2016-2017
City Hall School
Report to Partners

Grade 7 students play chess at the Calgary Public Library.
Grade 3-4 students sketch the Peace Bridge.

Submitted by Sheila Bean,
City Hall School Coordinator

Illustration by Sam Hester
“I had learned about municipal government in my classroom, but it was really cool to have a close-up look inside the building, and to have a chance to meet some of the government officials. I really liked being able to learn about things outside of my school. There were things in downtown I didn’t know existed!”

~ Grade 7 student

“We liked the big buildings, seeing the art and meeting the experts who were right there for us to talk to. We liked to go outside and sketch the real thing, not just pictures. It was nice to have the library so close so we could go and see the fire truck.”

~ Grade 4-6 LEAD students (scribed by their teacher)
Welcome to City Hall School

City Hall School opens eyes and minds every week – for students, their teachers and their parents.

Each week, a Calgary class spends the entire week downtown, learning how our civic government affects our everyday lives. They also learn how each of us can make a difference, whether small and personal or large and far-reaching. Students find out how The City of Calgary connects with their neighbourhood and listens to citizens’ ideas and concerns. They attend a meeting in the Council Chambers. They spend time with Mayor Naheed Nenshi. They meet their councillor and their neighbourhood partnership coordinator.

The City Hall School coordinator plans with the classroom teacher to create a deep, active, engaging and customized exploration. Students learn from City of Calgary experts, as well as from representatives of community organizations such as the Calgary Foundation, Calgary International Children’s Festival and Calgary Drop-In & Rehab Centre. Children might explore East Village, Stephen Avenue, the Plus15 Skywalk or public art. Anything is possible!

This unique opportunity is a partnership between The City of Calgary’s Calgary Neighbourhoods business unit and Campus Calgary. Each week-long experience differs from all others, depending on that class’s particular interests and focus. This year, classes have investigated topics ranging from diversity to active citizenship to the past, present and future of the Bow River. The children’s focus propels the whole school year, and prompts questions, research, data collection, sharing events and action.

The teacher also encourages them to keep their eyes and ears alert for current municipal issues. Maybe the Green Line will directly affect their neighbourhood. Perhaps homelessness seems distant and unfamiliar. Discussions and “wonders” shape the learning that they will undertake downtown.

Students discover that they have the right to be at City Hall and ask questions of those in charge, even if they are still too young to vote.
What makes a great neighbourhood?

Many classes pondered urban design at City Hall School. They learned from a variety of planners, such as experts who think about transportation, public art, floods, parks, libraries or wildlife. For example, students asked:

- How do people experiencing homelessness belong to a community?
- How did East Village transform from an unwelcoming space into a vibrant neighbourhood?
- Why were historic buildings preserved on Stephen Avenue?
- How does a community serve its pre-teens and teenagers?

With the help of neighbourhood partnership coordinators from Calgary Neighbourhoods, classes considered the essential parts of a community, recalled the best aspects of their communities and dreamt up improvements. In council and committee meetings, students observed discussions about cycle tracks, the Green Line, a tall building in Chinatown and residential development of a current golf course.

Several classes worked in their own classrooms beforehand to plan whole neighbourhoods or small plots of land. They submitted those ideas to City of Calgary planners who generously analyzed the designs and shared their feedback with students at City Hall School. Returning to their own schools, the classes examined their plans with fresh eyes and modified their designs.
Graphic record by Sam Hester, who volunteered with her son’s Grade 3-4 class at City Hall School.
How can students earn money to give away?

St. Pius X students wanted to create a business… to sell a product or service… to make money… to give away. They came to City Hall School to build entrepreneurship skills and knowledge with the ultimate goal of giving back to the community.

During each week, these French immersion classes (Grades 1 and 4) gathered ideas. They kept track of businesses that sold services or products. They examined signs and menus. They talked to experts who explained how to plan a project, ask for money and get the word out. Then students turned their attention to customer service.

By observing cashiers, the permit office and Fair Entry in the Municipal Building, and at coffee shops and banks, students noted how customers lined up and took turns, how they were treated with courtesy and how money was handled.

Back at school, the classes worked together to invent and build a business called Unic. After months of research and production, they staged a fancy art gala to raise $3,712.31 for Inn from the Cold.
Should Calgary host the Olympics again?

Should Calgary host the 2026 Olympic Games? Should we even bid on it? Two classes from different schools (Grades 4 and 7) considered multiple perspectives, and weighed the pros and cons for both the past and the future.

Students met passionate and determined teenaged athletes who explained the value of training in first-class facilities that attract top-level athletes and coaches. Former Olympic volunteers shared their infectious enthusiasm for volunteering and civic pride. City of Calgary archivists used artifacts to illustrate the mushrooming cost and complexity of Olympic bids since Calgary’s first bid in 1959. Students also discovered how our 1988 Olympics changed and promoted Calgary and Canmore, and how our Olympic archive is stored and used.

Chima Nkemdirim, chief of staff for Mayor Nenshi, serves on the 2026 Olympic bid committee, and he discussed many considerations behind a bid decision. Can we afford it? Could we save money by using existing facilities? What would security cost? Would an Olympics inspire Calgarians to become more physically active? What new facilities, art, or infrastructure might enrich our city? Would it bring people together?

Students thought hard about Calgary’s budget, and how it’s stretched in many vital ways. We want safe and efficient streets, affordable housing, dependably clean water, nature and public art, care for vulnerable citizens, and much more. Would an Olympics run a deficit or would the Winter Games make money, as they did in 1988? Would an Olympics create jobs and other opportunities? What problems might it solve or create?
Why journal?

Journalling is an integral part of the City Hall School experience. Each student carries a blank journal — lined or unlined — to record thoughts and observations. Educators and learners bring different approaches to the journal and no page is typical. It could feature a web, a story, a labelled drawing, a quick sketch of a moving object, six little sketches, a watercolour painting, a collage, jot notes, a science experiment, traffic data, a how-to explanation — anything. The journalist might save a page for a polished work of art, or use it to work a few bugs out of a messy idea.

The writing and drawing help the journalist to notice, remember, connect, imagine and reflect on small details and big pictures. Although each journal is particular to its owner, it is not a private diary. It is a conversation between student and teacher, child and parent, student and classmate. It is the student’s thinking today, with the intention of returning to this conversation with oneself later on.

Starting in September, the classroom teacher helps the students to build journalling skills. Just like early explorers or modern scientists, they sketch or write to note observations, ideas and questions in their personal journals. They might draw an architectural detail of their school, or jot information from interviewing the principal. By the time they come to City Hall School, they have the techniques, stamina, curiosity and confidence to move their pencils in a variety of situations.
A Grade 6 student observes one of Joe Fafard’s horses beside the Court of Appeals building. The sculpture commemorates the 400th anniversary of Québec City, which is one of Calgary’s sister cities.

Two students in Grade 3-4 reflect on their journalling.

**How did you feel about journalling?**

**Before** I thought journalling was boring, I wasn’t so sure. Now, I think it was so worth it. Right now I use my journalling now to think about my writing.

**How do you use your journal now?**

I try to do as much sketching as I can, writing to try to make my journal pop.

**How did you feel about journalling?**

I thought journaling was a bit exciting thing. I found some things that were inspiring, I had to sketch.

**How do you use your journal now?**

I try to do as much sketching as I can, writing to try to make my journal pop.
Who comes to City Hall School?

All Calgary schools are welcome, from public and separate, to independent and charter. This year, 26 classes came from Grades 1 to 9, from all parts of the city and from all sorts of school programs.

Each teacher applies the previous spring, proposing the general question, possibilities for the week downtown and how that week will motivate the rest of the school year. The coordinator – with the whole Campus Calgary/Open Minds team – examines the many proposals and selects as many as possible.

After being accepted, the teacher attends an evening orientation in the spring, a full-day summer inservice and a September evening workshop with a focus on journalling. Campus Calgary offers two other workshops and an information session, as well as sessions at the February teachers’ convention. The coordinator also visits the teacher twice to plan the week. The class’s topic might change, after the teacher has considered the direction and interests of these students.

“It was so wonderful to see the students fully engaged in the presentation and asking so many deeper learning questions. I can tell that you have created a safe environment in your classroom that the students feel like they can take risks in their use of language and learning.”

~ Elizabeth Ferros, specialist, English language learning, Calgary Board of Education
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Focus of Study</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 26-30</td>
<td>Haultain Memorial</td>
<td>3 and 4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>How can we make a difference in ourselves, our community and the world?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 3-6 and 11</td>
<td>Haultain Memorial</td>
<td>3 and 4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>How can we make a difference in ourselves, our community and the world?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 12-14 and Nov. 7-8</td>
<td>Marlborough</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Diversity: Is it OK to be different?</td>
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<td>Oct. 17-21</td>
<td>Captain Nichola Goddard</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>How does our history affect our present and our future?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 24-28</td>
<td>Brentwood</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>How does history bring stories to life? What are multiple perspectives on stories and events?</td>
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<td>Nov. 14-18</td>
<td>St. Pius X</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>How can we give back to our community?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 21-25</td>
<td>St. Pius X</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>How can we give back to our community?</td>
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<td>Nov. 28-Dec. 1 and 12</td>
<td>W.O. Mitchell</td>
<td>5 and 6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Active citizenship and change.</td>
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<td>Dec. 5-9</td>
<td>Chief Justice Milvain</td>
<td>5 and 6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>How are our lives influenced by others’ decisions? How can we make decisions to influence our communities?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 3-6 and 13</td>
<td>All Boys Program at Sir James Lougheed</td>
<td>5 and 6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>How can one action create change in your community, city and world?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 9-13</td>
<td>All Boys Program at Sir James Lougheed</td>
<td>5 and 6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>How can one action create change in your community, city and world?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 16-19 and Feb. 21</td>
<td>LEAD Program at Penbrooke Meadows</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>How can we be citizens of the world? Focus on how to build, take care of and run a community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 23-26 and Feb. 22</td>
<td>LEAD Program at Penbrooke Meadows</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>How can we be citizens of the world? Focus on rights and responsibilities in a community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 30-Feb. 2 and 10</td>
<td>Ramsay</td>
<td>3 and 4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>How do we inspire others to engage in community? How do neighbourhoods age and evolve?</td>
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<td>Feb. 6-10</td>
<td>Ramsay</td>
<td>3 and 4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>How do we inspire others to engage in community? How do neighbourhoods age and evolve?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 27-Mar. 3</td>
<td>GATE Program at Queen Elizabeth</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>How is power organized in the municipal government? How do you plan a neighbourhood?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 6-10</td>
<td>GATE Program at Queen Elizabeth</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>How is power organized in the municipal government? How do you plan a neighbourhood?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 13-17</td>
<td>Rundle</td>
<td>3 and 4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Who am I as a Calgarian? How can I make a better community? How can I better myself?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 20-24</td>
<td>Our Lady of the Assumption</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>How has history shaped the way we live today? How have we responded to change? Identify turning points.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr. 3-7</td>
<td>Altadore</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>What makes a vibrant community?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr. 10-13 and 19</td>
<td>Altadore</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>What makes a vibrant community?</td>
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<td>Apr. 24-28</td>
<td>John Costello</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>How can citizens effect change? How do you design a plot of land?</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1-5</td>
<td>John Costello</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>How can citizens effect change? How do you design a plot of land?</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 8-12</td>
<td>Acadia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Canada 150: What does it mean to be proud, strong and free? What is the past, present and future of the Bow River?</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 16-18 and 23-24</td>
<td>John Costello</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>How can citizens effect change? How do you design a plot of land?</td>
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<td>May 29-Jun. 2</td>
<td>Woodman</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>How is your voice important in your community? How can one person take action?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thank you

Thank you to The City of Calgary staff who shared their expertise with City Hall School, welcomed students into their workspaces or supported the students in other ways:

**Arts and Culture**
Sophie-Anne Belisle
Barb Greendale
Quyen Hoang
Ola Wlusek

**City Clerk’s Office**
Janice Brum
Julien Lord Charest
Kristin Gee
Libbey McDougall
Shawnee Muscoby
Carol Stokes
Deb Williams

**City Council (including administrators and office staff)**
Mayor Naheed Nenshi
Councillor Gian-Carlo Carra
Councillor Andre Chabot
Councillor Diane Colley-Urquhart
Councillor Peter Demong
Councillor Druh Farrell
Councillor Ray Jones
Councillor Brian Pincott
Councillor Richard Pootmans
Councillor Jim Stevenson
Councillor Ward Sutherland

**Civic Innovation YYC**
Kristofer Kelly-Frere

**Calgary Community Standards**
Cheryl Herperger
Loren McNeill
Janette Meyer

**Corporate Facility Planning & Management**
Andrea Poti
William Rathwell
Scott Trevis

**Calgary Fire**
Derek Arthurs
Todd Berry
Greg Deblicki
Karl Leung

**Growth Strategies**
Kaitlin Bahl
John Manieri
“It was a great opportunity for students to see the variety of people that impact decision making within the city. Students had the opportunity to see how groups outside the government often influence decisions at city hall. This was a great opportunity for kids from the burbs to come downtown and explore part of their city that they often have little to no exposure to.” ~ Grade 7 teacher
Thank you to other special guests who met with City Hall School students, welcomed us into their facilities or supported us in many other ways:

- Acadia Community Association: Keith Simmons
- Alberta Animal Rescue Crew: Barbara Francis, Adrianna Laszlo, Cathy Roy, Allison Thompson
- BMO Bank of Montreal
- Brookfield Office Properties: Rita Borrow, Alicia Wong
- Calgary Board of Education: Sanghamitra Dhar McKenty, Jeannie Everett, Sheila McLeod, Stacey Mee, David Stevenson, Kent Zado
- Calgary Board of Education students: Junior Fire Chief, National Sports School athletes, Mayor for a Day
- Calgary Board of Education Trustees
- Calgary Board of Education 2School: Trish Hubbard
- Calgary Catholic School District: Andrea Holowka, Frank McClernon, Gary Strother
- Calgary Catholic School District Trustees
- Calgary Chinese Cultural Centre
- Calgary Courts Centre: Tom Dabrowski, Reg Dunham, Dodi Hodgson
- Calgary Drop-In & Rehab Centre: Shaun Crawford, Colleen Delisle, Sunny Gill, Natasha McCulloch, Pat Newman
- Calgary Foundation: Julie Black
- Sam Hester (graphic recorder)
- Calgary International Children’s Festival: Brian Beaulieu, Christy Offer
- Calgary Public Library: Gabrielle Doyle, Monique Podiluk, Carolyn Ryder, Kate Schutz and security
- Campus Calgary/Open Minds: Ita Kistorma, Jennifer Meredith, Travis Robertson
- East Village Experience Centre ambassadors: Pamela Darragh, Amanda Eveson, Rylan Graham, Terry MacKenzie, Hugh Mosher
- Good Earth Coffeehouse
- Inn from the Cold: Chris Cutler, Meg Kaminek, Karen Murray
- Paralympics: Rick Hansen
- McDougall Centre: JT Clode, Joe Daly, Jeffrey Wiley
- Mustard Seed: Kelsey Brown, Rob Couper, Les H., Brittany Vine
- Phil and Sebastian Coffee Roasters
- Premier Rachel Notley’s Staff (who allowed us to attend her speech at the Jack Singer)
- Ramsay Community Association: Erin Joslin
- Rundle Community Association: Sue Holt
- Sidewalk Citizen Bakery: Kali Urquhart
- Studio Bell: Marcy Belva, Lori Bland
- University of Saskatchewan Professor Emeritus Bill Waiser
- Whitehorn Community Association: Pete deJong
- 1988 Olympic Volunteers: Trish Savill, Walt Savill

“I feel as though they have a much better perspective on how many individuals it takes to run a city. As we discuss new topics, I feel many students are starting to think from different perspectives… They are better at asking questions and making connections. The experience has given us ideas and ways to make learning authentic… Our experiences can be the beginning of authentic learning and not just a culmination of learning.” - Grade 5-6 teacher
# 2016-2017 statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>599</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>61</td>
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<tr>
<td>School administrators</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educational assistants</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council members plus Mayor Nenshi</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/Volunteers</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 26 classes from Calgary Board of Education
- 20 classes from Catholic School District
- 60 Community experts
- 61 City of Calgary experts
- 10 Council members plus Mayor Nenshi
- 313 Parents/Volunteers

Grade 1 students in East Village.

Grade 3 student artwork.
Conclusion

City Hall School has touched the lives of 599 students and 354 adults this year. They learned about municipal government, how all parts of this city work together and how one person’s action can trigger positive change. They explored the downtown core and thought about their neighbourhoods and the whole city. One class collected traffic data on an ice-cold day. Some students sorted clothing donations at the Calgary Drop-In & Rehab Centre. One class watched the Treaty 7 flag fly for the first time in front of the Municipal Building.

They pondered questions:
• Who types the words on the screens during council meetings?
• Is “Travelling Light” (the blue ring) really art? Could a bush plane be art?

They quizzed Mayor Nenshi:
• “Do you sleep here, or do you sleep in a house?”
• “Why do you have such long meetings?”
• “Calgary is a big place. How do you listen to the citizens’ needs and concerns?”
• “Did you want to be mayor when you were in Grade 3?”

Who might run for council someday? Who might be mayor?

“Students have been constantly referencing City Hall since we returned. In classroom discussions and our day-to-day work, students are making connections to their week-long immersion. Much of our work currently is focussed on our week at City Hall… The connections we made with experts is so vital for our learners. We will endeavour to continue this path in the future.”

~ Grade 4-6 LEAD teachers
The Mayor asked us: What was your favourite art you saw in the downtown?

Historic City Hall is being rehabilitated after the flood... we got kicked out!

This piece of art is by the same artist who made "Wonderland". I think it's exquisite!

The family that was naked!

This sculpture was donated to the City of Calgary 50 years ago.

It caused a scandal! But it became the symbol of the Calgary Board of Education!

"Where are your warm clothes?!

Questions for the Mayor: Do people at the homeless shelters stay overnight? Some people live in shelters for years... that's not right. So we have the ten-year plan to end homelessness.

"The family of Man"
“It has allowed me to see teaching outside of the classroom setting and the meaningful and rich learning that can enhance student learning… Having the opportunity for students to actually ‘live their experiences’ and build their knowledge together gave us common language and background. They were more passionately engaged because it was so real… Very few have the opportunity to go downtown to see City Hall or even meet the Mayor. It provides them the opportunity to see how their community is connected to City Hall, and that their parents’ voices and their voices matter and they can have an impact.”

~ Grade 3-4 teacher