

# Charter School Research and Innovation Initiatives

## ALMADINA LANGUAGE CHARTER ACADEMY - CALGARY

Almadina Language Charter Academy is currently in their second year of research with The Reading Foundation.

## AURORA CHARTER SCHOOL - EDMONTON

Aurora School commissioned a study (2012) by Dr. Paul Newton and Gus Riveros, entitled “Aurora Charter School Effectiveness Review” University of Alberta. The study was conducted to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the Aurora instructional program. The study can be viewed at: <http://www.auroraschool.com/schooleffectivenessreview.pdf>

Aurora School commissioned a study (2013) by Dr. Augusto Riveros (University of Alberta) entitled Aurora “ICT Implementation Report” University of Alberta. The study was conducted to ascertain strengths and weakness of technology implementation process at Aurora over the 2011-13 period. The study can be viewed at: <http://tinyurl.com/lk7rq47>

In partial completion of her M.Ed. studies at the University of Portland, Carol Bartel Nickel completed an M.Ed. thesis (2014) entitled: “Collaboration in a Grade 9 English Classroom” Nickel (Dr. James Carroll, Research Advisor). Ms. Nickel is the Assistant Principal of the Aurora Academic 5-9 program. She collected data for the study in Aurora grade 9 ELA classes. This study compared teaching strategies –Direct instruction, Collaboration, and Computer Supported Collaborative Learning - and their effect on student achievement and student engagement.

## BOYLE STREET EDUCATION CENTRE - EDMONTON

Book – Averill, M. (2013). SWEET: The Learning Lives of Students Who Have Experienced Extreme Trauma. Self-Published at the Edmonton Public Library Maker Space.

- Paper and Presentation - Community-University Partnership study – Best Practices for Supporting High-Risk Youth with FASD in a Secondary School Setting. Paper presented at 6th National Biennial Conference on
- Adolescents and Adults with FASD in Vancouver, BC.
- Paper and Presentation – Cox, J. (2013). Tenured Teachers & Technology Integration in the Classroom. Contemporary Issues in Education Research. Vol: 6; No: 2. Paper presented in Las Vegas, NV.
- Participant – Community-University Partnership study - Youth 4 YEG (project lead Dr. Yoshi Iwasaki, Associate Dean, Faculty of Extension).

## CALGARY ARTS ACADEMY - CALGARY

Recent research on learning through the arts at the higher grades has been discussed with University of Calgary professor, Dr. Robert Kelly. As part of planning for Calgary Arts Academy (CAA) preferred future, CAA is presently exploring the concept of design as it related to arts instruction.

In addition to this, CAA is studying different arts instruction methodologies to determine if there is in fact a similar process of arts instruction to the CAA model of arts immersion.

#### **CALGARY GIRLS' SCHOOL - CALGARY**

The Calgary Girls' School is signatory to the University of Calgary Research Partners Agreement. The procedures and processes for collaborating on research projects are still being developed; however, the Calgary Girls' School recently participated in a UC study on assessment practices. The principal was invited to present the school's perspective at the International Association of Evaluation and Assessment conference in Tel Aviv. The Calgary Girls' School is currently in discussions with the Werklund School of Education (UC) regarding research focused on the teaching and learning of Mathematics.

BP Energy awarded two grants (\$10,000) for energy-related, student research projects and two of our science teachers are participating this summer in professional learning designed by Telus Spark. The program provides skill building, collaboration and practical challenges for designing learning that fits our school.

#### **CONNECT CHARTER SCHOOL - CALGARY**

Connect Charter School has been designated as a Partner Research School with the University of Calgary and has a similar Memorandum of Understanding with Mount Royal University. Through an Alberta Education initiative focusing on the role of charter schools in promoting a transformation of education Connect Charter School involved Dr. Pamela Adams from the University of Lethbridge in conducting a two-year research of the school which demonstrate the important role served by charter schools in partnering and sharing best practices with other schools.

Members of the Connect Charter School teaching staff have undertaken over 40 research and innovation projects over the past three years which have provided significant insights relating to exemplary learning, teaching and leadership.

#### **CENTRE FOR ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL EXCELLENCE - MEDICINE HAT**

Centre for Academic and Personal Excellence (CAPE) is beginning a research project in partnership with University of Lethbridge (details to be determined) on parental engagement. It is a school-wide action research project that focuses on the use of technology to connect and inform parents and increase their engagement in the learning of their student.

#### **FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE CHARTER ACADEMY - CALGARY**

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy (FFCA) has chosen to partner (for the last several years) with Gonzaga University in Spokane in the preparation of leaders through offering a Masters Degree in School Leadership to cohorts of FFCA staff (Graduates of this program are currently serving in administrative positions at FFCA). FFCA has chosen to focus their partnership efforts on professional learning of staff and to receive the benefits of this partnership through the graduates of this program enacting successful and innovative approaches to school leadership.

#### **NEW HORIZONS CHARTER SCHOOL - SHERWOOD PARK**

Examining the Cognitive Processing Skills of Gifted Children

Principal Researcher: Georgios Georgiou, PhD – Associate Professor, Department of Educational Psychology, University of Alberta.

Purpose of Study: (a) To examine what cognitive processing skills differentiate between gifted and non-gifted learners, i.e. What are the differences in cognitive processing between children identified as gifted when compared with children who have not been identified as gifted? (b) To examine which of the cognitive processing skills are predictors of student success in reading and mathematics.

Health Through Physical Literacy

Principal Researcher: Dr Pat Longmuir, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute

Purpose of Study: To enable teachers and other education professionals to understand whether students have the capacity to achieve a physically active lifestyle; this is whether they are achieving the physical literacy outcomes within the physical and health education curriculum.

#### **SUZUKI CHARTER SCHOOL - EDMONTON**

Explore the Impact of the Suzuki Approach on Student Learning

Principal Researcher: Dr. Jacqueline Leighton - Chair of Educational Psychology, University of Alberta

Purpose of Study: Is there an association between the Suzuki pedagogical approach and student academic and personal learning outcomes? Follow up work continues on this project and it may become part of a possible presentation to the American Research Association.

Currently Suzuki Charter School is discussing a research partnership with Dr. Leighton and the University of Alberta. The partnership would be in the area of research funded through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSRRC) to discover appropriate instructional interventions for creating the emotional and social climate to nurture the most sophisticated method of cognitive development and learning.

#### **VALHALLA COMMUNITY SCHOOL - VALHALLA**

Valhalla Community School participated in a research project for their Reading Mastery program with the National Institute for Direct Instruction in Oregon. Valhalla Community School has also shared their educational practices with the Grande Prairie Regional College education students.

#### **WESTMOUNT CHARTER SCHOOL - CALGARY**

Westmount Charter School (WCS) has many research initiatives that are resulting in innovative approaches to learning and teaching. The environment of inquiry, collaboration and continuous improvement empowers all stakeholders to “seek and find a better way”.

WCS has a number of research projects under way with the University of Calgary. Two of these projects are:

- “A case study on how teachers come to understand, identify, connect, teach and assess key mathematical concepts across Grades 5 – 9,” with Dr. Krista Francis-Pocente; and
- “Relationship between Parenting Stress and Children’s Attribution Style in Childhood Anxiety,” by M.Sc. student Maisha M. Syeda, School of Applied Child Psychology, Educational Studies in Psychology, Faculty of Education, U of C.

Examples of other research projects are:

- “Overexcitabilities in Gifted Students OEQ-IIc,” November 2012, with Dr. Frank Falk, Director of Research, Institute for the Study of Advanced Development, University of Akron. Follow-up to occur during the 2013-2014 school term.
- “An Online Study of the Emotional and Cognitive Mechanisms of Cyber Bullying, Victimization and Kindness,” with Dr. Joan Stevenson, Queen’s University.
- “Socialization of Gifted Children in Schools in Canada,” a study by Masters Degree student, Ms. Luliia Khilko from the University of Ukraine.