



WISE Charter Society: Three-Year Capital Plan 2027 - 2030

Executive Summary

The WISE Charter School (WISE) is Alberta's first public charter school delivering Waldorf education. The current K-9 school facility does not meet safety, capacity, or program requirements necessary to support the WISE Charter's educational mandate.

Capital Request Overview

Project Classification: Replacement School (K-9) on an adjacent site

This capital request seeks approval for a replacement school adjacent to the current site in Ottewell. The proposed project addresses critical space and infrastructure deficiencies, student safety concerns, and sustained enrollment growth, while providing purpose-built learning spaces aligned with Alberta Education requirements and WISE Charter School's educational program. The proposal reflects provincial education and infrastructure policy priorities, including the Education Business Plan, Ministerial Mandate Letters, Alberta's Choice in Education Act, and Alberta Infrastructure's Strategic Capital Plan, by ensuring students have access to a safe, modern, and program-appropriate learning environment.

The existing facility, constructed in 1958 with a 1964 expansion, has exceeded its functional lifespan. Deficiencies in building systems, inadequate instructional and ancillary spaces, and site-related safety constraints limit program delivery and student access. Enrollment demand has significantly increased since becoming a public charter school, further exacerbating capacity limitations.

A replacement facility will provide a learning environment designed to meet current and future student needs. The project supports immediate and long-term enrollment growth, including expansion to provide core facilities for two classrooms (double-stream) per Gr. K-4 and one classroom (single-stream) per Gr. 5-9, with site planning and future design consideration for double-stream modular classrooms for Gr. 5-9 and eventual high school development.

Project Need

Core infrastructure deficiencies include depleted insulation, and electrical and mechanical systems, leading to high maintenance costs. Learning spaces, including the gymnasium and library, fall below Alberta Education standards and significantly limit programming capacity. The absence of dedicated science lab and Career and Technology Studies (CTS) spaces restricts hands-on and experiential learning. Transportation safety, traffic access and dispersed portable classrooms further compromise student safety and supervision. Future expansion, including site fitness for a future high school, requires facilities that support immediate and long-term enrollment expansion demands.

Project Proposed

The solution arising from the Value Scoping process is for a replacement school on the adjacent site, ensuring long-term value, student safety, and effective learning spaces.



Alternative options reviewed during the value scoping process were unable to provide solutions to address the identified needs.

Government Priorities, Municipal and Community Engagement

This proposal aligns with provincial priorities by:

- Ensuring safe and appropriate learning spaces
- Providing a cost-effective solution for aging infrastructure by replacing facilities that are no longer operationally or financially sustainable due to deterioration
- Responding to community demand for increased enrollment spaces
- Supporting Parental Choice in Education; and improving student educational experiences and learning outcomes

The WISE leadership is engaged with the City of Edmonton regarding a potential land exchange/acquisition and is collaborating with the Waldorf Education Society of Edmonton, the current owner of the school building and land parcel, to acquire the current site.

Capital Project Request

Replacement School – A new K-9 facility on an adjacent site

This request involves constructing a replacement facility on an adjacent site and demolishing the existing school upon completion of the new facility. The new building would be designed to meet Alberta Education guidelines, improve safety, and provide optimal educational spaces that meet the WISE Charter delivery. This location allows for future expansion, including doubling streams for K-6, 7-9, and the potential addition of a high school. While this project requires land acquisition and rezoning, it is the most future-proof solution.

Project Drivers

Building Condition: The 1958-built structure has significant infrastructure inefficiencies (electrical, mechanical, and building envelope) that cannot be addressed with Infrastructure Maintenance & Renewal (IMR) funding alone. The aging facility no longer meets modern building standards, resulting in higher operational costs and reduced sustainability.

Health & Safety: The current school layout prevents safe student drop-off, lacks safe access for busing, and limited site street access creates significant traffic congestion risks for students, staff and families during peak times. The dispersed placement of portables presents supervision challenges and inefficiencies in student movement on the site, impacting student safety and accessibility.

Functionality & Programming: The lack of CTS spaces, science lab, and appropriately sized gym/library facilities limits WISE's ability to meet Waldorf and Alberta Education curriculum



delivery requirements. Additionally, current administrative and student support spaces are critically undersized, impacting student services, teaching and leading collaboration, and community building.

Efficiency Solutions: A replacement facility allows for considerable operational efficiency improvements and long-term maintenance cost reduction, while ensuring a sustainable facility that meets current and future educational needs. Consolidating instructional spaces into a purpose-built structure enhances program delivery, student experience, and school-wide integration.

Expansion & Future Readiness: WISE is committed to long-term growth, including a vision to expand into high school (10-12 year horizon). Since WISE became a public charter school, enrollment demand has already significantly exceeded available student spaces in K-4. To support enrollment expansion demands, WISE will introduce a second stream K-6, adding one modular classroom per grade annually as minor capital modular approvals allow. A purpose-built facility will ensure compliance with Alberta Education's space guidelines while preserving Waldorf principles and supporting the growth outlined in the WISE Charter.

Supporting Data & Evidence

Built in 1958 with expansions in 1964, the existing school facility has surpassed its functional lifespan and no longer meets education standards. A 2016 real estate appraisal of the building and a 2023 engineering report on the portable classrooms indicate deficiencies in insulation, electrical, and mechanical systems, contributing to inefficiencies and increasingly unsustainable maintenance demands. The aging infrastructure and inadequate portables present risks to student safety, learning conditions, and long-term sustainability. As investigated in the value scope process, identified issues fall outside the scope of Infrastructure Maintenance and Renewal (IMR) funding, making replacement the optimal solution.

Furthermore, core and ancillary spaces fall significantly below Alberta Education's space allocation guidelines, limiting student access to essential programming:

- At 53% of the required size, the gym significantly restricts K-9 physical education.
- The library lacks space to support a functional library, oral storytelling, and collaborative inquiry, all core to Waldorf pedagogy. A purpose-built space will support immersive storytelling, literary exploration, and flexible group learning in an environment aligned with child development principles.
- The absence of dedicated Career and Technology Studies (CTS) and science lab restricts the hands-on, experiential learning fundamental to Waldorf's phenomenological approach as outlined in the WISE Charter. Purpose-built facilities will enable alignment with Alberta Education requirements.



- Administrative and student support spaces are critically deficient, impacting student services, staff collaboration, and WISE’s culture of parental involvement and volunteerism. Essential collaboration and community spaces for educators, parents, and volunteers, are currently insufficient to support the WISE’s broader learning community.
- Since becoming a public charter school, enrollment demand for the WISE Charter School has surged, highlighting the need for expansion, with demand exceeding available Kindergarten enrollment spaces by 230%. To meet future enrollment needs, WISE made minor capital requests for modular classrooms to add a third Kindergarten class and a second Grade 1, which will require continued infrastructure expansion to support a second stream per grade at the current site.

A purpose-built facility will:

- Ensure student compliance with Alberta Education and meet the guidelines for student safety, and space allocation
- Support effective stewardship of provincial and organizational financial resources
- Provide students with a safe and program-appropriate learning environment in accordance with the WISE Charter
- Address immediate and future enrollment expansion demand in the K-6 to support the long-term WISE Charter mandate goals of creating high school spaces

Enrollment Projections - 3-Year Capital Plan

Student Numbers *	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	New School opens	2nd year of New School
<i>2025/26</i>	<i>2026/27</i>	<i>2027/28</i>	<i>2028/29</i>	<i>2029/30</i>	<i>2030/31</i>	<i>2031/32</i>
203	253	297	335	365	394	428
230% increase in enrollment demand for Kinder & Grade 1 demonstrate need for additional classroom spaces	Double-stream Grade 1	3rd Kinder and Double-stream Grades 1-2	3rd Kinder and Double-stream Grades 1-3	3rd Kinder and Double-stream Grades 1-4	3rd Kinder and Double-stream Grades 1-5	3rd Kinder and Double-stream Grades 1-6

* WISE’s educational model requires an increased designated classroom space/ student ratio to meet pedagogical standards.



Capital Priorities

To accommodate projected enrollment growth and program delivery requirements, WISE Charter School requests that Alberta Education approve funding for a replacement school that will:

- Accommodate 395 students (K-9) in a purpose-built facility.
- Provide core facilities for two classrooms (double-stream) per Gr. K-5 and one classroom (single-stream) per Gr. 6-9, with site planning and future design consideration for double-stream classrooms for Gr. 6-9 modular classrooms.
- Accommodate core facilities for 420 students to allow for community enrollment expansion demands
- Include dedicated spaces meeting Alberta Education capacity standards, CTS equivalent charter school space, science labs, library, gymnasium, an auditorium and ancillary spaces
- Ensure community space for out-of-school care and Waldorf Early Childhood Education (ECE) program, a critical feeder program supporting enrollment growth

Alignment with Government Priorities

This proposal contributes to the Government of Alberta's Education and Infrastructure strategies by:

- Providing safe and appropriate educational learning spaces for students – The proposed project provides a modern, efficient, and cost-effective replacement for a facility that has exceeded its functional lifespan.
- Ensuring student safety and accessibility – A campus redesign addresses student pedestrian safety and supervision, accessibility deficiencies, and allows for busing transportation options.
- Expanding Parental Choice in Education – The WISE Charter School supports the province's commitment to increasing charter school options for families and expanding enrollment spaces.
- Supporting mental wellness – As a core tenet of Waldorf education, the WISE Charter School creates educational spaces designed to increase emotional well-being through an integrated curriculum with increased daily movement, access to the natural world, and digital-minimalist learning environments that support student mental wellness and resilience.



Project Classification

WISE Charter School's capital request is to build a replacement school. WISE seeks a new K-9 facility on an adjacent site to replace the current inadequate and aging infrastructure. A replacement school enables WISE to provide a safe, efficient, purpose-built Waldorf school with additional space to meet enrollment demand.

The Value Scope also considered a Modernization and Addition option to upgrade the existing building with expansions to accommodate student needs and enhance safety; however, the option was not able to provide solutions for safety concerns, or long-term expansion, and posed significant student learning disruption with phased construction.

Meeting Evaluation Criteria

This WISE Charter School capital request of a purpose-built Waldorf K-9 replacement school meets the six key evaluation criteria outlined in Bill 73, the Infrastructure Accountability Act, as it:

- **Ensures safe and appropriate learning environments** by addressing aging infrastructure to meet modern safety and accessibility standards
- **Supports cost efficiency** by investing in new infrastructure and reducing long-term maintenance and operational costs
- **Improves educational outcomes for students** by providing a purpose-built facility aligned with Alberta Education requirements
- **Enhances community resilience** by providing a stable, long-term facility for a growing community while attracting young families to an established neighbourhood
- **Supports a variety of educational programming and parental choice** with access to a diversity of skills and interests embedded within the WISE Charter, and aligned with Alberta's Choice in Education policy
- **Enhances economic growth and diversification** by developing student competencies in creativity, problem-solving, resilience, and adaptability, aligned with Alberta's long-term workforce development goals

Municipal and Community Engagement

The WISE Charter Society has engaged with the City of Edmonton regarding a potential land exchange to facilitate the development of a new school site. Initial discussions indicate that the City is open to exploring a 1:1 exchange, pending a civic spaces assessment. Acquiring



additional open space beyond a direct exchange requires the City to evaluate whether the land is surplus to civic needs and to seek approval for any sale at fair market value.

The Waldorf Education Society of Edmonton (WESE), the current site owner, is open and interested in discussing the sale of the property to support this development. WISE remains committed to working within municipal and provincial planning frameworks to ensure that, upon funding approval, site readiness aligns with necessary processes and regulatory requirements, enabling the project to move forward efficiently.

Project Scope & Implementation Readiness

The WISE Charter School has completed a Value Scope assessment in collaboration with START Architecture, confirming the most effective capital solution to address infrastructure, space, and educational needs. This process has provided a clear framework for implementation, ensuring the project aligns with Alberta Education facility standards and capital planning priorities.

With a Value Scope completed in March 2025, WISE submitted a Schools Now proposal in April 2025.

Capital Project Cost

Replacement Gr. K-9, 420-core school facility, with double-stream classrooms for Gr. K-4

The WISE Charter Society Budget for a K-9 Replacement school w/ 420 core capacity on adjacent site					
Item Description	Area m ²	%	\$/m ²	Subtotal	Total
Replacement School	3978		\$5,100.00	\$20,287,800.00	
Hazardous materials abatement	2080		\$100.00	\$208,000.00	
Demolition of existing building	1550		\$125.00	\$193,750.00	
Demolish modular classrooms	530		\$125.00	\$66,250.00	
Misc Sitework		3.50%		\$726,453.00	
Contingency		3%		\$622,674.00	
Building Construction and Site Development Subtotal				\$22,104,927.00	\$22,104,927.00
Consultant fees		6.5%			\$1,436,820.26
Project Expenses		2%			\$442,098.54
Furniture & Equipment		7%			\$1,547,344.89
Acquisition (est)					\$8,274,400.00
GST		1.60%			\$540,889.45
Total Replacement School Cost					\$34,346,480.14



Capital Plan Attachments for Reference

1. [Value Scope Report \(January - March 2025\)](#)
2. [School campus: Real Estate Appraisal - Analysis & Conclusion \(2016\)](#)
3. [Portables Engineering Report \(2023\)](#)
4. [WISE CS Board Meeting Minutes approving Capital Plan \(February 2026\)](#)
5. [WISE Enrollment Projection 2026/27 - 2029/30](#)
6. [WISE CS Level 1 Site Readiness](#)
7. [Schools Now Proposal Submission- April 2025](#)