



Education Unlimited Academy (EUA)

Education Plan (2023-2026)

Board Approved Effective Date

November 21, 2023

Accountability Statement for the Education Plan

The Education Plan for Education Unlimited Academy commencing September 1, 2023 was prepared under the direction of the Board of Directors in accordance with its responsibilities under the *Private Schools Regulation* and the *Education Grants Regulation*. This plan was developed in the context of the provincial government's business and fiscal plans. The Board has used its performance results to develop the plan and is committed to implementing the strategies contained within the plan to improve student learning and results.

Board Chair signature



Preamble

Education Unlimited (EU) was originally founded in 1999 as a traditional home education provider, working on behalf of a private school to assist families throughout the province of Alberta. For many years, EU successfully facilitated only traditional home education programs without using provincial accreditation or blended programs and consistently demonstrated principled leadership in home education.

EU's purpose has always been to recognize the authority and responsibility of parents, and to enable, equip, and encourage them in the training of their children at home.

In 2022, EU was reorganized as Education Unlimited Academy (EUA), an independent, accredited-funded private school. Like Education Unlimited, Education Unlimited Academy has one purpose: to support and encourage parents who choose to educate their children at home. EUA offers parents choice and control in the freest possible educational environment. It is a place where true unschooling is understood and celebrated.

In short, the only reason for the existence of EUA is to empower parents to exercise their responsibility for the education of their children.

EUA enables parents to home educate by helping them to understand the requirements of provincial regulations and their own rights as home

educators, while at the same time greatly simplifying the required paperwork for registration and funding.

EUA equips parents by providing them with the knowledge and tools necessary to lead their children to responsible adulthood.

EUA encourages parental authority in home education by promoting the foundational principles for educating children within the family created by God, and by reminding parents that these principles do not change with time.

EUA believes in keeping things simple, thereby freeing parents to be the teachers they are.

Stakeholder Engagement

EUA's primary method of stakeholder engagement is through the twice-annual facilitator visits. When the facilitators visit with their families, they get feedback about their students' educational progress, as well as feedback about the services provided by EUA.

Facilitators also phone their families mid-year to get additional feedback, and parents occasionally phone facilitators to discuss issues or get questions answered.

In short, the facilitators engage directly with their families at least three times per school year, so there is ongoing feedback throughout the year. This personal contact with every family is superior to surveys because there is a direct connection, and the responses are not shoehorned into predetermined categories.

Between EUA's various facilitators there are manifold decades of first-hand, face-to-face conversations with home educators that inform the Education Plan. That is, the Education Plan is built upon feedback from the day-to-day home educating experiences of hundreds of families across the province over a period of many years. This sort of valuable feedback — derived from personal conversations — cannot be conveyed in numbers, charts or graphs, but is reflected in the collective wisdom of EUA's facilitators.

It only makes sense that EUA will continue to rely on these kinds of first-hand, face-to-face conversations with home educators as its key form of stakeholder engagement.

Even then, EUA also sends families an email approximately every 3 weeks to keep them updated on developments and to recommend resources. Families can email EUA whenever necessary as well. So the channels of engagement are ongoing.

In addition, there is an interactive website with special features for parents engaged in home education through EUA.

EUA's facilitators, as stakeholders themselves, also provide important feedback on the school and its efforts. They are kept up-to-date on the school's activities through monthly staff meetings via Zoom, and are encouraged to contribute their views on making improvements. Facilitators also contact the school administration with suggestions between meetings.

Similarly, the Board has monthly meetings where updates about the school's efforts and finances are presented. Board members regularly make decisions on school operations.

Assurance Framework

Alberta Education has developed an Assurance Framework in order to encourage confidence in the education system by demonstrating that students are successfully being educated. Parents and other Albertans want to know that students' needs are being met. By looking at results, school authorities can focus on continuous improvement by making changes in areas that may be lacking.

Education Plans and Annual Education Results Reports (AERRs) contribute to transparency by demonstrating accountability and providing assurance to parents that they have chosen the best school for their children.

The main outcome EUA aims to achieve is parental satisfaction in the education of their children. EUA provides parents with a legitimate framework within which they can educate their children, as well as other services mentioned in this Education Plan. This whole endeavour is about children learning at home, and parents can observe their children's learning and growth on a day-to-day basis.

Parents want what is best for their children. A good education will clearly help any child to achieve success in life. Because parents are best placed to judge the educational progress of their children in a home education setting, parents' satisfaction is the key outcome for EUA.

If the parents are pleased with the results of this educational pathway, they will continue with it and perhaps recommend it to others. If they are not pleased, they will choose another home education option or put their children into a school. This means the outcome (parental satisfaction) can be measured by the number of families that remain with EUA or leave it for another option.

Alberta has more educational options than any other province. Every family has plenty of educational settings to choose from and can easily switch from one to another before the beginning of each school year. Therefore, if the number of families/students registered with EUA declines, the school will need to reassess its operations and determine necessary improvements. On the other hand, if the number of families/students remains the same or increases, EUA is on the right track.

Alberta Education has identified Five Assurance Domains to categorize school planning and reporting: Student Growth and Achievement, Teaching and Learning, Learning Supports, Governance, and Local and Societal Context.

Student Growth and Achievement

EUA promotes Student Growth and Achievement through home education.

Home education is best defined as a parent-directed program delivered outside of a structured learning environment such as a school. Beyond this simple definition, home education can become whatever a parent wants for their child. This flexibility is one of the main reasons families choose to home educate.

In home education, parents have complete control over what their child learns and can spend as much time as they would like focusing on each area of study. A child can spend more time learning about a subject they are passionate about and learn more than they could in a more traditional, structured environment. As well, the focused, one-on-one attention of a parent can help a student work through subjects and concepts they may find more challenging.

EUA also offers grade 9 Science and Mathematics in a Shared Responsibility program following Alberta programming requirements. These program offerings are made available especially as preparation for the trades.

The safe, stable environment of the home provides a learning experience free from bullying and negative influences, allowing all students to flourish. Direct control over a child's education allows parents to teach their child in accordance with their beliefs and values, and to provide gifted and special needs students with a program best suited to their abilities.

With this in mind, EUA's priority over the next 3 years is to convince as many parents as possible to choose home education. Since home education allows for individualized, one-on-one education within the loving, secure environment of the home, increasing the number of children who have this opportunity will clearly benefit the children and their families.

The success of this priority will be measurable using the increase or decrease in the number of children enrolled in home education.

Teaching and Leading

EUA promotes Teaching and Leading by equipping parents to take responsibility for their children's education. Over the years, EUA has amassed a wealth of online materials to equip parents in the education of their children. EUA's YouTube channel contains over four hundred videos, most of which are designed to help parents understand their role in home educating and unschooling.

YouTube helpfully calculates the number of views of EUA's videos. From this number it is easy to determine how frequently parents are using the channel to learn more about encouraging their children's learning at home.

The EUA website also contains text resources including a complete "Home Education Guide" to assist parents along every step of their home education journey. There is also a webpage for Post-Secondary Admissions to explain to parents and students how home educators can successfully engage with post-secondary institutions. Other online parent resources are also available, and EUA's facilitators are tasked with encouraging parents in their home education responsibilities.

Learning Supports

EUA helps parents to acquire the best Learning Supports for their children. When parents need additional help in this area, EUA staff work with them to ensure that the students' educational needs are met. Families already use a wide variety of curricula and other resources, and EUA staff are familiar with a broad range of material that can be recommended to families looking for assistance.

EUA also has a comprehensive database of resources on its website. These resources include both curricular and support resources.

EUA is currently setting up an internal department which will organize and offer a plethora of associated learning activities throughout the province. These activities, events, field trips and extracurricular classes will be made available to all home educating parents.

Governance

As a brand-new private school, EUA is on a Governance learning curve, since people are filling new roles in the operation of the school. As board members and other school leaders grow in their roles and gain experience, the regular day-to-day governance of the school will become more familiar and routine. Furthermore, EUA has created an advisory board of people with specialized knowledge to advise the school's regular board when called upon. It should be noted that while EUA is at the cutting edge of virtual learning, the government has yet to adapt to a constantly changing learning environment.

Local and Societal Context

For many years Alberta has had a large and diverse home education community. For over two decades, Education Unlimited has been well-known and respected within this community. Now, as a private school, EUA can play an even larger role. Home education itself has grown in popularity and acceptability throughout the province, and EUA can continue to grow as a flagship example of a new way of providing education to students. In this way, EUA will demonstrate educational leadership, not only within the home education community, but also to the greater provincial education system.

Plan for Implementation

Education Unlimited has existed as an organization since 1999. With over 20 years of experience in Alberta's educational environment involving staff with many decades of combined experience serving families and students, EUA plans to move forward utilizing its time-tested methods of encouraging and equipping parents in the education of their children.

This means EUA can continue on its well-worn path of success rather than starting from scratch. Implementation largely involves the continuation of current operations.

Nevertheless, now that it has become a full-fledged school, over the next 3-5 years EUA will focus on building its foundation, and developing new administrative structures to carry it into the future. Indeed, a new program called Activities Unlimited is currently being developed to offer families special learning events in conjunction with other home educators.

The main outcome sought by EUA is families that are satisfied with the educational growth of their children. Families that are fulfilled in this way will return for the following school year and will tell others about their happy experience as well. This means new families will enrol.

Thus the key performance measure is the number of students registered with EUA. An increase in students year over year will clearly demonstrate that the educational services being offered are meeting the needs of Alberta families. Meeting their needs is the benchmark of success.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Student Success

EUA supports improving educational outcomes for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students and believes such students would benefit from EUA's method of home education should their parents choose this option.