



Lethbridge
SCHOOL DIVISION

**PROPOSED BOUNDARY
CHANGES
FOR
WEST LETHBRIDGE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Frequently Asked Questions

- **Decision Timeline and next steps:**

- **When will a final decision be made regarding the school boundaries and program changes?** The Board of Trustees will make a decision on or before November 30th, 2024. This decision will be communicated to the community and parents of impacted schools and programs.
- **What are the next steps after the Board of Trustees approve a new boundary change?** New school boundary maps will be created, and families impacted by the change in boundaries will receive notification. The new boundary maps will be used to determine transportation eligibility and the Division will work with our transportation provider to coordinate busing. This will also include determining the best transportation solutions for Spanish Bilingual families (see Transportation and Access below).

- **Student Stay Duration: Can current students remain at Coalbanks Elementary until Grade 5, or will they have to move schools in 2025?** Students who continue enrolment in the Spanish Bilingual Program will be required to move to West Coulee Station Elementary School for the 2025-2026 school year. The Spanish Bilingual Program will no longer be offered at Coalbanks Elementary School, and it is not feasible to host the program at two locations and maintain program cohesion. For students in Nicholas Sheran or Mike Mountain Horse, see Exemption Option on next page.

- **Consideration of Future Schools: How does the school board consider future schools to avoid frequent boundary adjustments?** The Division reviews city planning and development information, census data and demographic data to consider areas of growth that may impact one of more schools. The Division prepares a business case for a new school(s) in the Three-Year Capital Plan and submits a request to Alberta Education to fund the requested new school(s). The Province of Alberta through Alberta Education and Alberta Infrastructure review all capital requests within the province and determine funding priorities. Capital announcements are normally made by the Province with the spring budget, in February or March.

- **Staffing for Spanish Program: How will the Spanish bilingual program be staffed if it is moved to another school?** There will be no change to the current staffing process. The Human Resources department has a process in which they collaborate with school administration to find staff to meet a school's programming needs. These staffing needs may be addressed by current staff within the Division or when required, other recruitment efforts to find staff for a school.

- **Transportation and Access: Will transportation be provided for students who are attending the Spanish Bilingual Program at West Coulee Station Elementary School in West Lethbridge as well as from the south or north side if there is interest in the Spanish Bilingual program?** A transportation solution will be provided for all students attending the Spanish Bilingual Program at West Coulee Station Elementary School and G.S. Lakie Middle School beginning in 2025-2026, who meet the distance requirements to be eligible for transportation, which is 1 Km or greater at kindergarten to grade 6 and 2 km for grades 7 - 8. Where feasible a yellow school bus will be provided as the transportation solution. Where there may not be enough ridership for a yellow school bus, such as North or South Lethbridge, another solution may be available such as a City of Lethbridge Transit pass or a parent provided transportation arrangement. As of the 2024-2025 school year, the Division does not charge a transportation fee. Information on bus routes will be available in August 2025.



Note transportation eligibility is >1 km from residence to school for K to grade 6 and >2 km for grade 7 to 12.

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Frequently Asked Questions

- **Capacity and Infrastructure: Why doesn't the school board build larger schools to accommodate future growth instead of adding portables?** The school division has recently been able to advocate for schools that have a larger core capacity and have the ability to accommodate additional students as the school grows through modular classrooms. This is the case with the new elementary school in West Lethbridge, West Coulee Station Elementary School. This school is built to a core capacity of 900 students, which means that the gymnasium, learning commons, gathering space, hallways etc., are constructed to support 900 students. The school will open with classrooms to support 600 students with the ability to add 12 modular classrooms as enrolment grows to support 900 students. In the Division's Three-Year Capital Plan, another 900-student elementary school has been requested for the south end of West Lethbridge and a 1500 student high school.
- **Exemption Option: What is the exemption option in the proposal and how does that impact my child?** An exemption option considers providing the option for a student that is impacted by the boundary changes to complete a grade(s) at their current school rather than changing to the new boundary school. In the case of the proposed boundary changes, students who will be going into grade 5 at either Nicholas Sheran or Mike Mountain Horse, and impacted by the boundary changes, will have the option to remain at their current school. The exemption is also offered to the siblings of these students, for the 2025-2026 school year only. If a parent wishes to keep their child in the school for grade 5 and siblings and not move to the new designated boundary school, they do this with the understanding that transportation will not be provided. Parents will be notified of the process to register students in their new designated boundary school or to request to enroll under the exemption option with their current school. ***There will be no exemption option for the Spanish Bilingual Program as the program is relocating to West Coulee Station Elementary School.***
- **Spanish Bilingual Program Viability: Will the Spanish Bilingual Program remain a viable program if families living in Copperwood choose to switch to the English program?** Approximately 61% of the students in the Spanish Bilingual Program reside in the Coalbanks Boundary which is the community of Copperwood. Certainly, there will be families that may choose to switch to the English Program and not move to West Coulee Station Elementary School for the Spanish Bilingual Program. It is possible that there may be a dip in enrolment in the program in 2025-2026. The Spanish Bilingual Program has been a program that has attracted students from west, north, and south Lethbridge. It is our belief that even with some families choosing to remain at Coalbanks, due to the quality teaching and cultural programs provided in the program, the Spanish Bilingual Program will continue to be viable into the future.
- **Support for children with exceptionalities: I have a child with exceptionalities and would have to transfer to a new elementary school. I am worried that this transition will be difficult for them. What can I do?** The school will have the same support levels as any other elementary school (Learning Support Teacher, EA support, access to special services and counselling). Because an Instructional Support Program is individualized, your child's program will continue at the new site. If you have any concerns or questions please book a meeting with the Principal (or the Inclusive Education department) and they can support you and your child in this transition. It is important to note that West Coulee Elementary is a two level building and has an elevator that students with mobility challenges will be able to access.

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Frequently Asked Questions

- **Middle School Zoning Impact: How will changes to elementary school boundaries affect middle school zoning and student transitions?** Middle School Boundaries will not change. The change in boundaries has minimal impact on transition to middle school. Spanish Bilingual students regardless of residence will attend G.S. Lakie Middle School for the middle school Spanish Bilingual Program. See the chart below to see how elementary schools feed to middle school.

Elementary School Boundary	Middle School	Notes
Coalbanks	Senator Joyce Fairbairn	
Dr. Probe	Senator Joyce Fairbairn	
Nicholas Sheran	Senator Joyce Fairbairn	*Varsity Village south of Columbia Blvd
	G.S. Lakie	*Varsity Village north of Columbia Blvd, Heritage Heights and Ridgewood
Mike Mountain Horse	G. S. Lakie	
West Coulee Station	G. S. Lakie	Spanish Bilingual will also attend G.S. Lakie

*refer to middle school boundary map for exact street transition

- **Options and Alternatives:**
 - **Why was the option (option 1) to split up the Coalbanks boundary not recommended instead of moving the Spanish Bilingual Program?** The survey and community feedback clearly indicated that moving the Spanish Bilingual Program was preferable to splitting a community.
 - **Why was the option (Option 2) to move the Spanish Bilingual Program to Nicholas Sheran Elementary School not chosen?** The survey and community feedback indicated that moving the Spanish Bilingual Program to the new school, West Coulee Station Elementary School was preferable. Also, Nicholas Sheran School has had to go through a significant number of changes over the last seven years. The school became a dual track French Immersion school in 2017-2018 then back to a single track school when French Immersion moved to Agnes Davidson in 2021-2022. This has been difficult on the school staff and community.
- **School Choice: What if I would like to enroll my child in a school that is not considered our boundary school?** Requests being made to attend a school outside of the designated attendance area is referred to as school choice. Fair and just consideration shall be made for requests by parents/guardians to have their child(ren) enrolled in a school outside of their attendance area. Factors that will be considered in allowing a student to enroll in an out of boundary school, included ability to provide resources and programming and enrolment in the school. It is important to note that transportation may not be provided if a child is enrolled in a school outside their attendance area (except for specialized programs such as the Spanish Bilingual Program). Please refer to *Policy 501.3.1 School Choice*.
- **Before and After School Care: Will there be a Before and After School Program at West Coulee Station Elementary School?** Yes there will be, the Division will be announcing a new Before and After School Program service provider soon.
- **Safe Pathways to School: Will a walking path be built between Copperwood and the new school in Garry Station?** Walking paths are the responsibility of the City of Lethbridge. The Division will work with the City on determining ways to address safety matters and find safe routes to school for our students.

Recommendations

Committee Recommendation

The School Boundary Alignment Committee recommends the following changes based on community feedback and the outlined principles:

- Approval of the new boundaries under Option 3, including relocating the Spanish Bilingual Program to West Coulee Station Elementary School for the 2025-2026 school year.
- Providing a transportation solution for eligible students in the Spanish Bilingual Program, both elementary and middle school, starting the 2025-2026 school year.
- Grant students enrolled in Grade 4 during the 2024-2025 school year at Mike Mountain Horse and Nicholas Sheran Elementary Schools the option to remain at their current school for grade 5 in the 2025-2026 school year, rather than transferring to the new designated boundary school. This option will also be extended to their siblings and will apply exclusively for the 2025-2026 school year. (Exemption Option)

How does Option 3 address the following guiding principles?

- **To support the successful opening of the new elementary school in Garry Station.** The new boundaries and addition of the Spanish Bilingual Program will ensure that West Coulee Station Elementary School opens with sufficient enrolment. West Coulee Station has the capacity to grow beyond 600 students to 900 students in the future as the school has been built with a core capacity of 900. Twelve modular classrooms may be added to provide an additional 300 spaces beyond the 600 the school will open with in 2025-2026.
- **To address capacity concerns at Mike Mountain Horse and Coalbanks elementary schools.** The new boundary for Mike Mountain Horse Elementary School will draw down enrolment significantly and will allow for the removal of 8 relocatable classrooms that have reached end of life. This will bring the school to a reasonable capacity. With the relocation of the Spanish Bilingual Program, Coalbanks will have some breathing room for a few years until a new elementary school can be funded by Alberta Education and built in the south end of West Lethbridge. Should growth occur faster than anticipated or more Spanish Bilingual Program families than anticipated switch to the English program at the school, then an overflow school may need to be designated in the future. See the chart on the next page illustrating Option 3 impact on utilization.
- **To balance out enrolment at westside elementary schools with the goal of ensuring that enrolment at schools is neither too low nor too full.** Option 3 provides the best balance for enrolment.
- **Try to limit disruptions to students, families, staff and school communities created by boundary changes.** Although all boundary changes will cause some disruption, Option 3 is the least disruptive by designating communities, where possible, closest to the boundary school and by moving a specialized program that attracts enrolment from all areas of the city. Transportation is also a key consideration in easing disruption. An exemption option for some students going into grade 5 is considered to limit disruption.
- **To minimize the short-term need for additional boundary changes for westside elementary schools.** West Lethbridge has had the fastest population growth in Lethbridge for a number of years and it is anticipated to continue to outpace North and South Lethbridge. There are a number of developing and proposed new communities for West Lethbridge. The pace of this development is influenced by a variety of factors such as migration, immigration, and economic conditions. It is anticipated that Option 3, provides for the greatest flexibility to address growth until a new school is built in the south end of West Lethbridge.

Option 3: Relocate Spanish Bilingual Program to New K-5 Elementary School (West Coulee Station) in Garry Station

About this option:

- Spanish bilingual program at Coalbanks Elementary School will be relocated to the new K-5 Elementary School in Garry Station. Spanish bilingual program enrolment is 41% of Coalbanks.
- A **transportation solution** will be provided to all eligible students attending the Spanish bilingual program at the new school.
- **Moved from Nicholas Sheran Boundary:** Crossings to new K-5 School.
- **Moved from Mike Mountain Horse boundary to new school in Garry Station:** Country Meadows, Garry Station.
- No change to Dr. Probe boundary.
- No change to Coalbanks Elementary School Boundary.



Option 3 Pros Cons

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balances enrolment amongst the elementary schools. • Significantly reduces Coalbanks utilization to allow for future growth. • Allows regular program at Coalbanks to remain unaffected. • Alleviates capacity concern at Mike Mountain Horse. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Means disruption to Spanish bilingual program families by moving to a new school, however transportation solutions will be provided for eligible students. • New school in Garry Station will open at significant utilization. There is the ability to request up to 12 modular classrooms for this school to accommodate future growth without impacting core spaces. Under this option, these modular classrooms may need to be requested sooner than anticipated. |
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