



CAIS Report Highlights

**A+** in Educational Excellence





MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

# RAISING THE BAR

I've been known to state that there is no such thing as standing still – if you're not advancing, and moving ahead, you are actually falling behind. As a school, we continually stretch ourselves to continue growing, and there are certain milestones along the way. The CAIS Accreditation is one such milestone.

The CAIS process does not focus solely on compliance in a handful of areas, but it is an extensive review of every area of the school. In a way, it measures the health of the community and educational environment as a whole.

During this process, it became apparent that the constituents in our community are united in their ownership of the School's vision, mission, and values. We, as an entire community, continue to raise the bar. And it is evident that students in our community are key players in the game of risk taking and advocating for new initiatives to grow. There is a collaborative approach that has emerged between student leaders, parents, faculty and administration that benefits the school as a whole. We are united as a strong community.

Yes, we all challenge ourselves to new heights. Through this challenge, we collectively exemplify the values of Fraser Academy.

- We are **Resilient**.
- We value **Acceptance**.
- We are committed to **Innovation**.
- We demonstrate **Self-Reliance**.
- We strive for **Excellence**.

I am so proud of our community and the great work we accomplish every day.

With my utmost respect and admiration,

**Maureen Steltman**  
Head of School



## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

# EXCELLENCE

This is a big win for our community, recognizing the level of excellence to which we all aspire.

The Board of Fraser Academy is extremely proud of the significant, positive results garnered in our first-ever CAIS Accreditation. It was a profound effort and hard won by everyone in our community: by the parents who support the school, by the students who work so hard to take their education to the next level, to all of the faculty who are dedicated to providing the highest caliber of education, and by the leadership and professional development provided by the School.

We can all be proud of the implications this accreditation has for our community. We are performing to a high caliber of national standards, set squarely in a category with some of the finest independent schools in Canada.

We hope you share in this pride, knowing that Fraser Academy has taken great strides to remove substantial educational barriers, offering a platform for your children to flourish and find success in any area they choose for their future.

**Brenda Jones Kinsella**  
Board Chair



## CAIS Accreditation: Promoting Continuous Improvement

In April 2017, a Visiting Committee (VC), comprised of six leading educators from CAIS schools and chaired by Erin Corbett, Head of River Valley School, spent four intensive days immersing themselves in our school and engaging with our community of parents, students, faculty, alumni, and Board members.

The goal was to measure our school against an extensive internal report written with 100% Fraser Academy faculty involvement and input from parents, students, and alumni, as well as against the 11 CAIS standards for independent schools.

The internal report was the culmination of a yearlong review, assessment, and reflection process, overseen by school leaders, that covered every area of school life and included recommendations for areas of improvement.

The CAIS Accreditation is a rigorous process that requires a strong commitment to reflecting on current practices, school improvement, the ability to meet National Standards, and participation in research and professional development.

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To meet the needs of our students, we invest heavily in faculty development and training, and in implementing data-driven, research-based best practice. The school community has embraced the concept of continuous improvement, and this is demonstrated in school communications and all aspects of school life.

– MAUREEN STELTMAN, HEAD OF SCHOOL

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Fraser Academy can walk tall and be proud of the learning environment they have created. A warm, dynamic and rich learning environment where they “celebrate the unique strengths of individuals with dyslexia and language-based learning differences, empowering students with choice and opportunity,” students are clearly at the center of everything Fraser Academy does.

– ERIN CORBETT, CHAIR OF CAIS VISITING COMMITTEE

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## Why Accreditation Matters

- ☑ Encourages highest educational standards and best practices.
- ☑ Creates accountability to all constituents.
- ☑ Assures parents that the school is focused on providing a safe and enriching learning environment while maintaining an efficient and effective operation.
- ☑ Provides education leaders at all levels with deserved recognition for going above and beyond the minimum to demonstrate their ongoing commitment to excellence and learning.

As part of our school-wide Executive Function Curriculum, we teach students to reflect and improve on their own performance. It is this same concept that we embrace as a school. Self-reflection and response are essential elements on the journey of continuous improvement.



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There is a genuine sense that students really love their school and embrace the idea that “Fraser Academy is our home. We live here.” When asked what they love about the school, student responses centered on feeling supported by their teachers and counsellors and feeling connected to the school. There is no doubt that students are on a mission to become self-reliant, successful learners.

– VC REPORT

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## Commendations & Highlights

The CAIS Visiting Committee (VC) highly commended Fraser Academy in many arenas. Following is a sampling of areas of our school that were highlighted in the report.



### MISSION, VISION, VALUES AND STRATEGY

- ✓ The diverse programming at Fraser Academy being a strong reflection of a school living its mission, vision and values.
- ✓ A lived and widely understood, accepted and celebrated mission “[to] celebrate the unique strengths of individuals with dyslexia and language-based learning differences, empowering students with choice and opportunity.”
- ✓ The RAISE values (Resilience, Acceptance, Innovation, Self-reliance, Excellence) being evident in the way students carry themselves and speak about their school.



### CO-CURRICULUM AND THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- ✓ Innovative programs, such as Odyssey, indicative of a school that is willing to explore and experiment so that students can thrive in an interdisciplinary, real-life, and inquiry based setting.

- ✓ The design and implementation of the 3C Thinking Program, Fraser Academy’s Executive Function (EF) Curriculum, Odyssey and OE<sup>3</sup> programs requiring students to think critically, creatively, collaboratively, and reflectively across subjects and settings.
- ✓ Substantial effort to integrate art into all areas of the curriculum in a meaningful and intentional manner.
- ✓ Strong commitment to and investment of time in modeling and teaching the school’s values of Resilience, Acceptance, Innovation, Self-Reliance and Excellence.
- ✓ A culture of empowerment, where students feel safe to embrace failure as a learning opportunity across settings.
- ✓ The variety of character programs, co-curricular opportunities and service opportunities that provide awareness of diversity and inclusivity.
- ✓ An environment in which students can discuss any questions or worries they have with trusted adults.
- ✓ The strong foundation and common will for promoting student-driven leadership initiatives within the school.
- ✓ An overall learning environment that enables the school’s mission.



### ACADEMIC PROGRAM

- ✓ A scope and sequence for thinking skills instruction as well as Fraser Academy’s Executive Function Curriculum.
- ✓ Exemplary efforts taken to prepare students for postsecondary education and life beyond Fraser Academy.
- ✓ The depth and breadth of program support that ensures student success.

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Fraser Academy is creating a community of confident, competent, resilient, respectful, empathetic and thoughtful life-long learners.

– VC REPORT

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Faculty are eager to foster a culture of full-school collaboration and continuous improvement and innovation in teaching and learning while leveraging technology that creates learning experiences for all students and faculty.

– VC REPORT

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- ✓ Effective common “Collaboration Time” for Middle and Senior School teachers to undertake and sustain school improvement.
- ✓ The commitment to providing the highest quality of education for our students.
- ✓ Academic programs, which exemplify academic excellence, and leveraging these programs’ strengths to build a comprehensive Grade 2 to 12 school.
- ✓ The faculty’s commitment to helping all students understand and apply a wide variety of learning strategies, evident during each classroom visit.
- ✓ The value that faculty place on student-centered learning and commitment to providing a variety of access points to class content.
- ✓ A school culture that works with students to develop goals to improve skills and consciously helps students become more aware of their learning profile.
- ✓ Students having access to coding and computational thinking in a developmentally appropriate and accessible manner, developing a maturity of thinking that is reflected by the creative and collaborative work they are able to do as they progress through the school.
- ✓ A culture that encourages creative and collaborative thinking by inviting students to get actively involved in their learning, formulate questions, investigate and build new understandings and knowledge.
- ✓ The Learning Services Program at Fraser Academy being an exemplary model for supporting students with dyslexia and language based learning disabilities.
- ✓ Documented procedures for “Personal Information Privacy Policy for Parents & Students”.



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Many students remarked how the School has given them the tools to learn about their own learning challenges and to be able to advocate for support that best suits them. This confidence and deep understanding of learning is one that sets Fraser Academy students apart.

- VC REPORT

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### **SCHOOL LEADERSHIP, HUMAN RESOURCES, ENROLMENT MANAGEMENT**

- ✓ Our current initiative to conduct a study on the impact of a hybrid model of NILD and OG intervention programs.
- ✓ Commitment to selecting mission appropriate students.
- ✓ The leadership team feeling empowered by upper administration, the Head of School and Assistant Heads.
- ✓ The development of robust strategies to involve the employees in the retention of students.
- ✓ Broad opportunities for professional and career advancement, particularly for a smaller school.
- ✓ Leading the way in Canada in having certified Educational Therapists.



### **SCHOOL & COMMUNITY, GOVERNANCE, FINANCE**

- ✓ The Board of Fraser Academy demonstrating a deep commitment to the mission, vision, values and strategic plan of the school.
- ✓ Crafting a positive, strengths-focused mission, vision and value set for the school reframing this as not just a great school for students with learning disabilities, but highlighting that this is just what school should look like for all students.
- ✓ The impressive increase in donor participation by 56% in addition to faculty and staff giving levels that are up 69%.



### **COMMITMENT TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

- ✓ The commitment to self-improvement being evident in conversations with the entire school team.
- ✓ A culture of innovation and strategic programming.
- ✓ Faculty and staff consistently seeking ways to improve programming and enhance the quality of education for all students.
- ✓ The launch of several school-wide changes and programs in a variety of areas that are data and evidence driven being a real area of strength for the school.
- ✓ Engagement with current research in a meaningful way being interwoven into the cultural landscape of the school.
- ✓ A leadership team deeply engaged with developing programming that best fits the needs of the students at the school.
- ✓ A true commitment to embracing change and new approaches to education.
- ✓ The strategic approach of creating a “building cognition” curriculum that incorporates several aspects of programming, such as the Executive Function and 3C Thinking curriculums, having the potential to make a significant impact in the learning of so many students.

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The faculty and staff at Fraser Academy are deeply committed to celebrating the differences in learning styles and abilities of all students. There is a strategic collective effort to ensure that an appropriate variety of instructional strategies is used to engage all learners. Faculty and staff strive to foster learning environments that are strength-based, promote resilience, and provide opportunity and challenge.

- VC REPORT

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## Recommendations

A sample of suggestions from the VC for improvement included the following.

- ✓ Reviewing the creation of a five-year financial plan to assist with the strategic goals surrounding new facilities.
- ✓ Developing a long-range facilities plan and incorporating it into the long-range financial plan.
- ✓ Developing an environmental responsibility plan that is congruent with the school's mission and vision as identified in the Internal Report.

## Results

The CAIS Accreditation has been a valuable process for us as educators, and we are happy to share the findings of this process with our community. It is an opportunity to celebrate the hard work and dedication present at our school every day, which extends to actualizing our vision of Changing Destiny by Changing Minds.

## Thank you!

We are grateful to the CAIS Visiting Committee for their extensive review of our School. The feedback and report will serve our entire community and assist to further develop excellence in our programming. We also thank all students, parents, alumni, Board members, staff and faculty who contributed during this year-long process.

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Teach[ing] to the individual, not the average”, Fraser Academy has impressive school wide approaches to learning using NILD therapy, the Orton Gillingham method, faculty developed programs in C3 Thinking Program, OE<sup>3</sup> and Odyssey in addition to an entire floor of personal learning specialists, small classes including a highly impressive specialist and co curricular offering.

– ERIN CORBETT, CHAIR OF CAIS VISITING COMMITTEE

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