothing, socks, and prepare lunches for those in need. Be sure to check the green boards around the school to stay involved!

Service Days

In November, Elementary students packed shoeboxes for Samaritan's Purse, and a Senior

High team volunteered at the warehouse to prepare boxes for shipment. This spring, we will:

- Partner with **Love on Fire** to serve at the Mustard Seed in Red Deer
- Continue community cleanup with **Volunteer Airdrie**
- Spend a day serving at **Camp Hope**
- Maintain our relationship with the **Mustard Seed Calgary**
- Prepare produce bags for the **Community Kitchen**

We are always seeking new opportunities to serve, so stay tuned for more ways we are getting our students involved in the community!

Missions: Jericho Ministries

Jericho Ministries is becoming an integral part of our ACA family. This year, we have two Mission trips planned to Honduras, with teams of 18 and 21 students and teachers traveling from **February 17-28** and **April 13-24**. Our mission is clear: Go Make Disciples. These trips focus on building God's Kingdom through worship, Scripture, hard work, learning, and play.

To support these efforts, we've launched our GMD merchandise line, featuring lanyards, hats, bracelets, t-shirts, and hoodies. Please support us through purchases, and keep our teams in prayer as they prepare to serve.

A Call to Prayer

Please continue to pray for discipleship in our school. As we educate generations for Christ, we send graduates into the world equipped to spread His love. Our work is not in vain, and we covet your prayers for our school body.





Elementary & Secondary

Cristie Watt, ACA Principal

Elementary

Elementary teachers are actively implementing the new Alberta Curriculum and Program of Studies, with Grades 4 to 6 focusing on the updated Science Curriculum. In preparation, teachers have dedicated significant time to revising long-term plans to align with the new learning outcomes, while intentionally integrating Biblical principles across all subjects. Alberta Education has also provided additional grant funding to support these efforts.

Teachers, Educational Assistants (EAs), and our new Elementary Learning Support Lead, Lisa Klassen, work collaboratively to create a flexible and inclusive learning environment. This includes offering individualized and small-group support both in the classroom and in break-out spaces. Literacy Support programs for students in Grades 1 to 6, including those in English as an Additional Language, provide targeted reading and phonics interventions. Grades 4 to 6 receive additional Literacy Support twice a week in place of French. Students also benefit from the use of Chromebooks, which enhance their learning through platforms like Google Classroom, IXL, Vocabulary A-Z, and Wordly Wise.

Students are given the opportunity to participate in engaging and interactive field trips, both within and outside the classroom, enriching their learning experiences and broadening their perspectives.

ACA continues its partnership with Renfrew Educational Services, supported by a funding grant from AISCA, to provide specialized services such as Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, and Psychological Consultation. Renfrew professionals collaborate with teachers, offering both small-group and whole-class support to meet the evolving needs of diverse learners.

Additionally, Elementary students have demonstrated their faith and service by living out Christ's teachings through initiatives such as supporting Operation Christmas Child (OCC), contributing to the Airdrie Food Bank, and participating in fundraising efforts for school Mission trips - sharing God's love with those in need.

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Biblical principles across all
subjects



Secondary

The 2024-25 academic year has seen continued growth in the programming offered to our Grades 7 to 12 students. We are proud of our high academic standards and commitment to whole-student discipleship, as we raise up the next generation to lead with Christ as their foundation.

Our Secondary Learning Support Lead, Tara Laidlow, continues to excellently support the diverse learners that God has brought to ACA.

This year, we welcomed Mr. Fabian Valdebenito to our Secondary Teaching Team. He has quickly built strong connections with our Junior High students. His fun and engaging teaching style has made him a wonderful addition to our team.

Our dual-stream approach in core courses, with distinct teachers for each stream, has significantly boosted the exam scores of students who traditionally opt for the less advanced "-2" courses. This strategic differentiation allows

teachers to tailor their teaching methods and materials to each group's unique learning styles and pace, enhancing student outcomes and fostering a more inclusive, supportive learning environment.

We remain committed to excellence by continuing to maintain mid-terms for Grades 7 to 9 and semester end exams for Grades recognizing academic achievement.

Secondary students at ACA also benefit from "WARRIORS" time, which provides two hours a week for students to manage their homework load, support their mental health, and engage in extracurricular activities.

We are thrilled to share that our graduation rate for the previous school year was 100%. We always celebrate the high level of student achievement and look forward to seeing our alumni thrive as they follow God's call into new endeavors.



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Alternative Programs

Jason Schuler, ACA@Home Principal

It has been a busy year in the world of ACA@Home. Through it all, God is good!

ACA@Home

Our Home Education branch began its third year in September with over 750 students enrolled in our programs.

In Airdrie, we have over 200 students enrolled in four hybrid / home education programs that meet at ACA from Monday to Thursday.

In Calgary, we serve 80 students in a print-based Enrichment program at Experience Church which runs Monday-Thursday.

In Red Deer, we operate three days of school programming at Deer Park Church with around 100 students from Grades 1 to 12.

In Edmonton, our Enrichment program serves 100 students at Life Church on Thursdays.

In addition to those Shared Responsibility / Online programs, we serve around 250 Home Education only students in our Airdrie, Three Hills, Red Deer and Edmonton hubs.

Our staff has grown to over 40 and God has brought us amazing teachers who love the Lord and love students.

We were able to run our first Mission trip to Costa Rica in February, and have started a home education sports tournament circuit in Central Alberta.

We are excited also to graduate the first ever class from ACA@Home in June with 14 grads. Looking towards 2025-26, we have over 75 families in our wait pool and we look in trust to God to provide the necessary spaces for us to serve those families. We humbly look forward to the massive responsibility that God has given us to serve the families He is bringing us.



ACA@Home





Facilities, IT & Equipment

Lucas Daley, Director of Operations

Facilities Improvements

- We constructed a new classroom to accommodate additional students and support new educational programs, enhancing our overall capacity and learning environment.
- We added new storage solutions throughout the school, including built-in cubbies, additional shelving, and improved boot and jacket storage areas. These enhancements make common spaces more organized, functional, and visually appealing.

Information Technology

- We significantly upgraded the WiFi network by installing additional access points, providing faster and more reliable internet access for staff and students across the entire campus.
- We began implementing a phased approach to continuously update our technology resources, including laptops, Chromebooks, and networking equipment. This ongoing effort ensures devices and systems will remain current and effectively support educational activities.

Equipment and Maintenance

- We are developing a comprehensive maintenance schedule to proactively

manage facility upgrades, repairs, and equipment replacements. This schedule aims to minimize disruptions, maintain safety standards, and control long-term costs.

- We are currently working on introducing new operational procedures to enhance efficiency and cost-effectiveness, which will lead to improved resource management and reduced overall expenses.

These improvements aim to better support our school community by providing high-quality facilities, reliable technology, and proactive maintenance strategies, effectively preparing us for future growth and operational excellence.





Finance / Human Resources

Rahul Solomon, Finance Director



Finance

Finance team is committed to being good stewards of the resources which God has entrusted to ACA. Our team is responsible for the following functions:

1. Budgeting and Reporting
2. Financial Planning & Cash Flow Management
3. Accounting Operations
4. General Business Administration
5. Human Resource Management

During 2023-24, the enrollment of students in both full-time and home education programs crossed the 1,000 students mark. This is a significant milestone in the school's history and we praise God for this.

The 2023-24 school year ended in a deficit of \$338,501. This was on account of the inclusion of

the amortization costs of \$424,900 as noted in our Financial Statements.

Our total revenues were down during the year. We received less than budgeted grant funding. Our actual tuition revenues were also down from projections. We have increased our focus on donations and fundraising. We are blessed to have some steady renters in the building.

We remained frugal in our spending, and as a result our total expenses were under budget during the school year.

In April 2024, we were able to convert the interest only loan and line of credit borrowing to a mortgage. This is a significant accomplishment for us and we are very thankful to our lender, Bow Valley Credit Union, for this. This conversion allows us to pay down the principal balance with each payment along with the interest charges.

Human Resources

During the 2023-24 school year, we maintained an excellent team of our dedicated staff members and I thank them for all their hard work.

We thank all the staff members who transitioned away from ACA during the 2023-24 school year and extend a special welcome to the new staff members who joined us for the 2024-25 school year.

We are thankful to the former Director of Business and HR, Kim Vander Wal, for her many contributions and sacrificial service to the school for the past many years.

We also extend a special thanks to our Finance Committee members, which includes Mike Crofts, our Treasurer and Jeff Braun, Chelsea Jarman, Steve Klassen, Michelle Seghers, Jonathan Ward, along with staff members Earl Driedger, Kathy Harmon and Rahul Solomon.

Lastly, we remain grateful for each family that calls ACA their “home” and are supporting it. We thank all the volunteer parents who came alongside our team and have remained committed to providing quality education to the students.

Our audited financial statements are available on our website.





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