

# “Change in Action 2”

## TAAPCS Annual Report 2017-2018

October 27, 2018

[www.taapcs.ca](http://www.taapcs.ca)



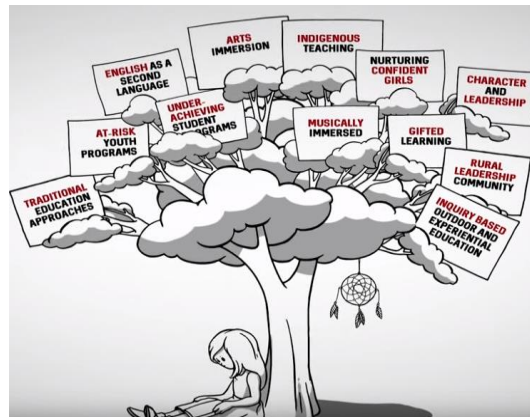
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## **BACKGROUND**

The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools represents Alberta's 13 charter schools. Charter schools are public schools under the *School Act, September 1, 2018* and as such provide to parents and guardians a choice for their child(ren)'s education. Charter schools help Alberta satisfy the statement from the Preamble of said *School Act*, "*WHEREAS parents have a right and a responsibility to make decisions respecting the education of their children;*" Alberta is the only province or territory in Canada to legislate charter schools. Current provincial regulation permits up to 15 charter schools. The last approved charter school was Valhalla Charter School in 2008.

The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools has 13 members from a wide geographic and demographic area which extends from Medicine Hat in the south to Valhalla Centre in the north, including six schools in Calgary and five schools in Edmonton and area. The mandate of each school is unique and distinctive. The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools was formally created to support all schools regardless of location and mandate ([www.taapcs.ca](http://www.taapcs.ca)).



## **FOUNDATIONAL STATEMENTS**

### **TAAPCS VISION**

*Working together to support choice and innovation in public education*

### **TAAPCS OBJECTIVES**

1. To promote and facilitate public charter school education in Alberta
2. To advocate collectively and effectively on behalf of the membership
3. To promote a forum for public charter schools to meet in support of common goals
4. To advocate for continued innovation and choice within public education

### **TAAPCS VALUES**

1. What's best for student learning
2. What's correct
3. What strengthens learning communities
4. What sustains exemplary public education

## **MEETING DATES**

The two regular meetings for the Association took place on the following dates:

- October 27/28, 2017 – Edmonton
- May 4/5, 2018 – Calgary



Preceding the regular meetings were Superintendent as well as Charter Board Directors' meetings. In addition to the above, the Superintendents and Secretary Treasurers meet in Red Deer on Sept. 15, 2017, and the Education Advisory Committee met on the following dates:

- October 13, 2017 (Red Deer)
- February 8, 2018 (Conference Call)
- April 12, 2018 (Edmonton)
- June 15, 2018 (Conference Call)

## **MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR, RON KOPER**



Serving TAAPCS over the last 12 months has been a privilege. There have been significant challenges for our association and for many Albertans over the past year. In the midst of interesting times however, our 13 member schools have all forged important progress, as has our association. Certainly, more is needed from our association and we are capable of more. The progress we've made however will enable us to be increasingly effective in delivering on the association's key objectives.

A review of annual reports from our members will reveal many major milestone accomplishments, celebrations as well as continuing high performance. Those who take the time to inquire will observe the evolutionary deepening of each charter, shaped through experience, research and innovation made possible through the fulfillment of charter commitments. It's also accurate that in every charter there may have been unmet needs, struggles with regulatory administration, or projects needing capital or approval. Public charter schools however completed facility upgrades, charter renewal, leadership and board transitions, new programming and a wide variety of advances directly enhancing student learning. Most importantly, public charter schools maintained exceptionally high learning community engagement, produced very strong results and maintained high interest and support for their programs.

Our association's progress was importantly oriented toward executing foundational work undertaken in previous years. Implementing a governance structure, developing policy, committee structures and operational processes required to make our new bylaws productive was challenging and critical work to accomplish. For a first pass through our new processes we fared quite well. As our shared understanding continues to grow and our capability deepens we'll be faster and more effective in responding to opportunities and challenges in our environment.

Developing a new fee structure that will move us toward being sustainable effective association was an important accomplishment. The involvement, openness, listening and decision-making demonstrated in the association were exemplary. It was easy to observe clear, strong, shared values guiding the decisions required. The outcome was a model of the collaborative unity that will help sustain success of public charter schools.

We were unified and collected at the spring general meeting while retaining the diversity of perspective and style, which our charters are designed to nurture. The work generated in the spring will shape ongoing

strategy development, help us form longer-range plans and maintain a clear advocacy agenda. Admittedly this work has been slow to come together. It has already informed our action and communication however and will continue to do so as we further develop the work products from that meeting.

We undertook committee work in a new fashion and worked to grow the involvement of Directors. Our regular and ad hoc committees all progressed or fulfilled their objectives and gained valuable insight regarding the process. Our Executive Director was instrumental in stewarding the progress and helping the committees retain focus and make progress.

The communication work that we undertook together broadened the reach of our messaging and helped develop relationships with key political and administrative leaders. Our association, some individual charter schools and directors proactively reached out to engage politicians, administrative leaders and other professional and institutional leaders in a manner that was aligned and unified. The TAAPCS conference and several other events held at Aurora Academic Charter School were exceptionally well planned and effective. Several schools enjoyed opportunities to visit with the Minister of Education or members of his team and communicated our messages and questions with increasing regularity and depth.

Our video rollout was a wonderful example of a collaborative effort from all our member schools. The two videos have been viewed close to thirteen thousand times since their release in early 2018. Interest in the message is continuing with over 900 views in the last 28 days of September. This messaging is becoming an effective tool, helping us to strengthen the shared identity of public charter schools. The video will continue to produce value for us as we adjust it to remain current and re-apply it with the same type of discipline we have done.

TAAPCS has been included in regular government communication events with increasing regularity and respect. This was gratifying recognition of the long-standing success, high integrity and professionalism of TAAPCS educators, educational leaders and parent and governance volunteers. It's true that the number of Alberta family groups engaged in public charter schools remains arbitrarily restricted to just over 9,000. However, the past 20 years of graduates, their families and other supporters are a quickly growing foundation of people who will increasingly help to validate the importance and contribution of the Alberta public charter school model.

Our association has no misgivings or naivety regarding the complex realities affecting administration of public charter school legislation. Notwithstanding this, TAAPCS chose to form authentic relationships with integrity, work consistently with other professional associations we support, and communicate our perspectives and requests from the context of being a proven, strong, value added contributor to Alberta public education.

In every charter school organization, on every TAAPCS committee, and in our association executive group we are extraordinarily fortunate to have the dedicated, passionate, diligent commitment of truly exceptional people. This year's Halvar Jonson Award winners are outstanding examples of this. There are far too many talented individuals to recognize individually. TAAPCS however owes a special thanks to the tireless support of the educational leaders and professionals, the talented directors and committee members who worked selflessly for the benefit of the association.

The true strength of the association continues to lie in our active collaboration towards a deeply shared purpose. As an association we acted consistently with our vision of working together to support choice and innovation in public education. Within the strategies of the organization we chose actions that will help to solidify our right to meaningfully contribute to distinguishing Alberta Public Education as a global leader, sustainably delivering innovative, diverse, inclusive and effective education within an evolving world.

## **MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-PRESIDENTS**

It has been a pleasure to serve in partnership as your Co-Presidents for the 2017/18 school term. TAAPCS is an organization of dedicated people who serve in volunteer capacities to support and advocate for the best interests of students in our schools.

The restructuring of the organization, creating a Board of Governors consisting of directors from each charter board and distinct from the Executive Advisory Committee consisting of the officers, has served us well over the past year. Although not without some birthing challenges, the restructuring has positioned TAAPCS well to fulfill its objectives into the future.

The unique charter mandates for each of our schools provides parents and students with real choices in pursuing public education options. To date, the current government has supported the continuation of charter schools as viable and valuable elements of the public education system in Alberta. The Minister has demonstrated his support through invitations to TAAPCS representatives to serve on various committees, participate in consultation sessions and attend milestone celebrations. Recent approvals from the Minister to increase enrolment caps and support major capital expenditures are welcome news.

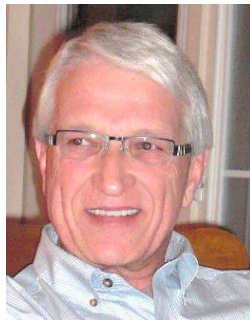
The government has not addressed key areas of inequity for charter schools in the public education system such as funding to reduce school fees, classroom improvement funding and support for inclusive education to recognize the increasing diversity and complexity of our student populations. These factors must continue to be areas of focus by TAAPCS.

We are optimistic about the future of charter schools in Alberta and remain strong believers in the value and positive impacts of our programs.

Sincerely,



Susan Chomistek  
Superintendent, Connect



Joe Frank  
Superintendent, Westmount

## **REPORT ON STRATEGIES**

### **A. GOVERNANCE EFFECTIVENESS**

The 2017-2018 fiscal year was the first full year of operations under the new Bylaws that were passed in the spring of 2017. Moving to a more director driven society created a need for policies and committees. Both were developed and in place for this year.

A number of committees were mandated and began operating right away. In fact, the ad hoc communications committee smoothly transitioned into the communications standing committee and continued the work began in 2016-2017. One interesting finding from the committees' work is the overlap between the individual committees. This is fuel for continued efforts for open transparent internal communication.

#### **Our Committees**

##### **a. Awards and Recognition Committee**

The awards and recognition committee will develop and oversee an internal annual Awards and Recognition Policy and provide oversight for the external Halvar Jonson Award. The committee met twice this year and, in that time, reviewed and renewed the Halvar Jonson Award, reviewed and recommended the internal Board of Governors' Award, and reviewed survey results.

##### **b. Board Professional Learning Committee**

The Board Professional Learning committee will organize governance and leadership professional development activities for the charter association Board of Governors specifically, and all directors generally. The committee has organized a session, "How to Make Friends and Influence Legislators", for directors and superintendents at the Annual General Meeting in October 2018.

##### **c. Communication Committee**

The communications committee will oversee and provide input regarding the internal and external communication for TAAPCS. The communication committee has taken the lead for Strategy B, Communication. See the report below. This committee meets regularly proposes and delivers actions to enhance communication. A communication plan is under development.

##### **d. Conference Committee**

Aurora hosted the TAAPCS Biennial Conference, October, 2017. Over 400 teachers, administrators and support staff attended throughout the province to share, learn, and engage



in professional development opportunities surrounding the theme of meeting the needs of all students. The conference included 41 collaborative learning sessions. Our TAAPCS team was honoured to have guest speakers Honourable Minister of Education David Eggen, and Edmonton Councillor Aaron Paquette.



e. Executive Advisory Committee

The Executive Advisory Committee provides administrative advice and support to the Officers of the Association. The committee meets quarterly and includes a representative of each school and the Officers. Secretary Treasurers were invited to the September 2017 meeting.

Officers for 2017 – 2018 were:

Co-Chairs – Susan Chomistek (Connect Charter School) and Joe Frank (Westmount Charter School)

Vice-Chair – Ed Wittchen (Mother Earth Children’s Charter School)

Secretary – Don Falk (New Horizons Charter School)

Treasurer – Myra Penberthy (Connect Charter School)

f. Member Schools’ Directors’ Committee

The Member Schools Directors’ Committee is intended to create a forum, in which individual Member Schools Directors’ can share information and discuss issues relevant to directorship. The Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors takes the lead in this committee. The committee was approved in May 2017 and had the first meeting at the Spring General Meeting.

g. Research Support and Promotion Committee

The Research Support and Promotion Committee shall provide support to charter schools endeavoring to do high calibre educational research. The committee has taken the lead for Strategy C, Research Informed Success. See the report below. This committee includes a representative of post-secondary education and Alberta Learning. Two members are also members of the Alberta Education Research Network.

h. School Leadership Learning Committee

The School Leadership Committee will provide leadership learning opportunities to senior, school and aspiring leaders within the Charter School Community. This committee is active in each year following the Teachers’ Conference. 2017-2018 was an inactive year. The leadership of this committee rests with school based administrators.

## **B. COMMUNICATION**

Following the Spring General Meeting (SGM) the Communications Committee continued work on the website revision, Google Non-Profit Suite migration, and developing a response to the Government of Alberta’s superintendent compensation changes.

Challenges we had with website functioning were graciously resolved by Ian Grey, Technology Director at Aurora. Ian has contributed valuable expertise to Rene deMeulles from Suzuki who is leading the website revision. The revision contemplated at the SGM is being drafted into a rough design to gain member feedback regarding functionality and content. The draft structure will mirror the three TAAPCS strategy areas, research / governance / communication. After member feedback has been gathered and a site map is developed a revision plan will be developed. The website will utilize the same artwork style as the TAAPCS videos.

The Google Non-Profit Suite migration is being led by Wayne Weinheimer of FFCA. We are in the



process of qualifying for non-profit status with the technical service provider representing Google and preparing our information and site details. As we get closer to specific migration plans and details we will be engaging the members appropriately. The benefits to streamlined communication and collaboration look to be considerable after a reasonable learning period.

The Alberta Government superintendent compensation changes have been extraordinarily difficult for our association. The timing of process deadlines, active renegotiations, continually shifting requirements and decision-making processes have complicated and slowed the process of responding formally as an association. The charter schools active in the contract negotiation process have clearly expressed disagreement with the changes made, and the shortcomings in process used to make them. We are preparing a draft TAAPCS statement for the consideration of the membership, formally declaring our dissatisfactions and requesting a review of the compensation assessments.

The committee is beginning to draft materials and develop a communication plan for the upcoming election. Our initial inclination is to follow a similar path to other professional associations who aim to raise awareness and knowledge levels in all current and potential political players. We will also consider engaging professional help if there is appropriate support from our membership and adequate financial resources.

Our committee would like to thank and acknowledge the efforts of all association members in promoting our two videos released early this year. Thanks to the collaborative and ongoing efforts of all schools and association members our videos have achieved a respectably high number of views and are continuing to increase at a steady rate.

Government relations' work from TAAPCS has been somewhat slower in the last few months. There has been a consistent effort from schools to meet and interact with politicians and other industry leaders. Knowledge gained in these meetings which has been shared with other members has been helpful to the association overall. These efforts are highly important and will remain a focus for the committee going forward.

### **C. RESEARCH INFORMED SUCCESS**

#### **Research Committee Vision and Mandate:**

The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools supports and is actively engaged in innovation and research that occurs in our member schools and stakeholders. To further this vision, and in accordance with our recently revised bylaws, our association has a standing committee on Research Support and Promotion. The committee is made up of charter school administrators, practitioners, and researchers, as well as post-secondary and Alberta Education representatives.

The Research Support and Promotion Committee mandate is to provide support to charter schools endeavoring to do high calibre educational research, and review and assist with the dissemination of charter school research within the broader educational community. The committee will also share external research reports and/or ideas with charter schools and public education stakeholders as we become informed/aware of them.

## **Key Strategic Goals, Deliverables, and Highlights:**

- ❖ The TAAPCS Biennial Conference featured Guest Speaker Honourable Minister David Eggen and Edmonton Councillor Aaron Paquette. This conference also included a number of sessions focused on research projects currently in progress with a number of TAAPCS member schools across Alberta along with multiple university research partners;
- ❖ Review of TAAPCS website and brainstorm a potential research and innovation web-based framework/hub to support and disseminate research and innovation both intra-jurisdictional and inter-jurisdictional with all stakeholders;
- ❖ Continue growth of the breadth and depth of TAAPCS Research Committee to include representatives from Alberta Education, Alberta Advanced Education, Alberta Universities, Public Education Stakeholder Organizations and local to international educational research stakeholders. This year, TAAPCS Research Committee welcomed Dr. Belina Caissie (Alberta Education, Senior Manager, Research) and Dr. Cristian Rios (University of Calgary, Faculty of Education) onto our TAAPCS Research Committee;
- ❖ Brainstorm and pursue the creation of specific online research tools and support processes including:
  - Scholarly literature review process supports and web-links;
  - Ethics review supports and tools;
  - Strategies and examples to engage with and coordinate multi-stakeholder research projects in partnership with scholarly research institutions;
  - An accessible and user-friendly repository of TAAPCS stakeholder research project summaries to be archived on the TAAPCS research website;
  - Coordinate and support presentations/conferences highlighting current research with a lens to disseminate and grow research capabilities and capacities across all public education stakeholders across Alberta;
  - Brainstorming a future TAAPCS Research Conference in partnership with Alberta Education and Alberta University Stakeholders to nurture and highlight exemplary educational research projects with the wider public school audience and stakeholders in Alberta.

## **Sample of TAAPCS Stakeholders Research Projects**

### **Almadina**

- ❖ Fifth successful year that “Discover Reading” is being run at both campuses. This is a reading program designed to systematically teach reading and spelling to students. The program introduces and provides strategies on how to decode and encode simple, complex and multi-syllable word structures. The testing data from pre and post testing is collected by the Reading Foundation. A representative from the Reading Foundation comes in twice a month to both campuses to consult with the education assistants and collect data. In addition, the representative, teachers, and education assistants collaborate to ensure all needs of the child are being met by deciding which program booklets should be continued or changed. At the end of each year, the data is shared with Almadina and is communicated for teachers, education assistants and support staff to comprehend and use in their research analysis.

- ❖ In past years we have been working with Dr. Hetty Roessingh, University of Calgary, on the topic of best strategies to use with students (ESL).

#### Aurora Academic Public Charter School:

- ❖ Publication of Volume 2 Action Research - Community of Practice research journal compilation of Aurora and partner organization research projects over the last year. The Aurora website was revised to optimize the sharing of research with stakeholders coupled with helpful hints for educators initiating school-based and university partnership research projects;
- ❖ Partnership with University of Alberta in research analysis of mathematics provincial achievement test (PAT) results and related trajectories Grade 3 to 6 to 9 longitudinally for 3 cohorts across Alberta in a multitude of public school authorities;
- ❖ Analysis of parents' perspectives on social connectedness as lived through their experiences in parent/teacher interview processes. This provincially funded research project includes partners: Simon Fraser University, University of Alberta, Edmonton Public Schools, and Aurora;
- ❖ Action research project investigating how knowledge of basic mathematical facts and processes (modes of instructional algorithms) affect students' performance;
- ❖ Action research inquiry into interschool leader collaborative processes and efficacy in relation to specific generative processes;
- ❖ Addition of new research section in Aurora main website that includes a number of research tools to assist teachers involved in starting and completing school-based research projects.

#### Calgary Arts Academy

- ❖ Member of the Partner Research School project - Leading and learning initiative with the Werklund School of Education.
- ❖ Contracted Robert Roach, Director of Insight, ATB Financial. Mr. Roach will be conducting research related to the uniqueness of CAA as a public charter school.

#### Calgary Girls School:

- ❖ Girls Code in STEM: The purpose of this empirical study is to explore how integrating coding into the K-12 curriculum, using gender-responsive pedagogy and a design for use approach, can attract and keep girls in STEM related studies. Research questions include:
  - Can the seamless integration of programming into the mainstream curriculum and classroom activities enhance learning in math and science, as well as computing and computational thinking (CT) for girls?
  - How can classroom pedagogy based on a design for use approach to coding/programming help foster a classroom culture of sharing, collaboration, and critique, as girls create usable knowledge and artifacts for use by meaningful audiences to further their computational thinking?

#### Centre for Personal Excellence (CAPE)

- ❖ Effective Mentorship Strategies: This 3-year research project investigates the effectiveness of 4 types of mentoring strategies used by administration to increase teacher confidence and efficacy in developing and delivering integrated learning experiences for students.

#### Connect Charter School

- ❖ The Impact of Outdoor Education on Executive Functions in Adolescence - a mixed methods research project. Mount Royal University is conducting a research study exploring the pedagogy of place: “Connect Charter School’s Journey to Experiential Place-based and Experiential Learning.”

#### Foundations for the Future Charter Academy

- ❖ Diversity as an Asset: Identifying demographic variables impacting the global competence knowledge, skills, attitudes and experiences of Albertan K – 12 students and staff. Research partners: University of Calgary and University of Alberta;
- ❖ Central Office Leadership that Works: Examining how a common focus on collaborative inquiry facilitated the development of a cohesive central office leadership team and impacted school leadership across our school and campuses. Research partner: University of New South Wales;
- ❖ Enhanced Object Manipulative Skills Programming for Girls in elementary School. Research partner: Mount Royal University;
- ❖ Pre-service Teachers at Risk: Intervention strategies by and for teachers. Research partner: University of Calgary.

#### New Horizons

- ❖ Individual Pursuits as Project-based Learning: This research focused on how to move individualized student research projects (Independent Studies) to a more project-based approach, yet still allow students to explore a research area that would be of their choosing. Essentially, the research focused on how teachers might change individualized student learning to more collaborative student learning in a project-based learning context.
- ❖ Math Acceleration: Are There any Gaps in Learning? For the past nine years, New Horizons has been accelerating students in math. Using above-grade level testing, students who may benefit from acceleration are identified and invited to move one or two grades ahead in their math. NHS aligns its Gr. 1-7 math instruction block so that it occurs at the same time in each class. Therefore, students who are accelerated are able to join the classroom to which they are accelerated for whole-class instruction. For instance, a grade four student who was identified as a student who could benefit from being accelerated would physically move to the grade 5 class for math instruction. At the end of their grade 9 year, all students, including those who are working one or two grades ahead of their cohort in math, write the Grade 9 Math PAT. An analysis of the Grade 9 PAT scores of students who have been accelerated will help determine if math acceleration has left any gaps in their learning.

#### Suzuki Charter School

- ❖ In collaboration with the University of Alberta received a Social Humanities and Research Council Canada grant to pursue:
  - Formative instructional and assessment strategies for academic and personal excellence (2016 - 2021)
  - Understand the role of social and emotional factors in K-6 student learning and achievement
  - Social factors such as student-teacher trust, student response to formative feedback

- Emotional factors such as attitudes towards mistakes, beliefs about learning
- Guided by learning errors and formative feedback (LEAFF) model

#### Valhalla

- ❖ Implementation of the Writing Road to Reading Program. Measuring the impact on the number of phonograms and words Kindergarten and Grade 1 (eventually grades 2 and 3) students are able to read and write from dictation, and the volume and clarity of writing in personal stories, subject reports and written responses to questions about text.
- ❖ Implementation of a cursive writing program in lower grades, with background understanding that there are demonstrated links between handwriting and reading as well as the written expression of ideas. We intend to develop measures of the effectiveness of the note-taking skills and capacity for immediate written expression of ideas in students in upper grades (six to nine).

#### Westmount

- ❖ Exploring the Linguistic profile of Gifted ESL Students: This research highlights literature on the linguistic and academic reality of the majority of gifted English as second language (ESL) students enrolled in English schools in Alberta;
- ❖ Anxiety-based Psychological Intervention to Examine its Efficacy and Applicability with Gifted Children: The purpose of this study is to better understand anxiety struggles in gifted students. This study will focus on application of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy to determine its efficacy in reducing anxious symptoms in grades 4-7 gifted children.

### **WORKS IN PROGRESS**

- Continued development of policy to support Bylaws approved at Spring General Meeting 2017
- Upgrading use of technology (Google Docs) to capture the work of the association for member access
- Website renewal
- Communication Plan
- Inter-committee communication

### **MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS**



#### **Almadina Language Charter Academy**

- ALCA is excited to be adding four new portables and a corridor link to our Mountain View campus, due for completion by October 19, 2018. Our Ogden campus received an exterior envelope upgrade in the summer of 2017 and looks great.
- ALCA continues to have a large number of students on our waiting list and we have been actively searching for a third campus.
- ALCA would like to welcome Ted (Edward) Emmett as our new Secretary-Treasurer. We would also like to welcome three new Directors – Osama Merhi, Salman Mazhar and Ammar Mahdi.

- Finally, ALCA Superintendent, Glenn McClure, was profiled in the Calgary Herald on March 28, 2018 in an article entitled: “Almadina Brings Learning Success to s Diverse Student Body”.



### **Aurora Academic Charter School**

- Aurora hosted a Technology Evening with students, parents, and charter schools across Alberta. Honourable Minister of Education, David Eggen was key-note speaker at this inaugural annual event. Staff and students highlighted innovative teaching and learning projects actively engaging our students in domains of computer programming/coding, robotics, computer-aided-drafting and design along with a number of innovative science and technology research projects.
- Aurora continues to grow with over 870 students (Kindergarten to Grade 9) and is actively seeking rental of Edmonton region facilities to eventually include exemplary high school learning opportunities.
- Aurora completed the construction of a new school elevator to improve our inclusion and accessibility capabilities for students, parents, staff, and community stakeholders.
- Aurora is honoured to be an active member of our TAAPCS team!



### **Boyle Street Education Centre**

- YMCA Youth Exchange – BSEC students were hosted by St. Mary’s school in Toronto and toured the city and Niagara Falls. The hospitality was reciprocated by BSEC when they hosted and travelled to Goldeye Centre for 3 days of camping
- 2 EA’s were added to staff – one has started a parenting program, and the other Pow Wow dance instruction and a beading class.
- Added a Cree language instructor
- entered the Nosebowl High School Improv competition for the second time and started community Improv performances in conjunction with Rapid Fire Theatre at a local cafe once per month
- Our school grew in the number of students who chose to remain connected with us for the whole year. Our student population became more engaged over the school year.



### **Calgary Arts Academy**

- July - August 2017: An amazing group of dedicated CAA parents installed the new playground at the Knob Hill campus.
- September 2017: Over 600 families and friends attended our community open house at the new Education Centre on September 27, 2017. Hon. David Eggen, Minister of Education joined us at our grand opening in October. CAA School Council organized an annual Art Harvest that featured art created by CAA



- students and local adult artisans. Students and staff created a club called the GLC or 'Global Leadership Club'. Part of the club's mandate was to maintain its responsibilities as the first Fair Trade School in Calgary and another part was to promote Truth and Reconciliation through an interactive bench.
- May 2018: A group of Year 7 and 8 students travelled to Vancouver Island to participate in the Gulf Islands Film and Television School (GIFTS). Fair Trade Festival - All 500 CAA students and the Adult Choir performed to a full house at our winter celebration the Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium on December 8, 2017. This year's theme was "Soundbreaking." Calgary Arts Academy Foundation honoured our donors by hosting an appreciation event at the Education Centre.
- June 2018: Year 6/7 developed and presented a Ted-Talks style seminar "IYILX." This ambitious and innovative event was presented at a number of locations at the Youth Campus. The Outdoor Pursuits mastery class travelled with staff and volunteers to hike the Juan de Fuca Marine Trail on Vancouver Island.



### **Calgary Girls School**

- Refreshed our unique, signature "Go Girls" curriculum which is the primary tool for advancing our charter goals related to the social and emotional development of girls who "have voice" and "agency". This curriculum enhances the Health and Life Skills curriculum of the Province and supports our charter outcomes.
- Inspired our community with two amazing band/choir concerts despite the challenges when our much loved band director passed away suddenly after a brief but courageous battle with cancer. We appreciated the Calgary area Charter School Crisis Intervention Team for its supports during this critical time of loss and grief that profoundly impacted our school.
- Developed a new report card to align with the Guide to Education and parental desires for something clear and concise with plain language. Workshops with AB Assessment Consortium and all-staff contributions supported an approach to reporting that aligns quality assessment practice. The process of engagement began in September and resulted in a new report card presented to parents in June for implementation in the 2018-19 school year.
- Hosted a Speak Out Event for parents and staff that considered the leadership qualities to nurture in young girls. Keynotes were delivered by Dr. Joanne Brown, Astrophysicist (UC), Ms. Ezmahan Razavi founder of Ask Her (organization to encourage women to run for public office) and advisor to the Minister for the Status of Women, and Patricia MacLeod QC - all exceptional women with multiple failures on the road to success! The learning is summarized as "FAIL" means "First Attempt in Learning"!



### **Centre for Academic and Personal Excellence (CAPE)**

- 2017-18 was Year One of our revised Literacy and Numeracy K-Gr. 9 program: groups structured according to student capacity and revised several times throughout the year as students master skills.





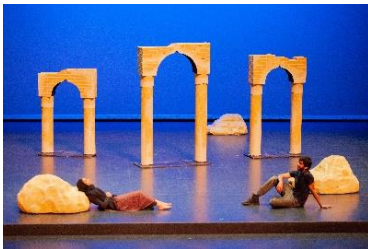
### **Connect Charter School**

- Connect developed a relationship with the Tsuut'ina Nation. Our students participated in a pow-wow at Mount Royal University with colleagues from the Tsuut'ina and through dialogue and collaboration developed a better understanding of their history and their people.
- Our new Artist in Residence Program welcomed 3 exceptionally talented artists to work with our students April 9 to 17, 2108. Two identical art pieces were created to be housed at the Tssut'ina Chiila Elementary School and Connect to symbolize this partnership.



### **Foundations for the Future Charter Academy**

- FFCA ranked first of all public high schools in the City of Calgary in the most recent Fraser Report.
- The past summer was kept extremely busy with the installation of 11 new modulares on 4 of our campuses.



- “My Hands Were Made for This” is an award-winning high school drama which was written by a Gr. 12 student, was acted and produced by students, and has been recommended for professional production.
- Proud member of the Alberta Research Network and Partner Research Schools
- Our campuses were visited for a second time by a contingent of educators from Australia who observed our classes, spoke with staff and enjoyed being able to attend our One-Act play while they were here.
- At the end of June 2018, FFCA high school students were poised to collect an estimated \$423,400 in scholarship funds from various sources.
- Our administrators continued to benefit from the wisdom and expertise of Dr. David Townsend in our “Leading Learning” initiative, which has now expanded to include teacher leaders in the development of meaningful professional growth plans and the use of generative dialogue. In connection with this, five of our administrators attended and presented at a Symposium on Generative Dialogue and Collaborative Inquiry in Victoria. FFCA looks forward to hosting the next Generative Dialogue Summit.



### **Mother Earth's Children's Charter School**

- Partnerships with Wildwood School in Grande Yellowhead and Academy at King Edward in Edmonton Public.
- Huge student transformations have occurred during a cultural exchange that took place the last two years. Maxine Hildebrandt teaches grade 3/4 at Mother Earth's Children's Charter School and she organized the exchange with Lisl Gunderman, a teacher at Wildwood School, where the community has deep Ukrainian roots. The program was partly funded and supported by the Canadian Multicultural Foundation in partnership with the ATA. Its

aim is to promote understanding between Alberta's Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Maxine and Lisl have been chosen to receive one of 6 Governor General's History Awards for Excellence in Teaching.

- The second project was funded the same way and promotes understanding through a partnership between MECCS and Academy at King Edward in Edmonton Public involving Field trips and cultural infusion days. The highlight was three intense workshop days with author David Bouchard. Teachers Maxine Hildebrandt (MECCS) and Nyles Varughese (Academy at King Edward) have brought students to each other's schools on several occasions to share their cultures and learning.



### **New Horizons Charter School**



- **Facility Modernization:** With almost \$8 million in financial support from the Government of Alberta, a two-year major modernization of the school facility was completed during 2017-18. Our 2018-19 school year began with a Grand Re-opening event on September 12. It was a time of great celebration for the 350 students, 30 staff, and the many dignitaries and guests who attended.
- **Program Expansion:** In keeping with enrolment growth, expanded programming has also occurred. In 2017-18, the position of music specialist was added to the staff roster. This year (2018-19) marks the fulfillment of a goal to add a second class to each of the elementary grades. During the past several years, we have also expanded our program of optional courses and extra-curricular activities for students.
- **Enrolment Growth:** 2017-18 witnessed a 16% increase in enrolment over the previous year, with another 11% being added in the fall of 2018. Over the past four years, our school's enrolment has increased by 60% and now stands at just over 350. We believe this to be due to the combined result of strong support for our school's programming, the acquisition of a suitable facility, and a desirable location in Sherwood Park with proximity to Edmonton.
- **Innovation and Creativity:** In keeping with our school's charter mandate, students engage in a variety of learning activities designed to promote innovation and creativity. These include the junior high Enterprise & Innovation option, as well as school-wide Inspire & Create (IC) events. Occurring once a month, students from K-9 gather in division groups (K-3; 4-6; 7-9) or mixed grade (K-9) groups to engage in problem-solving activities that stretch the imagination, develop creativity, and promote collaboration.
- **Issues and Challenges**
  - Accommodating continuous growth in the face of space limitations, parking and traffic challenges, and a campus that is shared with another school.

- Growing our junior high program, both in terms of numbers and programming.
- Maintaining and developing school culture in the context of significant numbers of new students, parents, and staff each year.



### **Suzuki Charter School**

#### **Instruction:**

- Excellent Overall rating on Accountability Pillar Results.
- Effective P.D. plan focused on building and working with curriculum portfolios
- Strong focus on parent and student engagement in math learning initiatives
- Celebrated the 23rd Anniversary by performing choral and instrumental music at the Winspear Centre including improved concert logistics and an internal conductor.



#### **Leadership and Management:**

- Reviewed and amended all administrative procedures, policies and bylaws
- Participated in two administrative leadership and planning retreats.
- Enhanced risk management procedures including addition of cameras centralized locking.
- Completed facility enhancements including classrooms, upgrades, and storage cabinetry.
- Completed year two of research partnership with University of Alberta.
- Reviewed and completed consultation with development of 2-year calendar.
- Partnered with Alberta Education, University of Alberta and Suzuki Charter School to implement The Suzuki Research Project 2017/18.
- Developed preliminary plans for expansion to a junior high program



### **Valhalla Community School**

- VCS celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> year of operation as a charter school in 2017-2018!  
In February of the past year, we received our five-year renewal after a lengthy evaluation and application process, and look forward to many more years of providing quality education to rural students.
- As a function of our evaluation and renewal process, our staff have been developing a set of local standardized tests to assess and track the year to year progress and success of our students in core subjects. A unique locally-developed data base will enable staff to more easily understand, and improve upon, the strengths and challenges of our program.
- Our teachers enjoyed taking part in the TAAPCS conference in Edmonton.
- VCS hosted two practicum students this year as we enjoyed renewed collegial opportunities with Grande Prairie Regional College.
- In May our grade 8 and 9 students continued the tradition of a biannual week-long trip to Ottawa and Quebec City.
- Our students participated in a presentation on bullying and the dangers of drug use by Dwayne Peace.

- Students also experienced opportunities for service work both in school and out, including a road-side cleanup in the spring for the County of Grande Prairie.
- Continued with expanded leadership program including rotating student council (all junior high students have opportunity to experience membership and work in Student Council) and increased leadership/citizenship instruction and practice in all grades
  - includes student planned, led and performed productions: Remembrance Day, Christmas, Spring Sing Talent Show, etc.
  - service program partnering young student with older students for shared activities and help: e.g. paired reading, shared lunches, etc.
  - Student Council planned and implemented programs such as School Spirit Days, in-school fundraisers, celebration activities.



### **Westmount Charter School**

- Phases II and III of the elementary campus renovation to replace all windows, exterior doors and upgrade the exterior façade were completed by mid-September. Thanks to CBE support through IMR funding.
- Partner Research Schools, U of C – continued membership with other Calgary Charter Schools and Zone 5 jurisdiction schools.
- Alberta Research Network – member school.
- Minister's Youth Advisory Council – one of our grade 12 students was selected.
- Westmount sent 23 projects to the Calgary Youth Science Fair in April 2018. All the students received a gold, silver, bronze, or honourable mention medal. Awards received include:
  - ☐ City of Calgary Biodiversity Senior Intermediate Award \$350
  - ☐ APEGA Education Engineering & Earth Sciences Award for earth sciences \$250
  - ☐ Faculty of Medicine Biochemistry and Experimental Biology award \$400
  - ☐ APEGA Education Foundation Award for engineering secondary \$250
  - ☐ Innovation in Computer Science Award
  - ☐ Mathematical Sciences Award
  - ☐ Four Canada wide travel awards to compete at the Canada Wide Science Fair in Ottawa
  - ☐ City of Calgary High School Aggregate Award - highest scores in high school projects
- Our band won Gold at the MusicFest Canada Nationals in Toronto, Ontario. Only two gold awards were given out in their age category across Canada and Westmount received one.

### **ISSUES**

- Government handling of complaints that are forwarded to the Registrar
- Undermining of local board autonomy to make decisions
- Enrolment Caps (Waiting lists)
- Expansion Requests (connected to enrolment caps)

- Inclusive Education (funding and recognition of complexity of charter school students; increasing special needs among our populations)
- Infrastructure (capital funding and transfer of ownership)
- Equity for Charter School parents/taxpayers (funding, e.g. reduction of student fees)

## TRENDS

- Association and its member schools are in transition with retiring of experienced superintendents and entry of new leaders. This trend is continuing in 2018/19.
- Government invited TAAPCS reps to their consulting meetings like the budget consultation last September.
- Exclusion of TAAPCS (charter schools) in funding that supports parental involvement in their schools (school fee reduction, lunch program)
- The trend of more frequent Alberta Education leaders visiting our schools



## LAST WORD – INTO THE FUTURE

*Executive Director Kath Rhyason*

TAAPCS really is all about people. It is a group of outstanding volunteers that come together to lead and support the work of the individual charter schools and to liaise with government. We benefit from the knowledge and expertise of its Directors as well as system educators. These abilities have really come to the forefront in the work of specific committees that were created with the review and renewal of our bylaws in the spring of 2017.

Our thanks to FFCA for support of Meredith Poole's efforts with TAAPCS.

Both Meredith Poole (FFCA) and I are proud to serve The Association of Public Charter Schools.

