

**Early Education Program
&
Jim Jiwani Autism Academy**

**Three Year Education Plan
2024- 2027**



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1. Message from Director of Education – Corinne Didrikson

For 20 years, Children’s Autism Services has supported children and their families with education programming and specialized in-home services. At the heart of our work is an emotional regulation approach. It is an approach that builds trust, honours each child’s unique needs and creates space for them to thrive and be successful.



Over the years, families have consistently expressed the need for continued support beyond the early education programming. In response, and with the help of a community donor, Children’s Autism Services opened Jim Jiwani Autism Academy in September of 2024. In its inaugural year, the school offered grades 1 and 2, with plans to continue to expand through grade 6 in the coming years.

Jim Jiwani Autism Academy offers families a meaningful choice. It provides a safe, caring space where students are met where they are—emotionally, socially and academically. It fosters a strong sense of belonging, strengthens connections between families and community and serves as a model for inclusive, neurodiversity-affirming education.

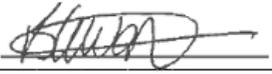
The launch of the school is a significant milestone—one that realizes our long-standing vision to give families a greater choice, support and hope in their child’s educational journey. It reflects our purpose of supporting the journey towards brighter futures for children with autism.



2. Accountability Statement

The Education Plan for Children's Autism Services, commencing August 2024 was prepared under the direction of the Board of Directors in accordance with the responsibilities under the Private Schools Regulation and the Ministerial Grants Regulation. This plan was developed in the context of the provincial government's business and fiscal plans. Leadership 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 Board reviewed and approved the 2024/2027 Education Plan on May 30th, 2025

Board Chair Signature:  Date: May 26th 2025



3. Foundational Statements

Our Vision: Families access high quality supports and services they need, when they need them, to improve their quality of life.

Our Mission: Children's Autism Services provides high-quality supports and services for autistic children and their families. We have dedicated, dynamic and qualified professionals providing family-centered programming. Through specialized services and supports, the children and families in our organization experience high levels of success and continue to meet and exceed their goals. Families are supported and empowered with strategies that will help them cope and prepare them for the future.

Our Values: Family Centered Practice; Current, High Quality, Evidence Based Programming; and Well Trained, Highly Competent Personnel

Family Centered Practice: Families are a vital part of the collaborative process. Respecting, strengthening, educating, and supporting families are all important components of programming. A true partnership that engages families in setting priorities and problem solving will help achieve lasting and positive change. Families are diverse and individual needs of the family, and the child are central in any programming decisions. Family centered services support the connections between children and their entire family and community.

Current, High Quality, Evidence Based Programming: Children's Autism Services of Edmonton is a flexible program and relies on the most recent evidence regarding best practices for children with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities. We use the SCERTS™ framework to guide programming. Functional communication skills and social engagement are a

high priority given the impact these skills have on the development of independence. Functional communication training provides alternatives to challenging behaviour. Children's Autism Services of Edmonton promotes child-initiated interactions and functional meaningful activities. A focus on practical daily living skills is important for long term success.

Well Trained, Highly Competent Personnel: We believe that personnel preparation and an emphasis on learning and development for employees are key components to providing high quality service. Well trained teams of professionals can provide the necessary expertise and guidance required for positive change. Transdisciplinary teams with many different professionals (Teachers, Educational Assistants, Education Consultants, OT, SLP, BC/Psych) provide comprehensive services for children with complex needs. A supportive working environment can help retain employees and sustain a commitment to excellence among the teams. Providing the necessary tools for employees will support their ability to achieve success.





4. Our Story

Based in Edmonton, Children's Autism Services is a leading Northern Alberta not-for-profit organization dedicated to transforming the lives of children with autism and developmental disorders—and the families who love them. Founded in 2004 in response to families seeking more choices and personalized care, our organization was built on the belief that every child deserves services that reflect their unique strengths, challenges and potential.

In 2006, we launched our early education program, providing children with support rooted in compassion, inclusion and emotional regulation. After nearly two decades of walking alongside families in the early years, we expanded this vision in 2024 with the opening of Jim Jiwani Autism Academy—offering specialized programming for students in grades 1 – 2 (with expansion to grade 6 in the coming years). Beginning in September 2025, our school will proudly become a Designated Special Education Private School (DSEPS), reaffirming our long-term commitment to high-quality, individualized education. At every stage, we work to build brighter futures, empowering children, supporting families and creating a more inclusive community for all.

At the heart of our work is a dedicated, dynamic and highly qualified team of professionals who collaborate in a transdisciplinary model. This includes Primary Consultants (PCs), Occupational Therapists (OTs), Speech and Language Pathologists (SLPs), Speech and Language Pathologist Assistants (SLPAs), Behaviour Consultants (BCs), Psychologists, Physical Therapists (PT), Educational Assistants (EAs), Teachers and Educational Consultants (ECs). Together, they deliver integrated, family-centred services that meet children and families at where they are and help them move forward.



Children's Autism Services works as an organization to provide coordinated support to the child and their family. The wide range of coordinated services that Children's Autism Services offers include:

1. **Counselling Services** are provided through registered psychologists for children and families.
2. **Diagnostic Clinic** is comprised of a team of professionals who provide diagnostic testing for children, youth and adults.
3. **Early Education Programming** is provided to children between 2.8 and 6 years of age, who have been diagnosed with a severe disability. The Early Education Program focuses on the development of communication skills, functional play skills, fine and gross motor skills, classroom routines and introduces early learning concepts.
4. **EPIC (Enhances Participation in Community)** provides opportunities for children and youth to engage in physical activity and recreation in their community.
5. **Outreach Programming** supports schools and community organizations to continue to build their Emotional Regulation and neuro-affirming practice. Support is offered through staff training, classroom and individualized consultation, and family involvement. The goal of outreach is to build the capacity of the community around the child, and to engage in ongoing partnership based on community needs in urban, rural and reserve communities across Western Canada.
6. **Respite and Community Aide** provides support and relief to parents by matching trained staff with children and youth receiving services. A respite worker can support the child / youth in their home or in site-based settings.



7. **School Programming** is provided to students at Jim Jiwani Autism Academy for grades 1 – 2 with expansion to grade 6 in the coming years. The school program utilizes an emotional regulation approach to meet the needs of the students where they are at.
8. **Specialized Services and Developmental Support** provide support to families to learn how to incorporate strategies into their everyday routines through regular home visits with members of our Consultant Team. The Specialized Services program aims to enhance the family's feelings of competence and confidence in addressing challenges at home and in the community.
9. **Summer Camps** support children and youth to access morning and afternoon camp activities. Those who attend camps have the opportunity to spend the day engaging with peers, practicing self-help routines, working on fun, themed activities, and building trusting relationships with staff and peers.

Our Sites

We operate out of multiple sites across Edmonton, including the Maier Centre West, Maier Centre South and Jim Jiwani Autism Academy. We also support children in various community daycares, preschool programs, and kindergarten classrooms in Edmonton Public Schools (EPSB) and Edmonton Catholic Schools (ECSD).



CHILDREN'S Autism Services



Our Philosophy

Children's Autism Services believes in having high expectations for diverse learners with appropriate levels of support to help them develop and grow within their community. Our core philosophy is supported through the SCERTS model, a research based emotional regulation approach to learning. It is the responsibility of the adults around the child/student to respond to their unique learning needs. This includes creating an environment that is flexible and designed to support sensory preferences, regulation needs and access to communication opportunities. This also includes the adults changing their interactions and supports they provide to children/students based on their emotional regulation needs. These supports are referred to as transactional supports which include the ways staff interact and engage with children/students, and the ways they make changes to the environment to respond to their needs. Our staff support emotional regulation by ensuring transactional supports are used and that the program is responsive to each student's needs and strengths. Each classroom has a consultant team including a speech language pathologist, occupational therapist and behaviour consultant that provides a depth of expertise in developmental areas targeted within the classroom. Classroom activities are programmed to infuse the interests and strengths of each group of children/students, with high levels of regulation and visual support to engage and regulate the group. Our specialized classrooms have observation rooms that allow parents and consultants to observe classes, to learn about the strategies and supports that are working best for the child/student.



Early Education Program (site based and community)

Children enrolled in site-based, pre-kindergarten or kindergarten programming with us attend five days a week with access to regulation and sensory supports. We also offer parents the option for inclusive community-based programming for children that are attending their community preschool, daycare or kindergarten program.

In addition to this, children and families have access to small group activities outside of class time, and online activities to extend learning opportunities. Each classroom has up to 10 children with developmental needs and is run by a certificated classroom teacher, and 2-3 educational assistants. An education consultant is assigned to these classrooms to support programming and teacher learning.



Throughout the day, children move through a schedule that includes targeted free play activities, circle time, snack, fine and gross motor activities as well as transitions to a movement gym and outdoor play area. Children who come into the early education program make significant progress in their developmental and social goal areas because of the comprehensive program and activities that address individual needs. Children in our program are often overwhelmed in a larger classroom setting, they require frequent access to sensory, and regulation supports and may require a higher level of supervision based on their safety needs.

Children enrolled in community-based programming attend their community daycare, preschool or kindergarten classroom with support from a 1:1 educational assistant. The goal of this program is to support the child to engage in the classroom routines with their peers, while continuing to

provide developmental support in areas required. These children also have a consultant team who makes regular visits to the community classroom to provide ongoing consultation. This consultant team has the same members as the specialized classroom, and they also have an education consultant on the team who works with the classroom teacher and the educational assistant to ensure the IPP goals are being targeted and to work through any barriers throughout the year. The primary goal of community-based programming is to build a strong set of supports to ensure a smooth transition from early education into elementary school. Throughout the year, the early education team works to support parents in feeling more confident in their ability to meet their child's needs and to collaborate with the community school administration team to ensure those needs are met within the school community.

School Program

Jim Jiwani Autism Academy strives to change the way education is provided for diverse learning needs. Through a strong foundation of emotional regulation, students have better access to learning experiences. All students belong and contribute to a supportive, trusting and strengths focused learning environment. Having a program that fits their unique needs, responds to their regulation profiles and focuses on trust and relationship building is an empowering, inclusive experience for these students and their families. This philosophy of best fit means that some students build regulation skills that support them to transition back to their community school; while others will spend a significant amount of time in a specialized program, if this meets their unique needs.



The school offers individualized programming guided by the SCERTS model that is supportive of social communication and emotional regulation development through use of transactional supports that are outlined in the SCERTS model. These supports ensure the educational philosophy is well represented in every classroom. The school includes flexible and sensory safe spaces to support different learning needs, maximizing the learning environment outside of the classrooms. Staff are highly trained and passionate professionals who believe in incorporating all student learning needs into daily activities.

The school program features 3 learning pathways, organized through the SCERTS model. The SCERTS model is an educational framework that focuses on developmental areas including social communication, emotional regulation and transactional supports. The learning pathways are organized through a SCERTS concept called Partner Stages which represent each student's developmental level and matches supports and expectations to ensure meaningful and relevant learning experiences for all students. Students may move from one partner stage to another within a school year, or at other intervals in their school career with the program. When students develop skills that reflect a new partner stage, a discussion on transitioning to another classroom or pathway is established with parents, the classroom team and the leadership team.

Social Partners (pathway 1) do not use words to communicate; they use primarily gestures and objects and have a limited awareness of the environment and the people within it. This pathway works on a modified curriculum, that includes exposure to curricular and non-curricular concepts through hands on, sensory based, play and learning activities. The foundation for this learning pathway is the Alberta core competencies as well as developmental goals that may be targeted. These goals may include building a foundation of



emotional regulation, stabilizing medical, sleep and diet challenges, supporting sensory processing needs, expanding communication through gestures and objects and targeting the increase of active engagement within the school routine.

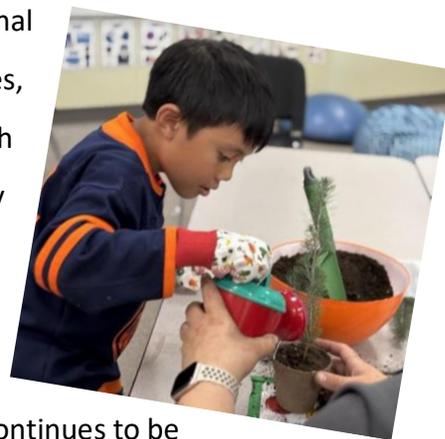
Language Partners (pathway 2) demonstrate emerging language skills. They are starting to use words and short phrases (spoken or represented) to communicate in their environments. They



are also showing an increased awareness of adults in their environment and are communicating for a few different purposes. This pathway works on modified or adapted curriculum, including concepts from the Alberta curriculum and the core competencies. A focus on building increased communication opportunities, highly visual and hands-on learning activities and repetition of concepts are provided by classroom staff. Regulation supports are offered universally and individually, so that students in this pathway can increase their

exposure to understanding emotions and matching regulation strategies to arousal levels. This pathway is exploring ways to expand language and communication, to provide greater access to curricular concepts, with multiple means of representation.

Conversation Partners (pathway 3) demonstrate conversational language skills, using their communication for a variety of purposes, with adults and peers, and are able to share information with spontaneous and functional language. Students in this pathway may be working on grade level curriculum, with adaptations as required. Learning activities can be project based, focusing on building strong peer interaction and social understanding skills through collaborative, interest-based work. Regulation support continues to be



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provided universally and individually with students in this pathway working on building independence in their self-regulation while also receiving mutual regulation from adults and peers.

These 3 pathways may interact within the same classroom environment, where a teaching team may be adapting learning activities to provide access at each different learning stage. Some classrooms are grouped based on partner stages, rather than the chronological age of the students. For example, a grade 3 classroom may have students who are working between all 3 partner stages, or it may be a group of all social partners, depending on student enrollment needs each year. Each student's program is uniquely designed to meet the academic and developmental goals outlined in their IPP document.



5. Priorities

STUDENT GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT

1. Provide all students with high quality academic developmental programming that utilizes an emotional regulation approach

TEACHING AND LEADING

2. Improve the practice of leaders, teachers and support staff through collaborative engagement and professional learning

LEARNING SUPPORTS

3. Build strong connections within the school by helping families connect with each other, take part in school life, and engage with the wider community



STUDENT GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT:

<p>Outcome 1: Provide all students with high quality academic developmental programming that utilizes an emotional regulation approach</p>	
<p>STRATEGIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create calm, sensory-friendly classrooms and non-classroom spaces that support emotional regulation - Embed regulation tools and calming strategies into daily routines and classroom design - Purposefully utilize unique school features (e.g., the loft areas and outdoor forest-school area) as dynamic, flexible learning zones - Determine SCERTS partner stage for each child/student through consultation with families and clinicians - Meet each child/student where they are at while including their interests in hands-on, meaningful learning opportunities and use their partner stage to inform their IPP goals - Provide home learning and communication supports to families tailored to their child’s SCERTS partner stage to extend learning and regulation strategies between home and school - Continue offering a play-based program that utilizes the FLIGHT framework for our preschool children, and adapt/modify the Alberta kindergarten and grades 1 - 3 curriculum to meet diverse developmental needs through individualized planning grounded in their SCERTS partner stage - Embed the three learning pathways (grounded in SCERTS partner stages) to ensure all children/students have access to a rich set of learning experiences that are coherently planned within the kindergarten and grades 1 – 3 Alberta curriculum - Utilize continuous monitoring of the three learning pathways to ensure all children/students have opportunities to build on their previous knowledge, skills and understanding of the kindergarten and grades 1 – 3 Alberta curriculum - Complete an initial SCERTS SAP-O for each student to inform IPP goals for next academic year - Use SCERTS SAP-O Summary to illustrate personal achievements and guide developmental goals on their IPP in 	<p>MEASURES:</p> <p>Provincial Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey Measure of Education Quality - Survey Measure of Student Learning Engagement - Survey Measure of Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments <p>Local Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SCERTS Assessment Process - Staff self-reflection and team reflective practice - Staff survey - Safe Management environscan discussions - Family survey - Observation of teaching and learning - Students’ individual SeeSaw journal illustrating their personal learning journey - Child/Student and Employee Incident Reports data - Review of IPP goal data



the areas of Social Communication and Emotional Regulation

- Generate ongoing comprehensive reports on student development using data points from SAP-O Summaries
- Extend learning into outdoor and natural environments, incorporating nature-based, experiential learning that incorporates Indigenous perspectives
- Support teachers to share regular weekly photos and/or videos of children/students with families, to demonstrate the development of skills across IPP and curricular areas over the course of the year (utilizing the SeeSaw app)
- Create a menu of meaningful, hands-on learning opportunities (linked to the Alberta curriculum) for each partner stage so that families can access opportunities to extend curricular learning at home
- Support teachers to use "I Can" curricular statements to demonstrate children's/student's summary of learning each year



TEACHING AND LEADING:

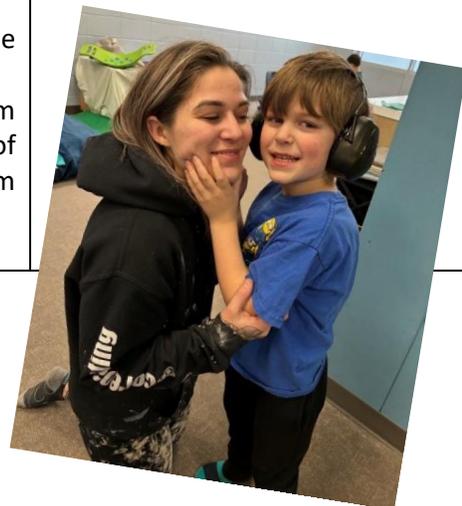
Outcome 2: Improve the practice of leaders, teachers and support staff through collaborative engagement and professional learning	
STRATEGIES:	MEASURES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to build staff skills using the SCERTS model, specifically transactional supports (SCERTS teaching strategies) by introducing a systematic training plan that emphasizes professional learning for all staff (including *EAs, Teachers, OTs, SLPs, SLPAs and BCs) - Increase consistency of curricular knowledge for teaching teams through collaborative learning and mentorship - Explore professional learning opportunities and share these with teaching and support staff to broaden their knowledge of topics like FNMI supports, use of technology/AI, community of practice - Support all staff to access and share regular professional learning opportunities to broaden their knowledge of topics like FNMI supports, curricular knowledge, use of early play skills, use of technology/AI, curricular areas of focus and/or play-based learning - Support staff to effectively label, demonstrate and communicate the use of transactional supports throughout the day and across all curricular activities - Ensure all programming appropriately challenges each child/student and their unique learning profile throughout the day and across all curricular activities 	<p>Provincial Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alberta Education Assurance (AEA) teacher survey (to include EAs as well) - Survey Measure of Education Quality - Survey Measure of Student Learning Engagement <p>Local Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff Performance Management scores (connected to use of transactional supports) are improving - Staff self-reflection and reflective practice - Return rate of staff - An increased number of professional learning opportunities accessed and shared by staff

* Educational Assistants (EAs), Teachers, Occupational Therapists (OTs), Speech and Language Pathologists (SLPs), Speech and Language Pathologist Assistants (SLPAs) and Behaviour Consultants (BCs)



LEARNING SUPPORTS:

<p>OUTCOME 3: Build strong connections within the school by helping families connect with each other, take part in school life, and engage with the wider community</p>	
<p>STRATEGIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement welcoming connection strategies to ensure current and new families have opportunities to connect with each other - Explore approaches to include indirect and direct opportunities for families to connect with each other - Establish a school council to generate goals that target community building with the broader organization; and expand donors and community partnerships to enhance the education program - Schedule family learning opportunities to extend from individual support to include more group learning opportunities (e.g. Lunch and Learn sessions) and increase parent participation in learning opportunities - Engage families in individualized learning opportunities such as guided observations and consultation - Offer a variety of approaches to families to enhance connection opportunities and collect feedback on which are most supportive to family needs - School council schedules and initiates activities over the school year in collaboration with the organization, inviting donors and engaging community partners where possible to enhance the education program - Design family learning opportunities that are reflective of family priorities based on feedback from previous year - Implement yearly school council activities, that enhance the education program - Provide parents with an online portal to access classroom consultation notes, follow up requests and sharing of documents to create ease of access to school and program information through Therabyte software 	<p>MEASURES:</p> <p>Provincial Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alberta Education Assurance (AEA) parent survey (from 2026-2027) - Survey Measure of Access to Supports and Services - Survey Measure of Parent Involvement - Survey Measure of Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments <p>Local Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent Measure of Process of Care (MPOC) survey - Parent survey data collection - Parent attendance at Family Learning Days - Number of guided observation participants (families) - School council feedback - Parent enrolment numbers in Therabyte parent portal access





6. Stakeholder Engagement

Parents are key stakeholders in supporting the success of each child/student at Children's Autism Services. A family centered approach is used organization wide, which sees the parents and the professionals in true partnership, as equals through the learning and support process. Parents are the experts on their children, they spend a significant amount of time teaching, supporting and caring for their children, they are a wealth of knowledge that our team lean on when learning about a child or building new strategies for learning. As a partnership, the parents and teams work together to create IPP documents to outline family and school priorities, including the child/student in this process. Throughout the school year, parents are encouraged to use observation rooms that allow them to observe their child in class and participate in guided observation with consultant teams to look at strategies and supports that may be working well and could be transitioned to the home setting, or vice versa.

Parents have regular access to workshops and small learning groups throughout the year. This is an opportunity to learn about topics such as regulation, sleep, language development etc. and to meet other parents who are going through similar experiences within their child's educational journey. They also have access to family events throughout the year such as our Practice Trick-Or-Treat, family Christmas event and family BBQ.

As part of our accredited-funded independent school, our school council works together to enhance school programming and engagement with families at Jim Jiwani Autism Academy. The council is also involved in fundraising and activities for families.

Public and Independent Schools in and around Edmonton are important stakeholders for our programs. These community partners are important resources to ensure every child has a



program that best meets their needs. We have developed partnerships where we support children in their community kindergarten programs, deliver professional learning opportunities to school staff and work together to provide partnerships for some of their students to attend our school program. It is important for us to collaborate with this stakeholder group to continue to explore and expand education options and environments available to our children/students to support their learning needs.

Children's Autism Services participates in a Community of Practice called Children's Autism Collaboration Team (CACT), a group hosted by Autism Edmonton that brings together representatives from schools, disability services and autism service providers to discuss successes, best practices and barriers faced by each. Learning together and building a strong rapport is a goal that Children's Autism Services would like to keep fostering as it moves into the school aged community.

Alberta Education along with other ministries such as Children's Services and Community and Social Services (Disability Services branch) are important stakeholders. These stakeholders require regular communication and monitoring to meet their standards. They provide guidance and support in ensuring programming and operations are aligned with legislation and funding requirements.

AISCA is another stakeholder who provides professional certification evaluation services. They have also connected us with other programs to support our ongoing growth and development.

Post-Secondary Education institutions such as NorQuest College and MacEwan University are community stakeholders that we have established relationships with through practicum placements, classroom learning opportunities and engagement at resource and job fairs. Training



and supporting post-secondary students provides engagement in career development and establishing best practices in autism support.

7. Budget Highlights 2024-2025

Children's Autism Services of Edmonton				
Actuals Sep 2024-Aug 2025				
	2024/25	24/25 %	2023/24	Difference
REVENUE SUMMARY				
Alberta Education	\$ 6,036,644	97%	\$ 4,871,356	\$ 1,165,288
Tuition Fees	\$ 208,500	3%	\$ -	\$ 208,500
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 6,245,144	100%	\$ 4,871,356	\$ 1,373,788
EXPENDITURE SUMMARY				
Instruction	\$ 5,106,289	82%	\$ 4,393,272	\$ 713,017
Operations & Maintenance	\$ 331,440	5%	\$ 97,873	\$ 233,567
Transportation	\$ 349,973	6%	\$ 215,219	\$ 134,754
Board and System Administration	\$ 241,463	4%	\$ 58,754	\$ 182,709
Other Admin Costs	\$ 208,500	3%	\$ -	\$ 208,500
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 6,237,665	100%	\$ 4,765,118	\$ 1,472,547

Note: a complete set of the AFS is available upon request by calling the Finance Office at (780) 495-9235

