

# “Inspiring Involvement”

TAAPCS Annual Report  
2009-2010

October 22, 2010

Prepared by Dr. Garry Andrews  
TAAPCS Executive Director

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

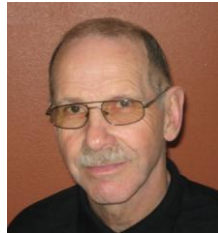
**CO-CHAIRS’ MESSAGE** – Jay Pritchard and Judy Gray, TAAPCS 2009-10

## **“Inspiring Involvement”**

### **A YEAR IN REVIEW**



As has become the norm each year for the Association, 2009-10 was not only busy but also a time of change – particularly with personnel. With increased demands on the time of our members, it was determined that a part-time and at the tail-end of the 2008-09 accepted the position. What a wise been blessed to have Garry capably previously occupied such a large energy. Garry faced his new has moved the Association forward for your contributions to the advancement and involvement of TAAPCS!



Executive Director should be employed year, Dr. Garry Andrews was offered and decision that has proven to be! We have handling many of the responsibilities that part of our calendars and so much of our challenge with initiative and purpose, and in innumerable ways. Thank you, Garry,

Throughout the year we were asked numerous times for our reaction to Alberta Education documents (“Inspiring Education”, “Inspiring Action”, “Review of Professional Practice” and “The Charter School Concept Paper”), and we responded accordingly. We also took steps to address the challenges presented in the Concept Paper, and began meetings with our stakeholders in order to build a better understanding of the place and role of charter schools in Alberta. With so many changes challenging our schools, we also surveyed our directors to see if there was support for professional development activities as a means of dealing with issues they are facing now and in the future. The response was positive, so several workshops were held. Directors also continued their efforts to speak with MLA’s about the importance of permanence for our schools; a committee of directors met with the Calgary Caucus and was well received and encouraged to keep up their efforts.

Based on TAAPCS’ Preferred Futures paper (“Freedom to Create-Spirit to Achieve”), preliminary steps have been taken to develop a more complete strategic plan for the organization. While the existing goals remain our focus (to implement an enhanced research and innovation agenda; to continue to promote a culture of responsible and flexible governance, and to achieve permanent charter status), it was felt there should be a larger framework and, to that end, a draft document

was prepared. Throughout the upcoming year, conversations and discussions regarding the plan will occur in order to complete the framework.

In summary, 2009-2010 was a year of increasing momentum in the areas of involvement and influence for our Association. We still have a long way to go, but we must take pride in our remarkable evolution!

### **WHAT IS TAAPCS?**

The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools is currently comprised of 13 member schools, which are located throughout the province and are united in support of the following mission:

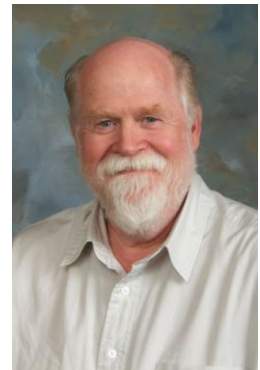
“Working together to support choice and innovation in public education.”

The Association has been in existence since 1998 and over the last several years has held three meetings annually for the purpose of furthering four primary objectives:

1. To promote and facilitate public charter school education in Alberta.
2. To speak with one voice on behalf of public Charter Schools in Alberta.
3. To provide a forum for public Charter Schools to meet in support of common goals.
4. To advocate for continued innovation and choice within public education.

#### ❖ **Charter Board Chairs (CBC) Committee:** Bill McGregor, Chair, 2009-10

Several initiatives were undertaken throughout the year under the auspices of the CBC. Executive Director Garry Andrews offered professional development workshops for Directors in Calgary on March 13, in Edmonton on March 20, and in Valhalla Centre on April 13. The Calgary and Edmonton workshops were on the topic “Leading Self and Others” while the Valhalla workshop was on the topic of “Governance”. A total of 28 directors took part. Evaluations were positive therefore more workshops are being planned for 2010-11. Another activity of the CBC included Bill McGregor (FFCA Board Chair) leading a group of directors to a meeting with the Calgary MLA’s caucus on January 29. The reception was very positive and reaffirmed the need for our Association to keep MLA’s informed regarding our situation. In this regard, a Government Relations workshop for directors is being planned for 2010-11.



#### ❖ **Charter School Administrators’ Group** Ian Gray and Jeney Gordon, Co-Chairs, 2009-10

The Administrators’ Group met three times over the course of the year. The meetings coincided with other TAAPCS functions and while the topics discussed varied, one which received a considerable amount of attention was the review of the evaluation survey results regarding the effectiveness of Conference 2009, and the consequent planning of the conference in 2011. In order to maintain the interest and support of school administrators, it was determined that extensive planning would be done to ensure ongoing effectiveness and relevance. With this in mind, the administrators discussed such questions as “Is there a common theme that resonates with all charter schools to provide the foundation for a conference? If so, what is it? If not, is there other value in holding a conference that physically brings charter schools together?” The Administrators’ group determined there was support for Conference 2011, and this information

was passed on to TAAPCS’ executive members. Administrators at the Calgary Science School, along with Garry McKinnon, CSS Superintendent, and Garry Andrews, have begun preliminary planning for the conference, tentatively scheduled to be held in Edmonton on October 21, 2011.

❖ **Conference 2009**



*Inspirational Speaker Alvin Law*

Thanks to the joint efforts of the Westmount Charter School staff, Merv Kurtz and the Calgary Regional Consortium, Conference 2009 was successfully held on October 23. Nearly 300 people were in attendance to hear keynote speaker Alvin Law, talk about meeting life’s challenges as well as to discuss topics specific to charter schools. Financially, the event resulted in a \$12,000 surplus which now can be applied to future conferences. An evaluation of the conference took place and overall the results from the 119 surveys returned, were positive. Particularly important to the planning committee was the response to the question, “Should these conferences be continued?” 70 people said “yes” while only 15 said “no”. The rest of the respondents were “unsure”. As noted above, preliminary planning is now underway for Conference 2011.

Since its inception, TAAPCS has enjoyed a long and rich history of positive relationships with Alberta Education. In this vein, we were pleased to welcome Minister Dave Hancock as our opening speaker at the conference. Always an advocate for excellence in education for children, Minister Hancock’s message of “permanence for charter schools” resonated with those in attendance. TAAPCS members are looking forward with anticipation to the upcoming Education Act as a vehicle to enshrine charter schools as permanent choices on the landscape of public education.



*L-R Conference organizers Dani Sever and Hal Curties, Minister Dave Hancock, TAAPCS Co-Chairs Jay Pritchard and Judy Gray*

❖ **“Innovation in Action” - Canada West Foundation Article**

In January, a Canada West Foundation article by Shawna Ritchie, entitled “Innovation in Action”, was shared with Association members. While being a positive endorsement for charter schools and their historic success at providing choice and encouraging innovation, it does list problem areas. In particular, Ritchie said charter schools, although successful, will only achieve their full potential if two impediments are eliminated – “giving charter schools permanent status”, and “clarifying charter schools’ position in the education system”. Ritchie’s article has stimulated conversation with other provincial organizations, and no doubt will continue to do so over the upcoming year. The full article is available through a link on TAAPCS’ website.

❖ **“Inspiring Education” and “Inspiring Action” Reports**

“Inspiring Education” and its follow up report, “Inspiring Action”, were received and a response to the Minister was provided on June 25, 2010. The Association affirmed the general content and direction of these reports, but noted several concerns regarding the future. For instance, we again asked for Alberta Education’s direction in clarifying the possible future role of charter schools as centres of research and innovation. As well, since the documents speak to possible governance changes in the province, we offered to be part of the process for framing these discussions.



Further, we wondered about the limited reference to student assessment in the “Inspiring Action” document and asked how the competencies which are listed, will be assessed, and at what level.

❖ **Charter School Concept Paper**

Alberta Education’s “Charter School Concept Paper” was circulated provincially with an invitation to respond to a new charter school vision being considered. Our Association responded and a copy is available on our website. Before presenting its vision, the paper indicated that Alberta Education, after completing a study of the impact of charter schools, determined several major findings.

- a. “Charter schools have provided enhanced choice in the system, both by providing it directly to families and by being one of the stimuli that has led other jurisdictions to offer more alternative programming. However, the provision of choice appears largely to have been limited to larger centres.
- b. Overall, charter schools appear to have provided enhanced student learning outcomes as compared to other similar schools and as compared to similar students enrolled in other jurisdiction types.
- c. One of the original purposes of charter schools was that they would be centres of innovation and would share innovations with the rest of the system. This purpose has largely not been realized.
- d. Charter schools have developed momentum, growing quickly since their inception, and now comprise over 1% of the school population. Their waiting lists are such that more growth would take place were adequate facilities provided.
- e. There are concerns in the rest of the Alberta school system about charter schools and about where the movement is taking the system.
- f. Charter schools have become a well-established part of the public school system, and the consensus of those consulted during this study was that there is a need to develop a revised charter school governance model that addresses the legitimate concerns of both the charter schools and other stakeholders in the system”.

As an outcome of these findings, a major theme in the vision Alberta Education is proposing relates to the concept of charter schools becoming “centres of innovation and research” by developing partnerships with other stakeholders. Not only would innovation and research be enhanced, but so too would the dissemination of information throughout the province and beyond. To this end, the Association met with various stakeholder groups throughout the year – CASS Executive, the ATA President and Executive Secretary, the ASBA Executive Director, University

Deans of Education, and officials from Lethbridge College. These preliminary meetings, designed to build better understanding, were encouraging and therefore will be followed up during 2010-11.

❖ **TAAPCS Funding & Finances**



A financial review last year resulted in a fee increase on a sliding scale tied to school size, with the maximum fee being paid by FFCA and Westmount at \$1500 per year. Although we requested a grant increase to \$40,000, all education grants were held at the previous year's levels and we were renewed at \$30,000.

Please see detailed financial statements on pages 7 & 8; note that these are in draft form and are scheduled for approval at the 2010 Annual General Meeting.

❖ **Tidbits**

- ❖ Suzuki Charter School celebrated their 15th anniversary with a large gala event in May, and the move to a welcome new facility (10720 – 54 St. Edmonton T6A 2H9)!
- ❖ Two Charter School teachers, Neil Robinson (Westmount) and Neil Stephenson (Calgary Science School), were honoured nationally with Governor General's Awards.
- ❖ Staff members from Westmount Charter School were selected to present papers at a national conference on Gifted Education.
- ❖ In January, Mr. Gordon Welch, Superintendent at the Calgary Science School took his retirement and his successor, Dr. Garry McKinnon, joined CSS.
- ❖ As well, Mr. Merv Kurtz, Superintendent at Westmount Charter School, announced his retirement in April and his successor, Mr. Joe Frank, put away his AE hat and dusted off his charter school hat to join us in August as their new Superintendent.
- ❖ The Calgary Girls' School has a new administrative office located at #203, 610 70 Ave SE, Calgary T2H 2S6 (phone 403-252-0702; fax 403-252-0717). Superintendent Ches Cowley and Secretary-Treasurer Jan Jordan can be reached there.
- ❖ Other personnel changes which took place over the spring/summer included Ms. Bev Hammond, resigning as Superintendent at Almadina to take a Superintendent's position in Manitoba. Bev's successor is Mr. Keith Jones, formerly with Alberta Education. Finally, Ms. Freddi Bromley, Superintendent of Valhalla Charter School also retired; her replacement has not yet been named. We shall miss Gordon, Merv, Bev and Freddi and we welcome Garry, Joe and Keith to our team.



❖ TAAPCS Audited Financial Statements (for approval at 2010 AGM)- Year End Aug. 31, 2010

The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools  
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION as at Aug. 31, 2010

		2010	2009
<b>ASSETS</b>			
	Cash	79,617.63	\$52,597.71
	Accounts Receivable	0.00	0.00
	Prepaid Expenses	0.00	0.00
	<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$79,617.63</b>	<b>\$52,597.71</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
	Deferred Revenue	30,000.00	30,000.00
	Accounts Payable	12,270.25	1,248.32
	<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$42,270.25</b>	<b>\$31,248.32</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>			
	Conference Surplus(es)	\$12,505.65	\$0.00
	<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$37,347.38</b>	<b>\$21,349.39</b>
	<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$79,617.63</b>	<b>\$52,597.71</b>

The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools  
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES

		Actual 2010	Budget 2010	Actual 2009
<b>REVENUES</b>				
	Alberta Education Grant	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$20,000.00
	Regular Membership Dues	19,000.00	19,000.00	11,000.00
	Extra Attendee Fees	3,700.00	2,100.00	1,800.00
	Conferences	12,505.65	80,000.00	-
	Workshops	5,101.48	-	2,650.00
	<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$70,307.13</b>	<b>\$131,100.00</b>	<b>\$35,450.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
	Regular Meeting Costs	\$15,114.06	\$15,000.00	\$13,251.43
	EAC/Other Meeting Cost Reimbursements	4,516.66	3,700.00	2,462.08
	EAC Prior Year Costs	702.00	-	528.22
	Honorarium for Executive Service	4,000.00	4,000.00	14,000.00
	Executive Director Contract Fees	23,996.57	26,500.00	-
	Executive Director Travel & Expenses	3,704.10	8,000.00	-
	Website & Publications	262.63	2,500.00	11,594.99
	Conferences	-	80,000.00	-
	Workshops	1,005.58	-	2,650.00
	Memberships	-	500.00	-
	Donations	-	-	160.00
	Miscellaneous	901.94	200.00	620.36
	Bank Charges	105.60	100.00	108.40
	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$54,309.14</b>	<b>\$140,500.00</b>	<b>\$45,375.48</b>
	<b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>\$15,997.99</b>	<b>(\$9,400.00)</b>	<b>(\$9,925.48)</b>

Thank you for YOUR involvement,

from your TAAPCS Executive:

Jay Pritchard, Co-Chair

Judy Gray, Co-Chair

Dr. Garry Andrews, Executive Director

Meredith Poole, Secretary-Treasurer

