

# **THREE YEAR CAPITAL PLAN**

**2025-2026 TO 2027-2028**

# ON THE COVER:

*An image showcasing the front of West Coulee Station Elementary School during its construction phase in January 2025. To the right, you'll find the architectural rendering.*



Architectural rendering of the main gathering space of the new K-5 Elementary School, West Coulee Station Elementary, under construction in the community of Garry Station. Scheduled to open September 2025



Lethbridge  
SCHOOL DIVISION

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

Lethbridge School Division ("LSD") provides public education services to the citizens of the City of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. The Division was established in 1886 and has proudly served our community for over 138 years.

LSD serves approximately **12,341** students from early education (pre-school) to grade twelve in 2024-2025. The Division provides high quality learning experiences for students through a broad range of educational programs in twenty-four (24) schools and four (4) institutional programs. Lethbridge School Division has 671 full time equivalent (FTE) certificated staff and 493 FTE support staff that provide quality teaching and learning for our students.

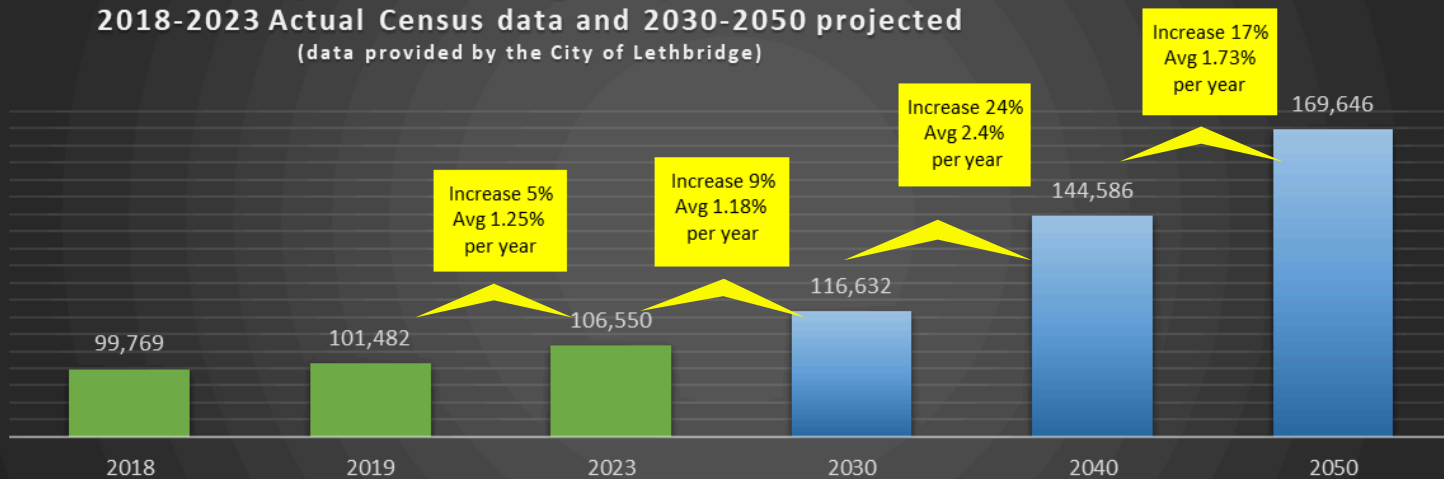
The Three-Year Capital Plan for 2025-2026 To 2027-2028 is an analysis of future school capital needs for Lethbridge School Division to address future enrolment growth and modernizing learning spaces to provide the best spaces for teaching and learning.

## City of Lethbridge and Population Growth

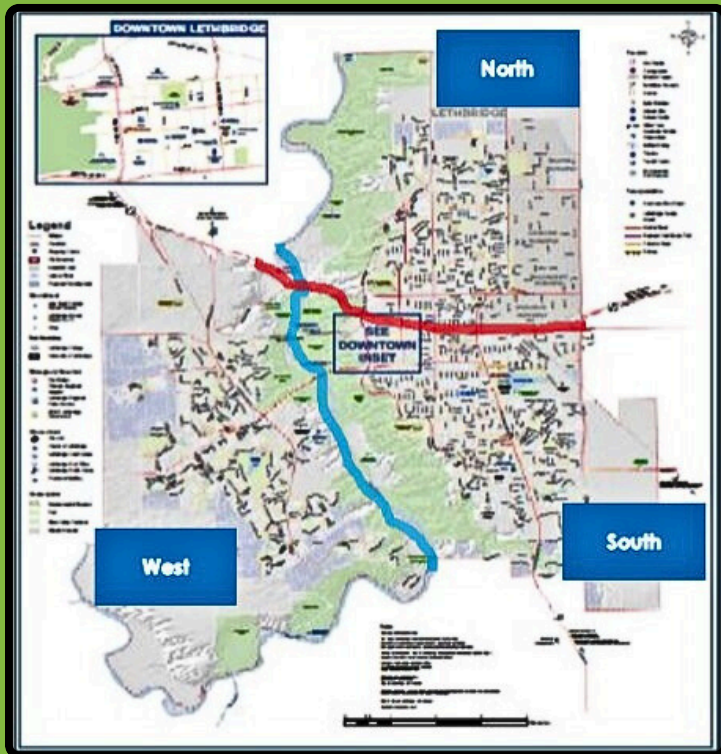
Lethbridge School Division is the public school system for the residents of the City of Lethbridge.

Lethbridge is a growing, vibrant city with over **111,400** residents in 2024 (Statistics Canada, July), 106,550 residents (2023 census). It is home to The University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge College, and the Lethbridge Research Centre, one of the largest agricultural research facilities in Canada. The city also houses two large manufacturing plants involved in raw product development. Well situated in the southwestern part of Alberta, Lethbridge residents enjoy access to state-of-the-art cultural and recreational facilities, and green spaces. Comprehensive retail services attract consumers from southern Alberta, southeastern British Columbia and northern Montana. Lethbridge continues to attract new investment; it's anticipated to boost the population by **9%** from 2023 to 2030 from approximately **106,550** to **116,700** and continues to project steady growth to reach **169,600** residents by 2050.

**City of Lethbridge Population**  
2018-2023 Actual Census data and 2030-2050 projected  
(data provided by the City of Lethbridge)

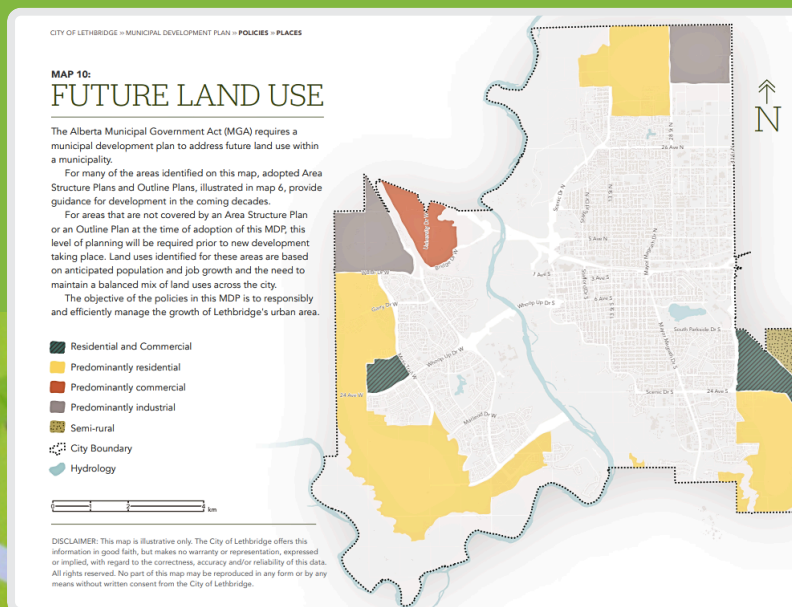


# CITY OF LETHBRIDGE DEVELOPMENT



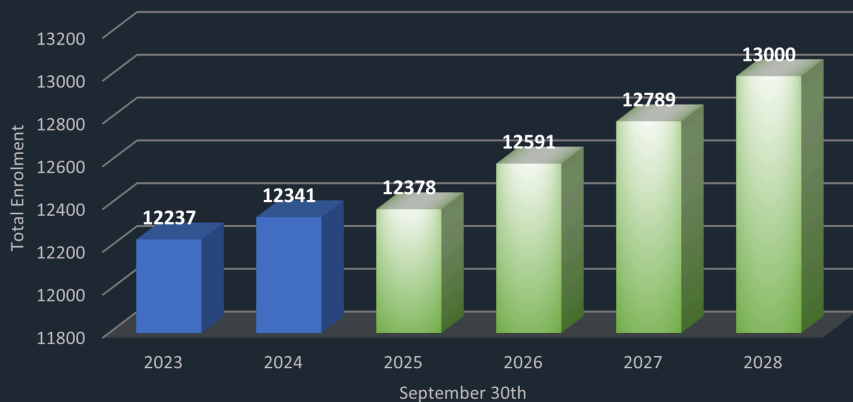
## CITY OF LETHBRIDGE DEVELOPMENT

Lethbridge is divided between North and South by a major highway (Highway 3). West Lethbridge is separated from both South and North Lethbridge by coulees and the Oldman River valley. The City of Lethbridge has identified areas for future growth and new neighborhoods to support future growth. There are five main areas of growth identified. The very north of Lethbridge, southeast Lethbridge and North, South and Mid-West Lethbridge. West Lethbridge is the fastest growing community in Lethbridge and as such there is more area planned for future development in the west sector of the city. As posted in the *Western Investor*, November 2, 2023, *Top 5 Towns for Real Estate Investors*, Lethbridge ranks number 5. *Western Investor* states "Lethbridge does not have a deep oil and gas industry and that has proven a strength in recent years as it had the space and the low land prices to attract mega Agri-players such as McCain Foods Ltd., Cavendish Farms Inc. and PIP International Inc. which are all building or expanding processing plants in the community. One can buy home in Lethbridge for less than \$340,000 and a one-bedroom apartment rents for an average of \$1,200. The combination of high job growth, low housing costs and projected population growth of 5 per cent will lead to a retail boom in 2024". Lethbridge's diversified economy and major projects will continue to positively impact development and population growth in the city.



# STUDENT ENROLMENT GROWTH

Total Student Enrolment  
PK to Grade 12  
2023, 2024 Actual to 2025-2028 projected



LETHBRIDGE  
census  
online

2023  
Census Results

Region	2023	2019	Change in numbers	Change in percentage
North Lethbridge	29,448	28,172	+1,276	+4.53%
South Lethbridge	33,309	32,412	+897	+2.77%
West Lethbridge	43,793	40,898	+2,895	+7.08%
Totals	106,550	101,482	+5,068	+4.99%

## ENROLMENT GROWTH

As depicted in the chart above, the Lethbridge School Division is expected to experience growth each year throughout the Three-Year Capital Plan period, reaching a total of **12,789** students by the 2027-2028 school year. This represents an increase of **552** students, or **4.5%**, compared to 2023. Further sustained growth is anticipated, with enrollment expected to reach **13,000** students in five years, marking an increase of **763** students, or **6.2%**, from 2023.

During the three-year capital plan period, the most significant growth will occur on the south side of Lethbridge, with an increase of **5.54%**. West Lethbridge is projected to see a growth of **3.3%**, while North Lethbridge will experience a **4.22%** rise in student population. Additionally, enrolment growth in South Lethbridge is influenced by **500** students from West Lethbridge attending high school there. Enrolment projections are derived from demographic software, Baragar Demographics, along with population forecasts from the City of Lethbridge and the Province of Alberta. These projections are conservative due to uncertainties surrounding migration and housing developments in the current economic climate. According to the City of Lethbridge's 2023 Census data, the population grew by 4.99% since the 2019 census, averaging an annual growth rate of 1.25%. Notably, West Lethbridge experienced a growth rate of 7.08%. Given the ongoing economic development in Lethbridge and the latest census findings, it is expected that actual enrollment growth may exceed the projections outlined in this capital plan.

## ASSURANCE PLAN

The Lethbridge School Division creates an assurance plan as mandated by Alberta Education. The Board of Trustees approved the 2024-2025 plan on May 27, 2024, and the Assurance Results Report for 2023-2024 on November 26, 2024. These documents are the product of extensive collaboration and reflect the plans and annual Assurance Results Reports from each school within the Division, incorporating input from various partners as we strive to innovate and enhance our practices. Within these documents, you will discover the Division's priorities, trends, challenges, opportunities, achievements, and strategies aimed at ensuring ongoing success for Lethbridge School Division students. We take pride in the dedicated efforts of our staff and students. With that in mind, Lethbridge School Division remains committed to improving each day. The 2024-2025 Assurance Plan and the 2023-2024 Assurance Results Report are available on the Division's website.

## FACILITY UTILIZATION

The school division is increasingly concerned about space utilization when it exceeds 85%. In evaluating utilization, both base and core utilization are taken into account. Core utilization emphasizes essential learning spaces within the facility, intentionally omitting modular classroom units. Although modular classrooms have been introduced to address immediate enrolment needs, their addition may have caused the core capacity to be surpassed. High capacity levels can negatively impact programming spaces such as gymnasiums and learning commons.

The chart provided shows that the west sector is expected to see a decline in utilization after the new Elementary School opens in the 2025-2026 school year. However, core utilization is anticipated to stay high through 2027-2028. At present, the Division possesses a significant amount of instructional space compared to core facility space. For example, in West Lethbridge, the large number of modular classrooms results in an instructional capacity that is **137%** of the core capacity. Overall, the division maintains an instructional capacity to core ratio of **125%**. A ratio well above 100% indicates that spaces such as gymnasiums, learning commons, and gathering areas may struggle to accommodate the projected student enrolment.

**73%**  
*projected utilization  
rates by 2027/2028*

**73%**  
*current utilization*

**125%**  
*Instructional vs Core  
Capacity*

Note: Considering the ongoing global, national, and provincial inflationary pressures, the enrolment projections outlined in this capital plan are viewed as conservative, as there are no dependable trends available for forecasting future enrolment.

### Area Utilization by City Sector (Actual and Projected)

City Sector	Instructional Capacity vs Core Capacity of Facilities	Full Area Utilization		Projected Growth in three year period	Utilization -Core Area Only	
		2024-2054 Actual	2027-2028 Projected		2024-2025 Actual	2027-2028 Projected
North	104%	70%	72%	5.76%	73%	75%
South	135%	71%	74%	4.44%	97%	100%
West	137%	78%	74%	3.41%	103%	89%
<b>Total Division</b>	<b>125%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>4.51%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>88%</b>

## CURRENT CAPITAL PROJECTS

In February 2021, Alberta Education approved the construction of a new elementary school in West Lethbridge, addressing a critical need. Named West Coulee Station Elementary, this school will cater to students from kindergarten to grade 5 and will be located in the northern part of West Lethbridge, specifically within the Garry Station community. Currently, there is only one elementary school serving this rapidly growing area on the city's west side. The school is set to open in September 2025 and will accommodate 610 students, with the option to add 12 modular classrooms in the future, raising the total capacity to 900 students. Alberta Infrastructure is managing the construction using a Design Build approach. Additionally, the modernization of Galbraith Elementary School, the oldest school in the Division at 113 years old, is in progress and currently in the design phase. The school board is working closely with Alberta Education, Alberta Infrastructure, and design architects on this project, which is actively moving forward.

Current Capital Projects								
Projected Opening/Completion	School/Community	City Sector	Project Type	Grade	Approved Capacity	Approval Date	% Complete as of February 2025	Estimated Cost
2025-2026	New West Lethbridge Elementary School/Community of Garry Station	West	Design Build: New Construction	Kindergarten to Grade 5	610 opening with full build out to 910	Feb-21	In construction (opening Sept 2025)	\$30 million
2028-2029	Galbraith Elementary School	North	Modernization	Kindergarten to Grade 5	510	Feb-24	In Design	\$32 million

Approved for  
Planning Funds  
Budget 2025

New School Construction								
Year	Priority	Community/School	City Sector	Site Readiness	Type	Grade	Capacity	2025 Cost (\$)
2025-2026	1	West Lethbridge High School	West	Site location in progress by City of Lethbridge	New Construction	9-12	2100	\$80 million
2025-2026	2	West Lethbridge Elementary School (West Lethbridge - South)	West	Site location in progress by City of Lethbridge	New Construction	K-5	910 (open 610 with growth)	\$32 million
2027-2028	3	North Lethbridge Elementary School (Blackwolf)	North	Site Not Yet Determined	New Construction	K-5	600	\$20 million

## NEW SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION REQUESTS

The Lethbridge School Division is seeking approval for three new construction projects in the capital plan period to ease current enrolment pressures and accommodate anticipated growth in the City of Lethbridge. This growth is expected due to economic development plans and an estimated population increase of over 22% from the 2023 census to 2030. The chart above outlines the new school construction projects requested in the Three-Year Capital Plan.

The primary focus for new construction in this capital plan period is West Lethbridge, which includes an elementary school (West Lethbridge-South) and an additional high school. West Lethbridge is the fastest-growing area in the city, with eight communities currently in development or proposed. A new elementary school is underway in the northern part of West Lethbridge, which will help alleviate enrolment pressures in that region. However, two more elementary schools are needed since the existing four schools are experiencing high core utilization rates ranging from **79% to 150%**, with instructional capacity compared to core capacity spanning from **105% to 193%**. The opening of West Coulee Station Elementary School for the 2025-2026 school year will relieve some utilization at Mike Mountain Horse and Coalbanks Elementary Schools. The high demand for instructional space and core utilization stems from the addition of modular classrooms to accommodate enrolment growth, which places strain on essential areas like gymnasiums and library commons. Additionally, due to planned developments in North Lethbridge, a new elementary school will also be necessary.

The current high school in West Lethbridge has undergone boundary changes in 2021, resulting in over **500** students being transferred to the South Lethbridge high school. Despite the addition of three modular classrooms in 2023, the school remains at capacity, necessitating requests for two additional modular classrooms to handle ongoing enrolment growth. With the pace of future development, a new high school in West Lethbridge is essential. With eight communities currently in development and another six planned for the future in West Lethbridge, significant growth is anticipated, further intensifying the pressure on existing school facilities and increasing the need for additional classroom spaces in this area.

## STUDIES IN SUPPORT OF THE CAPITAL PLAN

### WEST SIDE STUDY

West Lethbridge school planning faces challenges that require comprehensive analysis for sustainable solutions, moving beyond just adding modular classrooms or new schools. In early 2024, funding was allocated to study capacity issues linked to projected growth, focusing on school capacities, enrolment forecasts, and municipal data. Key challenges include the prevalence of modular classrooms and aging relocatable classrooms. The study, conducted by MSK Developments, aims to support requests for modernization and additional spaces in the Three-Year Capital Plan.

A new K-5 elementary school is being built in Garry Station to ease growth at Mike Mountain Horse School, but due to growth there is a need for K-5 school in the south end of West Lethbridge. Future capacity concerns may arise again at Chinook High School, requiring potential expansions or alternative solutions. The study recommends:

- One **new elementary school for 900 students** in the next 10 years
- One **new high school for 2,100 students** in the next 10 years
- Collaborations with the City of Lethbridge for site planning
- Coordination with developers for development planning
- Engagement with the Province of Alberta for funding support for the new schools.

### LETHBRIDGE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT

The *Accessibility Audit* of Lethbridge Collegiate Institute (LCI), carried out by Architect Ron Wickman, evaluates features for individuals with disabilities and highlights areas needing improvement, despite renovations since 1949. Key issues identified include:

- Challenging access at the main entrance due to the presence of stairs.
- Steep slopes along pathways connecting Buildings F and G.
- Stairs that do not comply with the Barrier-Free Design Guide.
- Insufficient accessible washrooms.
- Navigational difficulties for the public, including individuals with disabilities.

The report recommends several enhancements, such as:

- Establishing universal toilet rooms and upgrading existing washrooms.
- Improving stairs by adding tactile warning surfaces and enhanced handrails.
- Enhancing wayfinding through better signage and lighting.
- General suggestions to create a more accommodating environment for individuals with disabilities.

The recommendations outlined in the Audit underscore the necessity for modernization at LCI.

*Both studies are appended to the Capital Plan submission to Alberta Education*

## REQUEST FOR MODERNIZATION, ADDITION, OR REPLACEMENT OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

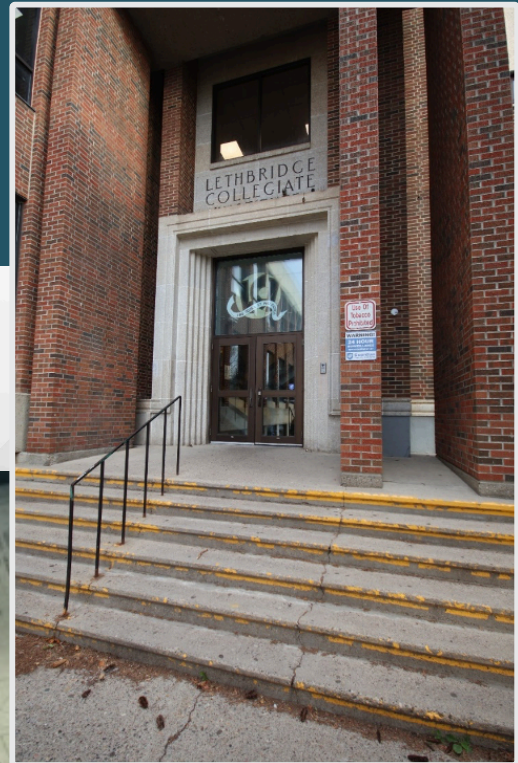
Some of the oldest school facilities in Lethbridge are elementary schools, which urgently need substantial investment for upgrades related to health and safety, environmental sustainability, and creating learning spaces that align with the needs of today's students. The Lethbridge School Division is seeking approval for the modernization of ten (10) elementary schools, two (2) middle schools, and two (2) high schools within the capital plan period.

In North Lethbridge, there are three elementary schools (Senator Buchanan, Westminster, and Park Meadows) that require modernization. Of these, two need elevators to provide access to the second level. Additionally, a high school (Winston Churchill) also needs modernization and expansion to enhance functionality and accommodate enrolment growth. The student enrolment in the northern sector of Lethbridge is projected to increase by 2.8% over the next three years of the capital planning period.

In West Lethbridge, three elementary schools (Mike Mountain Horse, Dr. Probe and Nicholas Sheran) also require modernization. These schools exhibit core utilization rates ranging from 79% to 150%, with instructional space to core space ratios between 145% to 193%. Furthermore, one middle school (G.S. Lakie) in West Lethbridge will need modernization to support anticipated enrolment growth, which is estimated at 4.9% over the same three-year period. To maintain sustainable enrolment in West Lethbridge, these schools must be modernized to meet facility standards and provide optimal educational opportunities for our students.

In South Lethbridge, a modernization initiative is proposed for four elementary schools: Fleetwood Bawden, Ecole Agnes Davidson, Lakeview, and General Stewart. These institutions need updates to enhance their building functionality and performance. Additionally, one middle school, Gilbert Paterson, has been identified for modernization due to challenges with accessibility and pressures from increasing enrolment. Modernization is also requested for one high school, LCI, which serves grades 9-12 and offers French Immersion. LCI accommodates students from West Lethbridge to help alleviate capacity issues at Chinook High School, with currently 500 students from that area enrolled at LCI. However, LCI faces limitations in accessibility to essential areas, such as the gymnasium and washroom facilities. As enrolment continues to rise at LCI, there is an urgent need to modernize the school, not only to replace outdated building components but also to improve functionality to support the growing student body. The projected increase in student enrolment for the south sector of Lethbridge is estimated at **2.9%** over the next three years of the capital planning period.

The following page provides a comprehensive list of all schools proposed for modernization.



Modernization Projects							
Year	Priorit y	Community/Scho ol	Facility Age	City Sector	Type	Grade	2025 Cost (\$)
2025-2026	1	Lethbridge Collegiate Institute	76 years	South	Modernization- Preservation/Replacement School	9-12	\$60 million
	2	Senator Buchanan Elementary School	71 years	North	Partial Modernization- Preservation	K-5	\$13 million
	3	Westminster Elementary School	72 years	North	Partial Modernization- Preservation	K-5	\$11 million
	4	Gilbert Paterson Middle School	70 years	South	Partial Modernization- Preservation/Addition	6-8	\$22 million
	5	Mike Mountain Horse Elementary School	39 years	West	Modernization- Preservation	K-5	\$16 million
2026-2027	6	Park Meadows Elementary School	45 years	North	Modernization- Preservation	K-5	\$17 million
	7	Nicolas Sheran Elementary School	45 years	West	Modernization- Preservation	K-5	\$17 million
	8	Dr. Gerald B. Probe Elementary School	34 years	West	Modernization- Preservation	K-5	\$17 million
	9	Fleetwood Bawden Elementary School	74 years	South	Partial Modernization- Preservation	K-5	\$17 million
	10	Ecole Agnes Davidson	63 years	South	Partial Modernization- Preservation	K-5	\$17 million
2027-2028	11	Lakeview Elementary School	65 Years	South	Partial Modernization- Preservation	K-5	\$17 million
	12	Winstom Churchill High School	58 Years	North	Partial Modernization- Preservation/Addition	9-12	\$30 million
	13	General Stewart Elementary School	69 years	South	Partial Modernization- Preservation	K-5	\$11 million
	14	G.S. Lakie Middle School	22 years	West	Partial Modernization- Addition	6-8	\$22 million

Pre-Planning  
Funds  
Approved



# Lethbridge School Division Three-Year Capital Plan

51

Year **2025-2026 to 2027-2028**

## Growth and Facility Utilization



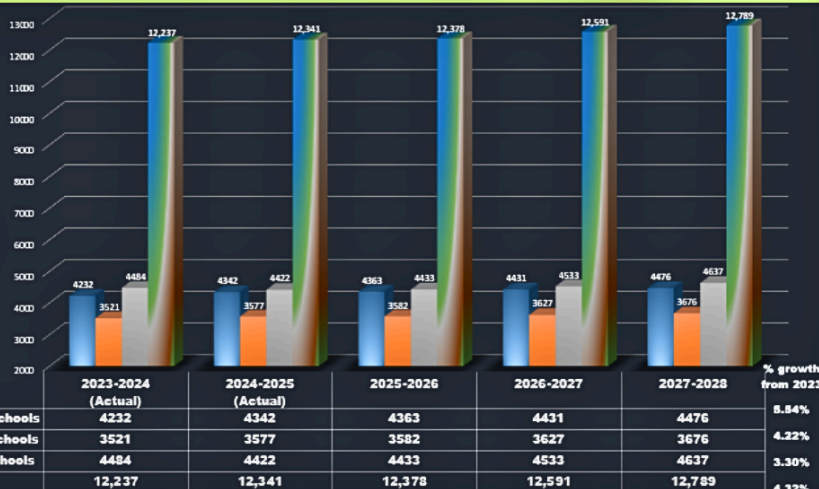
### Growth 2023 to 2027

Elementary School	2.78%
Middle School	10.65%
High School	6.13%

Enrolment by City Sector  
2023, 2024 Actual  
2025 to 2027 Projected

**4.3%**  
Enrolment  
Growth to  
2027

■ Total South Lethbridge Schools	4232	4342	4363	4431	4476
■ Total North Lethbridge Schools	3521	3577	3582	3627	3676
■ Total West Lethbridge Schools	4484	4422	4433	4533	4637
■ Total All Schools	12,237	12,341	12,378	12,591	12,789

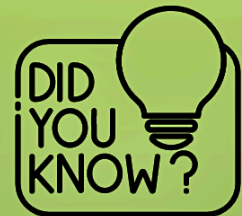


Enrolment projections show conservative growth

**5.54%**  
South Lethbridge  
fastest growing  
sector of city



There are currently **500** students who reside in west Lethbridge that attend high school in south Lethbridge.



**125%**

Total instructional space as compared to core space in the school division

**73%**

Current division utilization

**90%**

Current division core utilization

## New School Construction



Estimated cost  
of requested  
new schools  
**\$132 million**

\* Approved for Planning  
Funds, Budget 2025

**Requested**  
West Lethbridge  
High School  
2100 student

1

**Requested**  
West Lethbridge  
Elementary  
School -South  
900 student

2

**Beyond 2027**  
North Lethbridge  
Elementary School -  
Blackwolf  
600 student

3

**194%**  
Increase in housing  
starts from 2023

**443**  
Multi-family unit  
housing

**272**  
Single family  
housing



Estimated cost  
**\$287 million**



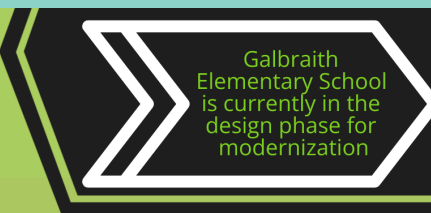
Pre-Planning  
Funds  
Approved  
March 2025  
for LCI

The top four  
modernization  
priorities are  
schools that do  
not adequately  
support  
accessibility to all  
parts of the  
school.

“

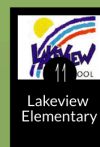
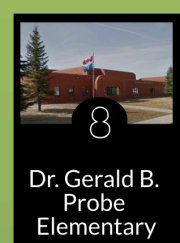
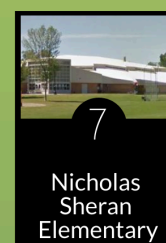
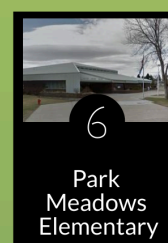
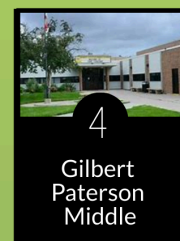
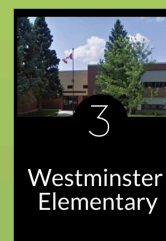
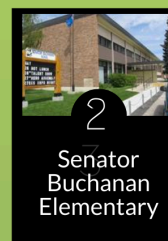
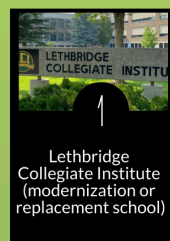


**76% of school facilities  
are 30+ years old. 57%  
are over 50+ years old**



## Modernizations

Modernizations, include major and minor modernizations, additions, or replacement school solutions



Lethbridge School Division facilities are the best places for teaching and learning

# THREE YEAR CAPITAL PLAN

**2025-2026 To 2027-2028**

Prepared by Lethbridge School Division  
Division of Business and Operations



March, 2025