

# FROM ME TO YOU MARCH 2024

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Sunil Mattu's Newsletter

## VERNAL EQUINOX 2024: STREAMING TOWARD SPRING



This year Tuesday 19 March 2024 marks the first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere as the sun crosses the celestial equator moving north. Spring is a time of rebirth. Despite Balzac **Billie's forecast, I feel that** the cold days of winter will soon be behind us. We can look forward with delight to putting our cold weather gear away and welcome the activities of spring.

Spring is no less a busy time of year than the Fall and Winter behind us. We greet its arrival with joy but also a degree of anticipation. With Spring comes the time to plant new seeds.

In my office, my hand is firm-

ly on the rudder but my mind is in the future. Spring is the time we plant new seeds. It will, as the months before since September, be a busy time. I am looking forward with joy and anticipation of new things to come.

Schools have seasons and

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## FROM ME TO YOU MARCH 2024

### STREAMING TOWARD SPRING

cycles too. January was time to re-start and think about 2024-2025 ahead of us. February was focused on Professional Development, so that we continue on our journey of improvement in serving our communities. March, as I have said, is about planting new seeds for 2024-2025.

We are working to grow:

- LYNX ECS Calgary with more nature inspired children
- LYNX Grades 1-9 Calgary/ Cochrane and new for 2024-2025 an Okotoks program
- Third Academy ECS as STREAMS ECS is folded under our wing
- ursa Global Online School for International students as we give students in Latin American countries access to an affordable, world class, and safe pathway to an Alberta High School Diploma.
- InBus to serve Independent Schools across Calgary

Some things will change as we grow. But fundamentally our vision remains **'student success'**. And in all our schools– Third Academy, ursa, and LYNX– it remains **'education your child's way'**.

Hurrah!

*“March, as I have said, is about planting new seeds for 2024-2025.”*



Sunil Mattu  
Head of Schools



## ALBERTA EDUCATION ASSURANCE MEASURE SURVEY (AEAM SURVEY)

Third Schools is accredited by both Alberta Education and Cognia. Both organizations demand that all schools operating under their authority meet world class quality standards.

Alberta Education, through its annual Assurance Measure survey, holds Alberta schools accountable and seeks to provide assurance to the communities we serve. As part of our strategic Education Plans and Annual Education Results Reports, Third Schools also provides local measures to further support accountability and assurance.

Cognia— a US based global accrediting agency with 40K institutions in 90+ countries with more than 11M students under its auspices— is focused on a continuous improvement model. That means using feedback to measure and drive improvement such that it benefits every student in our independent school system. Third School is distinguished as the sole Canadian school system to have gained Cognia ESA (system) accreditation.

We need all parents, students, and teachers to complete the Alberta Education Assurance Measure Survey (AEAM survey) now.

Parents will have received in the mail, over the past month or so, information and instructions to complete online surveys. Your feedback is valuable. I ask all parents to please take some time out of your busy day to complete and submit your survey on or before the deadline of Thursday 29 February 2024.

Teachers and students will be completing their surveys over the next few days so that we collect feedback to satisfy accountability and assurance objectives.

You should also know that we use the AEAM surveys to inform our Educa-

tion Plans. More specifically, we are driving improvement outcomes in:

- Citizenship
- Student Learning Engagement
- Educational Quality
- Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments
- Access to Supports and Services
- Parental Involvement

We are also committed to embracing FMNI perspectives in the spirit of Truth & Reconciliation.

If you need help to complete your survey, please contact Samantha Mackelson [smackelson@thirdschools.ca](mailto:smackelson@thirdschools.ca) or call (403) 288-5335 and select #1.

***“I ask all parents to please take some time out of your busy day to complete and submit your survey on or before the deadline of Thursday 29 February 2024.”***



## STUDENT REGISTRATION FOR THE 2024-2025 ACADEMY YEAR

There is significant desire amongst Alberta families for choice in education. Third Schools has been satisfying this desire since 1997.

The 2024-2025 registration cycle is upon us. Third Schools offers all seats to current families first. Below, you will find the deadlines to submit your application. After the deadline dates, we will start offering any empty seats to new applicants. Once all seats are filled, we will create a waiting list.

Please note that demand for Third Academy, LYNX, and ursa seats for the 2024-2025 academy year is extremely high.

Also, please note that we have been upgrading our application processes so that we can go paperless and you can complete and submit your **student's application over SchoolCloud**. I ask everyone to please forgive technical glitches as we upgrade the application process system wide.

When the upgrades are completed, parents will receive an email directly from SchoolCloud with log in information. There will be a link to log in and create a password protected account (if you do not have an active account already). Log in. **From there it's a step by step process, hopefully pretty straight forward.**

If parents DO NOT receive their login email please contact Renee Rideout, Registrar, [rrideout@thirdschools.ca](mailto:rrideout@thirdschools.ca) for help.

If parents DO get the login email from SchoolCloud and still have issues with the application, please contact SchoolCloud first on [schoolcloud@thirdschools.ca](mailto:schoolcloud@thirdschools.ca) for help. After that, of course we are here to help.

Our current deadlines for registration are:

Third Academy: Register on SchoolCloud Deadline for current families 11 March 2024

Third Academy ECS (formerly STREAMS ECS): Register Now paper application Deadline for current families 11 March 2024

ursa Parent Directed: Applications open 22 March 2024 on SchoolCloud Deadline for current families 29 March 2024



ursa Shared: Applications open 22 March 2024 on SchoolCloud Deadline for current families 29 March 2024

ursa Distance: Applications open 22 March 2024 on SchoolCloud Deadline for current families 29 March 2024

LYNX ECS: Register Now paper application Deadline for current families 29 March 2024

LYNX Calgary, Cochrane, and Okotoks: Grades 1-9: Applications open 22 March 2024 on SchoolCloud Deadline for current families 29 March 2024



FROM ME TO YOU MARCH 2024

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: PART OF OUR COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

It is a joint responsibility of Third Schools and each staff member individually to engage in professional development activities designed to ultimately benefit our students. Teacher excellence means programming excellence. That means system pd days and campus pd days on Wednesdays and scattered throughout the year.

We hope the entire Third Academy community enjoyed the Family Day holiday on February 19th. The Family Day weekend provides a wonderful opportunity to bring family– nuclear and extended- together. At the very least, it is time to spend with one another and hopefully create positive memories.

While Third Schools students had a break from their studies over the previous week, it was not an extended holiday for Third Schools staff.

Our staff attended:

- Red Cross Basic First Aid training
- Calgary Region Teacher Convention
- Alberta Independent Schools Association Teacher Convention, Edmonton and Calgary
- Digital Learning Annual Conference 2024, Austin TX

There are also various professional development opportunities that staff have access to during the course of the academic year. These are approved on a case by case basis within budget parameters. In developing their Professional Growth Plans, staff work in consultation with their leadership.

Our time commitment to high quality professional development is a significant investment in our staff and ultimately our students. The level of commitment definitely sets Third Schools apart from other school systems across Alberta.

While our students would appreciate having a

week off from school in mid-February, they truly benefit every school day by having highly trained, current, world-class educators supporting them on every step of their educational journey. And for our staff, new learning can be so much fun!



## INBUS: TRANSPORTING OUR STUDENTS SAFELY AND ON TIME

Almost 150 Third Academy and LYNX ECS students are daily riders on a system that provides service to many communities in Greater Calgary and beyond including Airdrie, Cochrane, Langdon, Chestermere, and Okotoks.

InBus Transportation Manager Tammy Morton-Renyk and her team of professional school bus drivers have been doing a super job getting students from point A to B and beyond every school day this year. I am pleased to see significant improvements in system reliability since our restart in January 2024.

Our Telus fleet tracking system shows that, with very few exceptions, our school buses are running on time. And when there are delays—usually resulting from traffic, weather or unanticipated mechanical issues—our transportation staff always tries to do their best to accommodate.

**InBus doesn't just provide daily home to/from school service.** We have a Calgary Transit connector bus that links up with both their MAX and Access services. The entire Third Schools community benefits from InBus as our yellow buses are also used for field trips, 'nature inspired' programming, and other educational adventures.

Third Schools made a substantial investment in our bus system by adding three new school buses for this academic year. This is part of our ongoing commitment to modernize our fleet and grow InBus.

So please, if you see or talk to Tammy or a member of her team, be sure to take time to thank them for their commitment to our students. They are out there in the cold, rain, and wind as early as 5:30am in the morning and as late as 6:00pm in the evening to make sure that our kids have a safe and enjoyable ride every school day.

***"InBus Transportation Manager Tammy Morton-Renyk and her team of professional school bus drivers have been doing an super job..."***



## THIRD SCHOOLS WEST CAMPUS

Some of our families might not be aware that Third Schools has two Calgary campuses. In addition to our East Campus at 400 Prince of Way, we operate our West Campus in the Glenbrook community at 3311 49 St SW.

Opening the West Campus was a critical component of our COVID strategy that served the Third Schools community well. We now utilize the West Campus for our LYNX ECS and LYNX Calgary onsite programs.

Third Schools has made a substantial investment in the West Campus including the installation of a nature inspired playground as well significant improvements to the classroom and common areas including new flooring throughout.

Our stay at the current West Campus site was only intended as a temporary arrangement. While the location has served us well, there are many factors that make it unsuitable for long term occupancy as a school site. We are actively exploring new sites to reestablish LYNX programming in the West.

As with our move into the East Campus, our goal is to find a property that will best serve the needs of our LYNX West communities—LYNX ECS, LYNX Calgary, and LYNX Cochrane—into the future.

Further information about a new site for our West Campus will be shared with our families as it becomes available.



*FROM ME TO YOU*  
**SUNIL MATTU'S NEWSLETTER**

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Need More Information?  
 Contact Sunil Mattu, Head of Schools  
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- Fully accredited by Alberta Education and COGNIA
- Third Academy: Serving special needs students in Grades 1-12
- **'Nature inspired' programming** through LYNX and LYNX ECS Kindergarten plus Grades 1-9
- Parent directed home education through ursa Parent Directed Grades 1-12 plus Little Bears Kindergarten
- Shared responsibility home education through ursa Shared Grades 1-12
- Fully teacher directed distance online education through ursa Distance Grades 1-12
- ursa Global Online School for International students Grades 9-12
- 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  
 Founder & Ambassador-at-Large

*We believe that how a person thinks, affects how they feel, and hence how they act.*

**Success is a choice.  
 It's mine.**

**FOLLOW US ON THE WEB!**

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

<https://thirdschools.ca>

<https://thirdacademy.ca>

<https://lynx.education>

<https://goursa.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.

