



# Writing Sample

## CALGARY POLICE SERVICE SPEARHEADS AMBITIOUS STUDENT PROGRAM

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### The Integrated School Support Project brings together police, psychologists, educators and social workers in an effort to support at-risk students and their families.



Students of Patrick Airlie school pose around for the camera and then run off to mingle with a group of Calgary Police Officers.

“If we get to them young, they’re not going to become bad guys,” he adds. At-risk students and their families are the focus of this innovative new program that integrates the services of police, teachers, social workers, psychologists and physical education specialists.

The ultimate goal is to provide students with the tools and support needed to achieve academic success while forging strong community connections.

ISSP is being piloted at Holy Trinity School and Patrick Airlie School in Forest Lawn.

**O**n September 19, Calgary police chief Rick Hanson hosted an event at Patrick Airlie School where he introduced an initiative, dubbed the Integrated School Support Project (ISSP), an operation that pairs youth with positive role models who can make a real difference in their lives.

“As far as I’m concerned, this is all about community,” says Gary Strother, chief superintendent of the Calgary Catholic School District.

Breakfast and lunch programs, as well as mentoring and tutoring, are initially being offered to students ages four to 12. However, infants and youth up to the age of 18 will be added as the ISSP expands in scope.

According to the Calgary Police Service (CPS), many ISSP partners and sponsors are making financial contributions. Additional funds are being raised through corporate and private donations.



Integration is paramount and it's one reason the program is being touted as such an innovative approach.

David Stevenson, chief superintendent of the Calgary Board of Education (CBE), says teamwork is an essential part of the plan.

“Our community, our future, becomes stronger when we all work together,” he says. “When we work together we are able to provide opportunities for our students that, separately, we could never provide.”

The number of participants and programs that have been combined into ISSP is impressive. The CBE, CPS, the City of Calgary, Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary, Calgary Reads, Meals on Wheels and YMCA Calgary are a few of the partners that have stepped up.

According to Hanson, wide-ranging support is critical. “This city is growing phenomenally fast so you’ve got challenges and issues and it’s not easy,” Hanson cautions. “Calgary’s going to be a better city, and this community is going to be a better place because of all of us pulling together... in way that’s going to impact so many people.”

Valerie Murphy, principal at Patrick Airlie School in Forest Lawn, agrees: “We’re delighted for the kids and the families in this neighbourhood. These children have a lot of potential.”

Murphy has already seen how students have been positively impacted by the presence of police officers in the school.

“They might be playing chess with the kids, they might be making paper airplanes or they might be shooting hoops. The day that we had such a big blizzard they were out here rolling giant snowballs with them.”

Reducing high-risk behaviour, lowering criminal activity in the neighbourhood and increasing community engagement and academic achievement are just a few of the measures of success for ISSP.

“For educators, it’s a challenging world, but challenges are easier when we bring in people with right expertise in the right areas,” says Dianne Yee, director of Area 3 for the Calgary Board of Education.