

# Off-Campus Learning

## Case study on day trips and swimming lessons

Every student comes into the classroom with a different world experience that is affected by their culture, financial situation, and family influences. Several studies have concluded that students who have been exposed to a variety of activities tend to do better in school. Providing off-campus learning opportunities are a great way to help level the playing field a little for students across the board by offering experiences with and insights into different subjects, industries, and activities.

Even though there is agreement that off campus learning is beneficial to students, the cost of providing it can often be prohibitive for schools. As off-campus learning is not part of the core curriculum, schools need guardians to contribute in order to plan and execute each event. For children in financially secure households this is rarely a problem, but for poorer families contributing even a few dollars to cover a field trip can be unattainable. Ultimately schools have to cancel off-campus learning opportunities altogether or exclude those children from less wealthy households, and every time a school makes the decision to cancel or limit participation for off-campus learning, we continue to widen the gap between the rich and poor in our city. Students from financially secure households will, in general, get a wider variety of life experience outside of school than their poorer counterparts. Failing to remove barriers to off-campus learning opportunities will negatively impact a significant number of CBE students whose only chance to experience a wide variety of opportunities is in school.

### Day Trips

We are lucky that our city has a remarkable array of activities and events ready to be enjoyed, but for a significant number of young people without school trips they would never experience any of them. Offering trips to the zoo, days in the mountains, visits to the science centre, or chances to see a play within the school ensure that every child gets to see, do, and try new things regardless of their family's financial situation. The Off-Campus Learning Fund allows educators to plan and execute day trips without having to exclude individuals of less means than their peers and lets them broaden the horizons of all their charges.

Did you know Calgary has a river???" said an 11-year-old girl, born and raised in Calgary, after her first ever trip to the zoo in grade 6.



### Swimming

Swimming is a skill that has the potential to save lives, whether it's making each individual child proficient enough in water to save themselves, or developing stronger skills in the pool that would enable an individual to assist somebody else in difficulty. Thanks to strong school swimming programs, Canada has significantly improved swimming rates than its southern neighbour, but the programs are expensive to run and rely on the financial support of parents. For schools in less affluent areas where parents struggle to contribute financially, swimming would be out of reach without outside investment. The Off-Campus Learning Fund helps to ensure that all CBE students have equitable opportunities in school by removing the financial barrier faced by some institutions.