

# School Lottery Engagement

## Engagement & Communication Plan



Calgary Board  
of Education

*dialogue*)))

Date: November 7, 2025

## 1. CONTEXT

At the CBE, a lottery process is used when a school, program or grade is identified to be at capacity or over capacity. Lotteries ensure fair and equitable access to schools, programs or grades with a student population at capacity or over capacity. Schools usually conduct lotteries for the grade of entry (for example kindergarten or Grade 10), but they may also need to hold lotteries for specific grades or programs.

Historically, the CBE has aligned its lottery process with 'walk zones' that determine eligibility for yellow bus transportation. This alignment allows for the prioritization of students who live closest to the school. However, the new provincial transportation service mandates, effective for the 2025-26 school year, define new transportation service areas that differ from previous distances and the measurement methods used (i.e., using driving distance instead of walking distance) to determine transportation eligibility. The new walk zone maps, now referred to as transportation service areas, differ considerably from the 2024-25 walk zone maps in some cases, and these changes will impact some families' priority status in the lottery. If the transportation service areas are used to set priority for the lottery, some families living a walkable distance from the school, using pedestrian pathways, may not be considered among the highest priorities for admission. While the CBE must ensure that transportation service areas follow legislated parameters, it can establish separate standards for the lottery process. Given the challenges and potential concerns that may arise from any change, the CBE must consider whether transportation service areas will continue to be used to determine priority groups for students in the lottery process.

The engagement process outlined in this plan will help determine possible lottery zone changes for the 2027-28 school year lottery (held in February 2027). The lottery held in February 2026 for the 2026-27 school year will continue to use the 2024-25 walk zone maps to determine lottery priority groups. For now, we have indicated publicly that more information will be shared in the fall about next year's lottery.

## 2. PURPOSE: WHAT IS TO BE DECIDED?

By March 2026, the CBE will confirm the zones used to determine lottery priority groups and any adjustments to lottery communications with families for the 2027-28 school year and beyond.

## 3. DECISION MAKER(S)

The decision will be made by the director of Planning.

## 4. ENGAGEMENT PLANNING TEAM

The planning team will be responsible to develop and execute this engagement and communication plan, and it includes the following members:

- Education Director, Area 6 and Alternative Programs
- Planning Analyst
- Projects Lead, Planning

- Community Engagement Advisor

## 5. IN SCOPE OF ENGAGEMENT (FACTORS PEOPLE CAN INFLUENCE)

The following are factors people can influence:

- Zones for school lottery priorities. Options will be presented for consideration.
- Factors related to the CBE's communications with families about the lottery process. This includes:
  - CBE resources and supports provided to schools for communication with families
  - Information that is communicated to families centrally about the lottery process (CBE website, social media, etc.)
  - Aspects of the lottery process timeline (e.g., the time families have to respond to offers of placement)

## 6. OUT OF SCOPE/GIVENS (FACTORS PEOPLE CANNOT INFLUENCE)

Below are factors people cannot influence through this engagement process:

- The lottery process steps identified [here](#).
- The three levels that determine a student's priority group (1, 2 or 3).
- The schools in lottery and their designated overflow schools, which is determined by the capacity limits for each school.
- Implementation timeline: any changes to the zones and communication with families resulting from this engagement will be implemented for the 2027-28 school year.
- CBE Policies and Administrative Regulations, including AR 6090 | Child and Student Registration and Admissions.
- Alberta Government legislation, regulations and guidelines, including the registration practices outlined in the Education Act.

## 7. GROUPS TO BE ENGAGED

The following groups will be engaged:

- Education directors
- System principals
- Principals
- Area office admin
- School front office staff
- Public information staff

All CBE education directors, system principals, principals, Area office admin, school front office staff and public information staff will have the opportunity to share their perspectives through this engagement process, as they – and the schools they are responsible for – may be directly impacted by a decision that determines future lottery zones and potential changes to lottery communications with families. These staff members are either already responsible for schools in lottery or may be responsible for schools in lottery in the future.

## 8. IMPACT ON ENGAGED GROUPS

It is anticipated that a decision about lottery zones and lottery communications with families will have a positive overall impact for engaged groups, as it provides an opportunity for improvements to be made that reflect their preferences.

## 9. ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

The following strategies will be applied to this engagement process:

- Share information about this engagement initiative through direct email and The Week Ahead with a link to a project page.
- As this engagement is internal, all communication about engagement opportunities will be focused on the CBE employees who are being invited to share their perspectives.
- Communication with principals about the engagement will specify that they are welcome to have a conversation with their assistant principal(s) about the lottery zones if they feel it would be valuable to include those perspectives, but only the principal will be invited to complete the survey.
- The focus of this engagement will seek to gather input and feedback on lottery zones and factors related to lottery communications with families.
- Provide an online opportunity for input and feedback (online survey).
- Engagement will occur in alignment with the Dialogue Framework.

## 10. ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

**Engagement Objective #1:** To **gather input** to establish future zones for school lottery priority groups and to enhance the lottery communications with families.

**Outcome:** Participants say they have been listened to and engaged meaningfully in the engagement process.

**Outcome:** Input gathered through this process is considered in the decision.

**Outputs:** Records of input and feedback gathered through engagement activities.

**Communication Objective #1:** To **inform and communicate** about the opportunities available for participants to share their perspectives on lottery zones and factors related to lottery communications with families.

**Outcome:** Participants understand how to provide input, as well as the scope of their influence.

**Outputs:** Communication and messaging provided through existing internal CBE communication channels and direct email.

**Communication Objective #2:** To **inform and communicate** about how input and feedback influenced the decision.

**Outcome:** The majority of those engaged support the final decision based on the engagement process.

**Outcome:** The majority of those engaged can see that their input has influenced the final decision.

**Outputs:** Communication summarizing input and how it influenced decisions.

## 11. ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION TIMELINE

Action	Date
Active engagement period	January 2026
Analysis of input from engagement	Late-January 2026
Engagement results posted on the project page	April 2026
Decision shared with all staff - the decision, including lottery priority zone maps and supporting information, will be shared with staff by the end of October.	October 2026
Decision shared publicly - the decision and full lottery priority zone roll-out (maps, web updates, etc.) will be communicated publicly by the end of November.	November 2026

## 12. MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

We will determine the success of this engagement initiative by the feedback provided from participants, including session evaluations.