

FROM ME TO YOU

FEBRUARY 2023

VOLUME 26, ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2023

IT'S 2023 AND I FEEL THAT IS ABOUT TO BE OUR BEST YEAR EVER!

Take a leap of faith and begin this wondrous new year by believing.

Sarah Ban Breathnach

The month of January has flown by. The days are getting longer. As we come to Third Schools' February Teacher Convention/Family Day Weekend break, I am reminded of our successes to date as reported to you in my December 2022 *FMTY*. Since our return from the Winter Holiday:

♦ January 2023 startup went smoothly, with a few ripples in our Transportation Department and a mini tsunami in our **ursa** Arise Christian program

♦ February 2023 also saw a personnel matter arise in LYNX Cochrane that is being worked through

♦ Inquires continue daily for Third Academy, **ursa**, and LYNX topping 400 since September startup

♦ A baker's dozen of new students have been registered in Third Academy/**ursa**/LYNX classrooms now, mid year

♦ We welcome new staff—Susan Alexander, Teacher, Giuliana Perez and Kevin Martin, Instructional Assistants, and Peter Samuel, Bus Driver—to our teams

♦ An **ursa** Arise Christian program Town Hall is called for Wednesday 8 Feb 2023

♦ Parents will start to receive Alberta Education Assurance Surveys in the mail this week

♦ Application forms for 2023-2024 will be ready by the end of this week

* * *

I feel my hand is firmly on the rudder, but my mind is in the future. Our successes for the 2022-2023 school year will have ramifications moving forward and I must plan for the future:

♦ We are offering 45 new seats between Third Academy West and East

♦ We are offering 100 new seats in **ursa** Distance and Shared

♦ **ursa** Parent Directed seats will be capped at 900, so we

will offer only 200 more seats in total for 2023-2024

♦ We are offering 50 new seats in LYNX West and East including Kindergarten and Grades 1-9

* * *

Why do we need to carefully manage our growth in this manner? There are space constraints, for sure. But more importantly, growth must not interfere with our ability to provide high quality programs. This is the path to continued success.

I realize that it is a lot to consider and for some it may feel too early to plan for 2023-2024. But based on the volume of inquiries and tours, most seats in our system will be filled by the end of February 2023. I urge our continuing families to re-register now.



Sunil Mattu, Head of Schools

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THIRD SCHOOLS



THIRD
ACADEMY



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VISION

Student Success

MISSION

As an independent school system, we inspire through innovation in providing access to a world class education – inclusive, student centered, holistic, best practice informed, respecting parental choice such that we indeed assure the families we serve.

PILLARS

- * Visionary Leadership
- * Accepting of All
- * Respect
- * Instructional Excellence
- * Healthy Relationships
- * Mind follows Heart leading to Action
- * Family and Community
- * Holistic
- * Continuous Improvement



THIRD SCHOOLS: DUAL ACCREDITATION

Third Schools holds dual accreditations: first by Alberta Education and second by COGNIA.

Alberta Education is recognized both within Canada and throughout the world as having exceptionally high standards. In fact, Alberta schools consistently rank in the top five in educational outcomes compared with a host of OECD nations according to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/> results. Third Schools was first accredited by Alberta Education in 1997.

COGNIA is a global educational accrediting agency, based in Atlanta GA, USA. They've been elevating 'teaching and learning' for 125 years. Currently, COGNIA's reach is wide: 85 countries, 36,000 institutions, 5,000,000 teachers, and 25,000,000 students globally. For more information about Cognia, visit <https://www.cognia.org/>.

We sought COGNIA accreditation

for two reasons. While we know our standards as a school system are high, we wanted to be evaluated by independent experts familiar with the very best in education. Second, COGNIA shares our commitment to continuous improvement. While we are good at what we do, there always can be room for improvement.

After 3 years of hard work, in June 2021 Third Schools became the first Canadian school to be awarded COGNIA's Education Service Agency (ESA) accreditation. This is a significant achievement that has been accomplished through the combined efforts of staff, students, parents, Board members, and Friends of Third Schools in the community at large. We're proud of this accomplishment.

What does it mean to be recognized by a global leader in education? Third Schools is world class. Not only here in Alberta, but everywhere.



FROM ME TO YOU FEBRUARY 2023

URSA: SHINING BRIGHT IN 2023-2024

ursa has always been about providing parents and students with educational choices and opportunities. We have a passion for thinking outside of the box to support families that don't fit into narrow categories imposed by other systems. We are proud to be independent and advance the public good through our programming and supports. We're delighted to be able to do so not only in Alberta, but also to share the gift of learning with students worldwide. We're here to support learners whether they be parent directed, shared responsibility, or distance education students.

Our Distance Education continues to build its program offerings to achieve an Alberta High School diploma for students across the globe.

Exploratory junkets in April 2022 to Panama and Costa Rica resulted in the launch of **ursa** Distance International and our first enrollments in the Spanish New World. This will be followed up with junkets to Texas and Peru in the next few months. The goal: to establish program entry points from Tierra Del Fuego to Fort Mac.

We are also working to provide Distance Online learning opportunities for students in India and West African nations.

Third Schools is part of EduCanada, a joint international education initiative developed by Global Affairs Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada (CMEC). <https://www.educanada.ca>

It's a noble cause, folks, helping to make this world a better place, one student at a time.

Tracy Gilluley, Principal **ursa**



"We are proud to be independent and advance the public good through our programming and supports. We're delighted to be able to do so not only in Alberta, but also to share the gift of learning with students worldwide."

Tracy Gilluley, Principal **ursa**



GOVERNANCE MATTERS: THIRD SCHOOLS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Third Schools' Board of Directors is the body corporate and is responsible as the Operator of the Authority. This is a strategic policy driven Board, with day-to-day operations delegated to the Head of Schools. The Board meets regularly and at the call of the Chair to conduct its business, including: meeting regulatory requirements including submissions, receiving and approving reports, both administrative and financial, and conducting the Board's business in general.

Our Board is Chaired by Linda **McKay-Panos**. Ms. McKay-Panos is a former English teacher and lawyer. She currently serves as the Executive Director of the Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre and is a professor in the University of Calgary's Faculty of Law. Both her son (previously) and grandson (currently) attend Third Academy.

Zeljko Puric is the Board Secretary/Treasurer. Mr. Puric is a Registered Psychologist, with 45 years of experience both here in Alberta and in the former Yugoslavia. Our first Board Chair going back to 1997, Mr. Puric represents continuity in governance. He has recently retired, having served as Third Academy's Chief Psychologist for 20 years.

The balance of the Directors: **David Beresford**, Entrepreneur, Oil & Gas Technology; **Manu Chugh**, Architect; **Shannon McKenna**, Accountant; **Dean White**, Engineer and Founder of Capstone Engineering Academy; **Keith Mhlanga**, Farmer & Safety Officer; **Tim Lloyd**, Geologist, Oil & Gas.; **Eva White**, Lawyer/Human Resources, Defense; **James Roberts**, Home Inspections.

The Board is a volunteer group who meets regularly. The Board is representative, diverse, and presents with the skills and attributes to fulfill all the obligations of governance.

The sole employee of the Board - to whom all day-to-day operations of the system have been delegated - is **Sunil Mattu**, the Head of Schools. Sunil completed his IB program at Atlantic College before attending the London School of Economics and the University of Calgary's Master of Teaching program. As an original member of the 1997 founding staff of Third Academy, Sunil helped establish the dream of Third Schools from the very beginning. The Head of Schools, who amongst other responsibilities is responsible for all hiring, believes that 'our children deserve good people in their lives'. In turn, 'good people make good teachers'.



FROM ME TO YOU FEBRUARY 2023

LYNX CONTINUES TO EXPAND FOR 2023-2024

“Where Outdoors is In”

No classroom, no desks, no walls if you so choose. Instead of learning about the wetlands in a textbook, LYNX Calgary West and LYNX Cochrane students are exploring real ponds, scooping up specimens, and studying live creatures. Students experience learning in a real world, kinesthetic approach. By connecting to the land, they also gain respect, appreciation, and understanding of their environment and our place within it.

All programming is ‘nature inspired’. We also support parental choice. That means there are multiple pathways to LYNX: fully teacher-directed or shared responsibility, onsite or in the field, Kindergarten, and Grades 1 through 9. We will also offer LYNX East ECS, a Christian faith based ‘nature inspired’ program at our Third Schools East campus for September 2023.

Our classroom is the ‘great outdoors’. Our students are ‘living, breathing, and moving’ every day. Plus all students have access to Arts programming on site at Third Schools East campus every Wednesday.

We’re working on continually improving our programming. One thing we do know: our LYNX students are happy, healthy, and learning!

Contact Joe Smith, Principal LYNX, to find out more and how to apply.

josmith@thirdschools.ca



FROM ME TO YOU FEBRUARY 2023

HELP US BUY OUR NEW THIRD SCHOOLS EAST CAMPUS

Not only have we made considerable leasehold improvements to our Third Schools West campus over the past few years, but the plan is to replace all the flooring throughout the foyer, stairwells, hallways, and classrooms for September 2023 start up. Can't wait to see what the interior designers come up with!

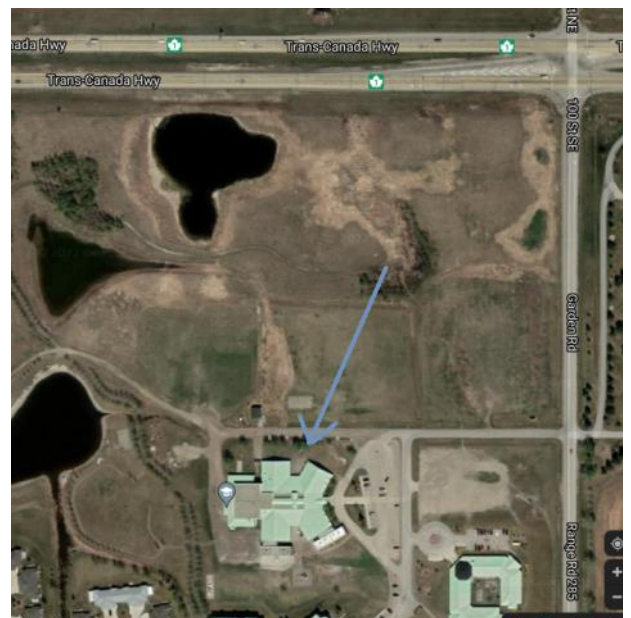
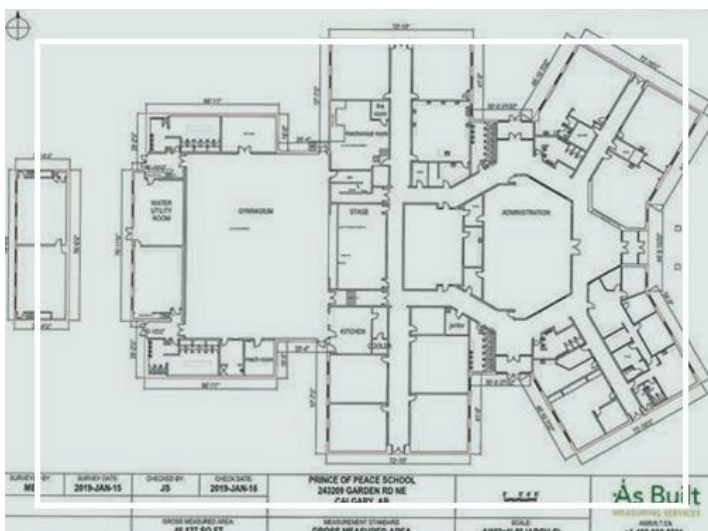
At the same time, we are blessed to have moved into our new Third Schools East campus. It's an excellent facility that supports quality programming for Third Academy, **ursa**, LYNX, and **ursa** Arise Christian program students.

Next step: buy it!

- Why remain at the mercy of a Landlord?
- The price is right at \$5.35MM
- The location is strategically placed, with ready access to NE and SE Calgary communities as well as Airdrie, Kathryn, Conrich, Strathmore, Chestermere, Indus, Langdon, and Okotoks.
- Portables can be attached to the South wings of the school building to both increase office, counseling, and classroom spaces
- The competition standard gymnasium allows us to ramp up our Physical Literacy program including Intramural Sports leagues
- The 9 acre parcel of land means that there is potential for future development

Contact Sunil Mattu, Head of Schools, now to help make this dream come true. smattu@thirdschools.ca

*Contact Sunil Mattu, Head of Schools,
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smattu@thirdschools.ca*



FROM ME TO YOU FEBRUARY 2023

OUR NEW & NATURE INSPIRED CALGARY WEST PLAYGROUND

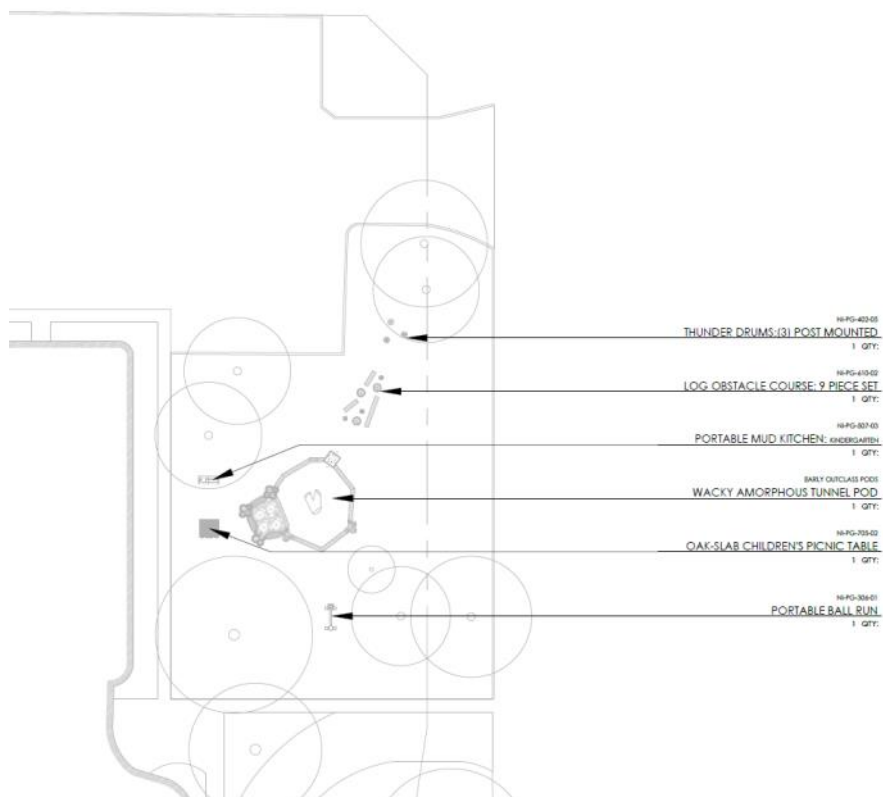
We're excited that our playground equipment for Third Schools West Campus was installed in the Spring of 2022. Most importantly, our kids love it too! You should see them play!

Our playground equipment was sourced from all natural materials and then custom manufactured. It's designed to connect students to their environment, stimulate their senses, and foster creative play.

A site plan is to the right. The equipment is placed directly in front of our wing of the building. This location provides natural shade from the trees as well as the building. The playground is fenced for safety.

The playground, along with a newly installed outdoor classroom, is available to all Third Schools students — Third Academy West & LYNX West ECS students — on site at Third Schools West Campus.

We also look forward to sharing our playground with students attending Lady Fatima Academy, a new startup for September 2023.



HANDCRAFTED.
Nature's
INSTRUMENTS
• FOR YOUR PLAYGROUND •



FROM ME TO YOU FEBRUARY 2023

RUN SANTA RUN! 2022: A GREAT SUCCESS!

Many thanks to the 100 or so participants and volunteers that made Run Santa Run! 2022 a success. While our very own Scott Finney (High School Teacher, Third Academy East) once again came in first on the 10 km run, everyone was a winner in this event!

We were delighted to see so many Third Academy, LYNX, and **ursa** students, parents, and staff come out early on a cold December morning. While the weather didn't cooperate, Santa was generous this year. Thank you donors! We raised over \$10,000! The funds are earmarked to support students in all Third Schools programs.

A big shout out goes to our Run Santa Run! organizer, Melanie Isabelle, and all of the "elves" who assisted her. All of these efforts by our parents, students, staff, and Friends of Third Schools go a long way to support our students. Your participation—whether it is through fundraisers like Run Santa Run!, our casinos and bingos, and other fundraising events or doing volunteer work at one of our campuses—really helps make a difference. Stay tuned for more exciting projects to participate in!



FROM ME TO YOU SUNIL MATTU'S NEWSLETTER

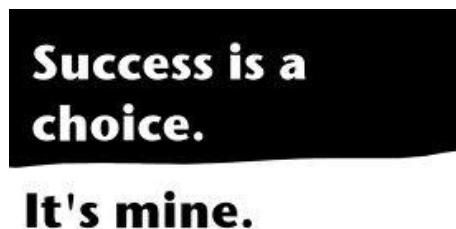
Third Schools
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Bragg Creek T0L 0K0
Phone 403-288-5335

Need More Information?
Contact Sunil Mattu, Head of Schools
smattu@thirdschools.ca

- Fully accredited by Alberta Education and COGNIA
- Third Academy: 2 Calgary schools serving special needs students in Grs 1-12
- Parent directed home education through **ursa** Parent Directed Grs 1-12 plus Little Bears for ECS
- Shared responsibility home education through **ursa** Shared Grs 1-12
- Fully teacher directed distance education through **ursa** Distance Grs 1-12
- **ursa** Distance International Grs 1-12
- 'Nature inspired' programming through LYNX and LYNX ECS Kindergarten plus Grs 1-9
- A non-profit, charitable organization
- Doing whatever it takes to help your student succeed



"Third Schools gives hope... hope for kids, families, and our collective futures."
Dr. S. Lal. Mattu, Third Academy
Ambassador-at-Large



FOLLOW US ON THE WEB!

Be sure to visit our websites. We now have four!

<https://thirdschools.ca>

<https://thirdacademy.ca>

<https://goursa.education>

<https://lynx.education>

We encourage you to "spread the word" about how we are helping students succeed by posting links to our websites on your social media channels.

