STEM INNOVATION ACADEMY

STEM Innovation Academy Society

Rolling Education Plan

2026-2029

Accountability Statement

Under the direction of the Board of Directors, the Education Plan for STEM Innovation Academy Society was prepared under the direction of the Board of Directors in accordance with the responsibilities under the *Education Act* and the *Sustainable Fiscal Planning and Reporting Act*. This plan was developed in the context of the provincial government's business and fiscal plans. The Charter 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.

The Charter Board reviewed and approved the 2026-2029 Education Plan on May 20, 2026. The original copy of the report has been signed.

Dee-Ann Evans
Board Chair

Joanne Higgins
Superintendent

Message from the Board Chair

On behalf of the STEM Innovation Academy Board, I am pleased to share our support for the 2026–2029 Rolling Three-Year Education Plan.

Now operating three campuses and serving over 1700 students in our sixth year, STEM IA remains committed to inspiring students to be technology creators, innovators, and problem solvers. In 2026–27, our education priorities are strengthening effective instruction in every classroom, advancing junior high new draft curriculum piloting and implementation, and deepening a culture of character, community, and belonging through the Calgary Charter Hub Athletic Complex.

The Board is encouraged by this year's academic focus on building collective capacity, supporting a consistent standard of excellence across all classrooms through a data-informed approach to continuous improvement, and enhancing existing supports for student resilience and well-being. These efforts will help ensure students graduate with the STEM knowledge, skills, and competencies needed for lifelong learning and leadership in a fast-paced global environment.

We are also excited by opportunities to expand the reach of our programming and strengthen connection across the STEM IA community through initiatives such as the Calgary Charter Hub Athletic Complex,

opening in fall 2026. This will create new opportunities for school spirit, collaboration, and community engagement across STEMIA campuses and have a positive impact on how we share and connect with the STEM IA community and beyond.

Thank you to our students, staff, families, and partners for your continued support as we work together to provide innovative learning experiences and prepare students to be curious, creative, and resilient.

Dee-Ann Evans

Board Chair

Our Mission

Inspiring the next generation to be knowledgeable creators, innovators, and responsible leaders.

Our Vision

STEM Innovation Academy will be the premier learning community for the design and advancement of innovative Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics education.

Key Foundations

Preparing Future Ready Leaders

Our ever-evolving future will require innovative and adaptable leaders. Students at STEM Innovation Academy are inspired to be technology creators and innovators, not just technology users. We engage students with real-world problems, expose them to possibilities for post-secondary and future careers, and develop them as critical thinkers and responsible citizens.

Excellence in Teaching and Learning

We believe a student's education should be well rounded. We use evidence-based, research informed instructional practices. Knowledge is the core foundation for the skills and mindsets we seek to develop in students. Students make connections between the knowledge they are learning and real-world experiences, current events, and/or their daily lives. Students are engaged and active participants in their learning. Our students are resilient - we challenge them to persevere and to not give up.

Design Teaching, Thinking and Learning

Creative and critical thinking occurs in a meaningful way with a strong foundation built on knowledge and skills outlined in the Alberta Program of Studies. On top of this foundational learning, students use a design process to strive meaningfully and intentionally to develop creative solutions to unique problems in all subject areas. Teachers collaboratively create the conditions for student curiosity, creativity, leadership, and critical thinking.

Data to Inform and Drive Instruction

We ensure all students are supported to have a strong academic experience in ALL subject areas at our school. Teachers use best educational practices, including direct instruction through explanation and modelling, to ensure a rigorous and engaging program. Formal and informal assessments inform teachers, students, and parents about student progress and determine next steps in learning.

Industry Partnerships and Global Focus

STEM Innovation Academy is part of a local and global innovation ecosystem. Collaborative partnerships with post-secondary institutions and industry experts enrich and inspire powerful life-long learning for students and faculty. Through connections with internationally recognized STEM organizations, we ensure students develop an awareness of global challenges and solutions while acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary for future success.

Parents as Partners in Learning

Parents are the primary educators of their children and important stakeholders in their education. Through collaborative relationships and open communication, we work together with families to support success for all students.

Character, Community and Curiosity

Staff at STEM IA facilitate a positive social and emotional learning environment. Respect is an integral part of our culture. We honor the uniqueness of each individual and embrace diverse backgrounds, values, and points of view to build a strong, inclusive community. Members of our learning community treat each other with mutual respect, kindness and empathy. Students are inspired to be curious about each other and the world around them.

Introduction

STEM Innovation Academy opened its doors in August, 2021 as the 15th Charter School in Alberta. In our fifth year of operation, we currently serve over 1680 students in grades 7-12. As a charter school, our students come to us from all corners of the city of Calgary and surrounding area. Our original junior high campus is located in Southwest Calgary and serves students in grades 7-9. In September 2023, we moved into our permanent high school location at the Calgary Charter Hub, occupying the first two floors. This Northwest Calgary location is in the heart of the University Innovation Quarter and perfectly situated close to UCalgary. Our high school program currently supports students in grades 10 -12. In the next year, we anticipate a full high school enrolment of 975 students.

In the fall of 2025, we were very excited to open a second junior high campus in the Calgary Charter Hub. This second junior high campus occupies the third floor of the Hub and serves over 330 students in grades 7-9. This location significantly helps our families living in northwest Calgary. Overall, STEM IA will represent 70% of the occupancy of the Charter Hub.

We have experienced tremendous growth in our first five years, with enrolment increasing 320% since 2021. In our opening year 2021, STEM IA employed 25 staff members. Today, we employ 130 highly talented staff members, a staggering 420% increase! We are incredibly proud of our exceptional team and our collective efforts in pursuing our vision of being a STEM Centre of Excellence.

We embody a vision for education our province needs more than ever – one that inspires students to be technology creators and innovators, not just technology users. We are in the middle of a once-in-a-generation digital transformation, and Alberta students can be leaders in this global shift. We believe every student can be successful in STEM and should have the opportunity to learn about cutting edge science and technology topics.

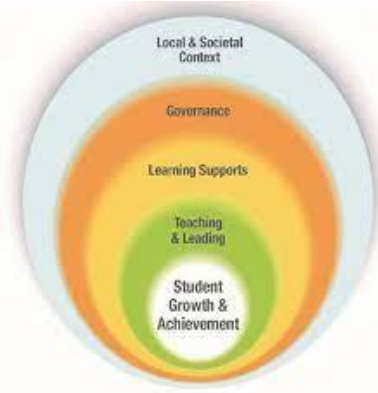
Charter Goals

1. Students will graduate high school with superior STEM knowledge, skills, and competencies that provide a strong foundation for lifelong learning in a fast-paced global environment.

2. Students will have core STEM knowledge and skills needed to become global innovators and problem solvers.

3. Students will be community minded learners who demonstrate courage, resilience, respect, and caring for others.

Assurance Domains



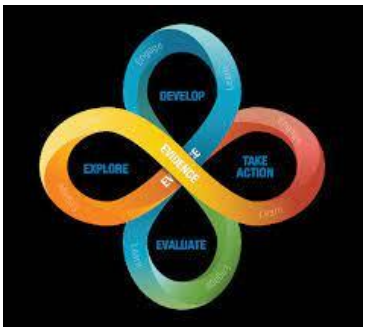
STEM Innovation Academy's 2026 – 2029 Education Plan outlines priorities in alignment with the Alberta Education Assurance Framework. As articulated in the Funding Manual,

"Assurance in the education system happens when community members, system stakeholders and education partners engage across five domains of Student Growth and Achievement; Teaching and Leading; Learning Supports; Governance; and Local and Societal Contexts" (pp. 28, 29).

STEM Innovation Academy goals are integrated into the Assurance Domains section of this document. The outcomes identified are measured with local and provincial assessment tools.

Continuous Improvement Cycle

As articulated in the Funding Manual, "Successful work within and across the domains occurs within a continuous improvement cycle." (pp. 32, 33). Key processes include:



- **Evidence-informed decision-making:** the gathering of evidence informs next steps.
- **Engagement:** education partners working together for the purposes of bringing about positive change.
- **Learning and Capacity Building:** Reflection on learning is critical. The opportunities for building capacity for change and improvement must be ongoing.

Highlights of our 2025-2026 Year

- **Strategic Growth with Continued Demand**
  Student populations grew to over 1,680 students while maintaining program quality, with sustained high demand reflected in extensive waitlists across all grade levels. Successfully opened a second Junior High campus in August 2025 at the Calgary Charter Hub, serving 316 students in Grades 7–9.

- **Strengthening Stakeholder Voice Through School Councils**
  Established independent School Councils at each campus to strengthen parent engagement, enhance communication, and support the unique needs of each school community.

- **Strengthening Teaching Through the Model of Instruction**
  Continued refinement of the STEM IA Model of Instruction through expanded resources, targeted professional development, increased classroom observation, and collaborative practices designed to strengthen instructional consistency and impact.

- **Provincial Excellence in Junior High Achievement**
  School-wide analysis of Grade 9 Provincial Achievement Test (PAT) results demonstrated exceptional student achievement, with STEM IA ranking #1 in the province in Math and Science, #1 in Calgary and #3 in the province in English Language Arts, and #1 in Calgary and #2 in the province in Social Studies.*
  *Based on the percentage of students achieving excellence in schools that do not select students and have class sizes of 30 or more.

- **Strengthening Horizontal and Vertical Curriculum Alignment**
  Collaborated across both Junior High campuses on common assessments, instructional planning, and program implementation to strengthen horizontal alignment within departments while enhancing vertical alignment from Grades 7–12 to ensure students develop the knowledge and skills needed for future success.

- **Expanding STEM-Focused Programming and Capstone Opportunities**
  Expanded Junior High and High School option programming through new STEM-focused courses and advanced Capstone opportunities in areas such as Game Design, New Media, Foundations of Flight, and Design Your Future, designed to deepen student skills and extend learning in specialized areas. Note many of these courses were developed after feedback from students on courses they would like to see.

- **Expanding Athletics, Clubs, and Student Culture**
  Expanded athletics, clubs, and student culture opportunities across all campuses, including new clubs such as Community Clean-Up and Creative Writing, additional volleyball and soccer teams, the launch of a student athletic council, and the implementation of Ignite to strengthen student connection and belonging. Despite no onsite gymnasium access at the Northwest Junior High and High School campuses, STEM IA offered a full complement of athletic teams and achieved record student participation along with multiple league championships.

- **Robotics Program Achieves Global Recognition**
  Over 375 students participated in robotics, with VEX and FIRST Robotics Competition teams qualifying for World Championships. Our FRC high school team were World finalists for the prestigious Impact Award recognizing excellence in leadership, outreach, and advancing STEM education.

- **Post-Secondary Readiness, Access, and Advocacy**
  Students engaged with multiple post-secondary institutions through information sessions and targeted workshops preparing them for applications and admissions, resulting in many students receiving offers from their first-choice universities. Through Founder's Circle, students also developed advocacy skills by visiting the legislature and championing increased access to STEM post-secondary opportunities in Alberta.

- **Celebrating Five Years of Growth and Impact**
  In December, STEM IA celebrated its fifth anniversary with teachers, support staff, school leaders, and central office staff, recognizing the collective effort and dedication that have shaped the organization in just five short years. The milestone highlighted the tremendous growth, innovation, and strong culture that have been established across all campuses since the school's founding.

Stakeholder Engagement

Clear, transparent communication and stakeholder engagement is a priority for STEM Innovation Academy. Parent and stakeholder engagement and feedback is valued. This input and feedback is gathered to inform our education plan, our priorities and future planning. The following engagement activities occurred:

- Tech Advisory Committee consisting of parents and industry leaders in areas such as AI, Robotics, Energy Innovations, and Tech Innovations guiding classroom teaching and learning along with course development.
- Parent information sessions held for all three campuses attended by over 2000 prospective families.
- Open House for current and prospective junior high and high school families in November 2025 and January 2026
- Grade 9 Parent information session about high school in Alberta – October 2025.
- Provided multiple opportunities for parent engagement and teacher feedback through over 26 hours of student-parent-teacher interview time at each campus, offered in both face-to-face and blended formats during the fall and spring semesters. As requested by parents, the blended approach increased accessibility and flexibility for families, resulting in greater parent participation and engagement in student learning.
- School Council meetings held monthly for each campus with all parents encouraged to attend also in a blended format allowing greater accessibility.
- Sent weekly Principal messages with families, highlighting school events and upcoming activities with featured photos and teachers sent weekly communications outlining course content and upcoming assessments.
- Regular and proactive communication from school leadership with families prior to the opening of the new Northwest Junior High campus, combined with spring Grade 7 orientation sessions, provided opportunities for parents to share feedback and contribute input into the development of the new Junior High program.
- Maintained the STEM IA blog to showcase school highlights, alongside regular updates to the website and social media channels.
- Professional growth conversations occur twice each year with teachers to ensure staff intent and feedback are known in the fall and the spring along with holding staff to standard of excellence.
- Monthly standing faculty meetings occur each week (full faculty, curriculum, grade/subject level) as well as regular meetings with school Team Leads.

- Founder's Circle and Robotics students visited the legislature in November 2025 for a STEM Day showcasing robotics to elected officials as well as advocating for more STEM spaces in post-secondary schools across Alberta.

- Tech Advisory Committee consisting of parents and industry leaders in areas such as AI, Robotics, Energy Innovations, and Tech Innovations guiding classroom teaching and learning along with course development.

Through ongoing engagement with parents, students, and our industry partners, several clear themes emerged that directly informed the priorities and strategies included in this year's plan. Parents and students consistently shared they are very happy with the quality of our program and the opportunities presented to their child. Parents also emphasized they feel their voices are genuinely heard through their participation in school council, high response rate to school surveys, and our open door policy. Their feedback directly shaped our decision to continue offering a blended format for conferences, combining in-person and virtual options to better accommodate family schedules while preserving strong communication between home and school. Their feedback also informed our decision in the creation of new option courses for next year. Marine Biology and Foundations of Flight have both been developed in partnership with industry experts resulting in greater choice for our students and expanding their learning opportunities in the areas of science and technology.

Priorities 2026-2027

1. Strengthening Effective Instruction in Every Classroom

STEM Innovation Academy will continue to prioritize high-quality, consistent instruction in every classroom through deep implementation of our Model of Instruction, ensuring all students experience engaging, rigorous, and aligned learning.

This work will be supported through targeted professional development, teacher personal, team and department goals, ongoing classroom observations, and formal and informal evaluation processes. A key focus will be mentoring new teachers through book studies, monthly workshops, and intentional onboarding into the STEM IA Way—building collective capacity and a consistent standard of excellence across all classrooms.

2. Junior High New Draft Curriculum Piloting and Implementation

Pilot and implement new Junior High draft curriculum in Mathematics, Social Studies, and Physical Education and Wellness through significant staff training, targeted professional development, and ongoing collaboration with the Alberta Professional Learning Consortium. Departments will continue developing robust curricular frameworks, common resources, and instructional supports to ensure strong alignment and optimal student learning during the 2026–27 school year.

3. Deepening a Culture of Character and Community Through the Calgary Charter Hub Athletic Complex

As STEM Innovation Academy High School reaches full capacity, a key priority for 2026–27 will be intentionally strengthening a connected culture grounded in character, community, and belonging across both the High School and NW Junior High campuses.

The opening of the new Calgary Charter Hub athletic complex will play a transformational role in this work by providing dedicated spaces to host home athletic games, tournaments, pep rallies, assemblies, robotics and debate competitions, open houses, professional growth conferences, post-secondary fairs, and other major community events. Combined with continued growth of Ignite and Spark programming, these opportunities will strengthen school spirit, student connection, and a shared culture of excellence while creating greater opportunities for collaboration and engagement across campuses and the broader community.

Provincial Domain: Student Growth & Achievement

Outcome:	**Students will reach their highest academic potential demonstrating strengths in literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy.** **First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students are successful and have a sense of belonging.** **<u>Charter Goals</u>:** • **Students will graduate high school with superior STEM knowledge, skills, and competencies that provide a strong foundation for lifelong learning in a fast-paced global environment.** • **Students will have core STEM knowledge and skills needed to become global innovators and problem solvers.**
Strategies:	• Integrate authentic First Nations, Métis, and Inuit resources across curricula to build understanding of Treaties, Residential Schools, and Indigenous contributions and perspectives. • Implement literacy and numeracy baseline assessments, mid-year benchmarks, and targeted Student Services supports to meet learning needs. • Use blueprint-based common assessments aligned to curricular outcomes and appropriate academic rigor. • Track and analyze student achievement through midterm, PAT, Diploma, and monthly intervention data to inform instructional practices. • Enhance the junior high ELA program across campuses with increased writing opportunities and more rigorous reading expectations. • Pilot new junior high draft curriculum in mathematics, social studies, and physical education/wellness while developing resources for the 2027 rollout. • Strengthen vertical and horizontal alignment of curricular outcomes and frameworks across subject areas. • Leverage Schoology and open gradebooks to improve communication about student learning between staff, students, and parents. • Provide opportunities for students to participate in extracurricular STEM and academic competitions, including Robotics, Debate, Skills Alberta, Math, Science Olympics, and the Calgary Youth Science Fair. • Engage students in emerging technologies and advanced STEM concepts through hands-on option courses. • Increase student and staff digital literacy through implementation of the STEM IA AI mission, vision, and framework.

Measures & Evidence:	• Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Exams. • Alberta Education and Childcare Assurance Survey results. • Percentage of students earning an Alberta High School Diploma within the standard three-year completion timeframe. • Students registered for post-secondary programs in Fall 2026. • Common midterm exams in Junior High core areas. • Common final summative assessments. • Access to emerging technologies, STEM tools and applications. • Guest speakers, industry expertise, leverage internal expertise to build staff capacity. • Student Showcases. • First Nations, Métis, and Inuit resources are readily available for staff and student use. • Successful pilot of SchoolAI in all three campuses.

Provincial Domain: Teaching & Leading

Outcome:	**Teachers and leaders will grow in their professional practice to ensure excellence in teaching and continuous improvement in student learning.**
Strategies:	• Regular Administration and Team Lead meetings. • High Reliability Schools framework – continued focus on Level 1: Safe and Caring Culture and Level 2: Effective Teaching in Every Classroom. • STEM IA Model of Instruction (MOI) serves as the core framework underpinning professional development, TPGPs, classroom observations, and evaluations. • TPGP reviewed three times throughout the year to reflect on growth. • Structured Professional Learning Community (PLC) time ensuring collaboration toward consistent delivery and assessment of learning outcomes as well as improving teaching and learning. • Structured and formal classroom visits once per semester between teachers looking for elements of the MOI and how their peer teacher is doing it. • Attend and present at ResearchEd and Charterverse 2026 Conference to better understand current research in Education. • Administration participation in Calgary Charter School Leadership Network learning series.
Measures & Evidence:	• Alberta Education and Childcare Assurance Survey results. • Administration participation in Calgary Charter School Leadership Network learning series and HRS workshops. • Teachers regularly observe colleagues teaching providing feedback. • School calendar that supports and prioritizes instructional design and leadership (Professional Development days). • Staff evaluations and performance reviews. Alignment with professional growth plans. • Staff debrief of observations identifying practices they will institute into their personal practice. • Staff feedback in survey and conversation reflects on professional growth over the year. • Staff accessing professional development funds to improve their practice. • Staff choose to remain at STEM IA.

Provincial Domain: Learning Supports

Outcome:	**STEM IA will create a culture that supports wellness for students and staff. STEM IA is a safe, caring, welcoming, respectful, and inclusive learning community.** **Charter Goal: Students will be community minded learners who demonstrate courage, resilience, respect, and caring for others.**
Strategies:	• Student services teams at each campus to identify and support academic and mental-health needs for all students. • Extended SPARK time at junior high focusing on interpersonal skills, executive functioning, social emotional learning, and community building. • Monthly Student Success meetings identifying academic and mental health at-risk students along with intervention and support plan. • Interventions for students identified as being at risk on baseline assessment at the beginning, mid-point, and end of year. • One on one support time available during homework club (junior high) and tutorial time (high school). • Collaboration of high school and junior high student services team to successfully transition Grade 9 students. • Launch week first week of school for student orientation and culture building. • Student Services guidance team liaise with universities and support students in university choice, applications, and scholarships. • Student Leadership promoting student belonging and community. • Staff wellness committee organizing regular connection and wellness activities. • Staff meet at least once per year with admin to discuss goals, outcomes, and what support they need. • Biweekly team meetings for staff sharing workload and collaborating on planning and assessment. • Staff resiliency guest speakers and Professional Development. • Administration and student services trained on Comprehensive Threat Assessment as well as ASIST training.
Measures & Evidence	• SOS-Q data is leveraged to identify and address students' social-emotional needs through targeted planning and support. • Alberta Education and Childcare Assurance survey results. • Parent, staff, and student survey results. • Student involvement in clubs and athletics. • Students registered for post-secondary programs in 2026. • Provincial: Assurance survey results. • Student attendance rates. • Staff absenteeism rate for illness.

Provincial Domain: Governance

Outcome:	**STEM Innovation Academy is well governed and well managed.**
Strategies:	• STEM IA Board will approve a budget that is aligned with school priorities. • Board Retreat to facilitate a Strategic Plan to further develop and focus on the future in STEM IA growth and program. • Increase ongoing communication and collaboration with all stakeholders to further the identified Strategic Plan and Priorities. • Encourage parental participation through involvement with their respective School Councils and Board Committees.
Measures & Evidence:	• Provincial: Assurance Survey results. • Annual reporting (budget, education plan, capital plan). • School survey results. • Policies and Administrative Procedures are reviewed on a regular basis. • Letter to Education and Childcare Minister requesting Charter permanency.

Provincial Domain: Local & Societal Context

STEM Innovation Academy is a meaningful and contributing member of Calgary's innovation ecosystem.

Outcome:	**Developing a network with students, parents, staff, and community members to inform our shared vision of being the premier learning community for the design and advancement of innovative Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics education.**

Strategies:	• Critique and revision with experts in the field of study connected to our high school option courses.
	  ○ Quantum Computing (new Locally Developed Course)
	  ○ Statistics 35
	  ○ Artificial Intelligence
	  ○ Engineering Technologies
	  ○ Entrepreneurship & Innovation, Global Economics
	  ○ Marine Biology
	  ○ Foundations of Flight
	• School tours for educators and industry experts.
	• Development of online course strategy and platform with consultant
	• Future Ready and other guest speakers
	• STEM Impact Projects for students: underwater robotics, robotics automation, cube satellite.
	• Program partners such as Cisco, Imperial Oil, WestJet
	• School Council participation.
	• UCalgary & MIT Beaverworks partnerships
	  ○ First year transitions to Schulich school of engineering
	  ○ Hunter Hub partnership for tech disruption
	  ○ Ongoing curriculum development for Beaverworks

Measures & Evidence:	• Frequency of engagements with post-secondary and industry experts. • Grants received and content created for transition from High School to Schulich School of Engineering. • Successful Beta test of STEM Impact Projects. • Online platform developed ready to launch pilot for 2027-28. • Co-designed courses with external industry experts. • Quantitative and qualitative measures from social network tracking tool. • Digital media analytics. • School survey results. • Visitors to our program including other educators and boards. • Students actively share and teach their STEM learning to community members through a variety of events such as Science Fair, Energy Debate, Technovation Girls, FIRST outreach and other outreach opportunities.

Budget 2026-2027

STEM Innovation Academy's approved budget for 2026-2027 may be accessed at STEM Innovation Academy Approved Budget Report 2026-2027.

Facility and Three-Year Capital Plan

STEM Innovation Academy's approved capital plan for 2026-2029 may be accessed at STEM Innovation Academy Facility and Three-Year Capital Plan 2026-2029.