



**“Charter Schools are
here to stay....”**

Education Minister Ron Liepert, Oct. 26, 2007

**TAAPCS Annual Report
2007-2008
October 24, 2008**

Prepared by Meredith Poole
TAAPCS Secretary-Treasurer

www.taapcs.ca

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE – Judy Gray and Jay Pritchard, TAAPCS Co-Chairs 2007-08



Last year’s Executive Message opened with the comment “The 2006-2007 year has been a productive one for The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools”. Although each of our schools has demonstrated continued outstanding performance, we are less inclined to attribute this statement to the majority of the Association’s collective initiatives undertaken in 2007-2008.

For the past number of years, charter school stakeholders have been encouraged by phrases and statements such as “the experiment is over” and “Charter Schools are here to stay”. We have been congratulated for our well-run schools, for our parents’ high levels of satisfaction, and for our students’ excellent results. These indicators continue to be bellwethers of our schools.

TAAPCS has worked hard to represent the collective needs of its members in spite of a sense of “hurry up and wait” which has pervaded this election year. To date, action remains pending on the following issues arising of our initiatives undertaken in service of the Association’s “Three P’s” (permanence, parity and process):

- Response to the proposal requesting legislative changes to the School Act,
- Access to the themes and recommendations outlined within the Concept Paper, and
- Identification of a clear and timely process for Charter Schools to access appropriate facilities

Nevertheless, we can take pride in the efforts of many people whose hard work resulted in the following “Key Accomplishments” of the past year:

- ❖ New Charter School Approved!
- ❖ Progress in Government Relations
- ❖ Equity in Small Board Administration Funding
 - ❖ Successful TAAPCS Conference
- ❖ Continuing Strong Relationships with Alberta Education
 - ❖ New Logo; Revamped Newsletter, Brochure, Website

With the recently announced “Dialogue with Albertans” intending not to have recommendations completed until 2010, it will be more vital than ever that charter school stakeholders continue to demonstrate strong, strategic and vocal advocacy.

As always, we continue to be optimistic about the future, knowing that the vision, commitment and enthusiasm of members will assist in the realization of even greater accomplishments for Charter Schools: their students, parents and staff.

WHAT IS TAAPCS?

The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools is currently comprised of 13 member schools, located throughout the province, which 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 few 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.

- ❖ New Charter School! – TAAPCS is thrilled to welcome a new member, Valhalla Community School (located near Grande Prairie in Valhalla Centre). Motivated by their school’s closure, some very dedicated parents and staff worked tirelessly to open Valhalla’s doors on September 2, 2008 and served 52 students at the time of the September 30th count.



Valhalla Community School buses pull up to the school on opening day.

- ❖ Progress in Government Relations – The 2007-2008 School Year brought us a new Minister of Education, the Honourable Dave Hancock, moving from his former portfolio of Health and Wellness. Minister Hancock held a meeting with our Co-Chairs, and a subsequent meeting with Superintendents and Directors of all Alberta Charter Schools, on September 11, 2008. He is proposing to conduct a broad consultative process on education in our province (“Dialogue with Albertans”), which will occur over the next year and a half and will incorporate Charter School participation.

“Charter Schools are here to stay....”

In the September 11th meeting, our group conveyed the importance of the concept of Permanent Charter Status for Charter Schools – achievement of this goal would have a positive impact many of the issues we face today, so we remain hopeful that due consideration will be given to this request. All members of TAAPCS are encouraged to develop relationships with their MLA’s in order to enhance understanding of, and support for, our schools.

Our Board Chairs and Directors were very active over the past year in furthering the cause of Charter Schools in meetings with various members of government. On October 17, the Calgary Board Chairs were able to make a presentation to Calgary Caucus and reinforce the idea of permanence for schools that have “proven” themselves to be successful.

- ❖ Small Board Administration Funding Increase – Thank you to the team of Charter School leaders that succeeded in getting an amendment to the formula used for administration funding – from a base level per school site to a per student amount which better reflects the costs involved and reduces the amount of “volunteer” time performed by staff members.
- ❖ 2007 Conference a Huge Success! - Our heartfelt thanks go out to the dedicated, creative staff at the Calgary Arts Academy for their excellent work in organizing the 2007 Charter School Conference. As well as the informative sessions and “artistic” pre-conference activities, a highlight of the conference was a speech by then-Education Minister Ron Liepert who declared that “.....the experiment is over” as “.....Charter Schools have proven themselves.....”.



CAA student, Anastasia de Rosa, with Education Minister Ron Liepert

“Charter Schools are here to stay...”

- ❖ **Strong Relationships with Alberta Education** – We continue to foster, and enjoy, our positive contacts with departmental representatives. Our membership benefits enormously from their contributions at our regular meetings, on both a professional and personal level, and appreciates their efforts on behalf of Alberta Public Charter School students.
- ❖ **New Logo; Revamped Newsletter, Brochure, Website** – TAAPCS has a great new logo (see first page of this report) which has been incorporated into our revamped newsletter, brochure and website. FFCA’s Communications Coordinator, Lara Hamnett, has been taking the lead in these efforts – in the coming year she will be counting on your help to provide updates and interesting articles to enrich our communications, both internal and external.

What is TAAPCS?

TAAPCS is an association comprised of Alberta Education approved charter schools that choose to be members and support TAAPCS objectives. The Association is governed by a Board of Directors.

<p>Almadina Language Charter Academy 225 – 28 Street SE Calgary, AB T2A 5K4 Tel: (403)543-5070 / Fax: (403)543-5073 www.esl-almadina.com Offers: kindergarten to grade 9 Focus: English as a second language</p> 	<p>Calgary Science School 5915 Lewis Drive SW Calgary, AB T3E 5Z4 Tel: (403)282-2890 / Fax: (403)282-2896 www.calgaryscienceschool.com Offers: grade 4 to grade 9 Focus: inquiry-based, technology-rich program</p> 	<p>Suzuki Charter School 7211-96A Avenue Edmonton, AB T6B 1B5 Tel: (780)468-2598 / Fax: (780)463-8630 www.suzukischool.ca Offers: kindergarten to grade 6 Focus: academics enriched with music</p> 
<p>Aurora Charter School 12245 131 Street Edmonton, AB T5L 1M8 Tel: (780)454-1855 / Fax: (780)454-8104 www.auroraschool.com Offers: kindergarten to grade 9 Focus: traditional education</p> 	<p>Centre for Academic and Personal Excellence (CAPE) 830A Balmoral Street SE Medicine Hat, AB T1A 0W9 Tel: (403)528-2983 / Fax: (403)528-3048 www.apeisgreat.org Offers: grade 1 to grade 9 Focus: academically capable underachievers</p> 	<p>Valhalla Community School 9702 - 100 Avenue Valhalla Centre, AB T0H 3M0 Tel: (780)356-2370 / Fax: (780)356-2789 www.valhallacommunityschool.ca Offers: kindergarten to grade 6 Focus: rural leadership</p> 
<p>Boyle Street Education Centre 10312-105 Street Edmonton, AB T5J 1E6 Tel: (780)428-1420 / Fax: (780)429-1428 www.bscc.ab.ca Offers: 14 to 19 years age group Focus: at-risk youth</p> 	<p>Foundations for the Future Charter Academy 240, 688 Heritage Drive SE Calgary, AB T2H 1M6 Tel: (403)520-3206 / Fax: (403)520-3209 www.ffca-calgary.com Offers: kindergarten to grade 12 Focus: academic excellence and character development</p> 	<p>Westmount Charter School 2519 Richmond Road SW Calgary, AB T3E 4M2 Tel: (403)217-0426 / Fax: (403)217-0252 www.westmountcharter.com Offers: kindergarten to grade 12 Focus: gifted education</p> 
<p>Calgary Arts Academy 4931 Grove Hill Road SW Calgary, AB T3E 4G4 Tel: (403)532-3020 / Fax: (403)217-0965 www.calgaryartsacademy.com Offers: kindergarten to grade 9 Focus: arts immersion curriculum</p> 	<p>Mother Earth's Children's Charter School Box 1150 Wabamun, AB T0E 2K0 Tel: (780)892-7222 / Fax: (780)892-7223 www.meccs.ca Offers: pre-kindergarten to grade 8 Focus: traditional indigenous teachings</p> 	 <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Visit us online at www.taapcs.ca</p>
<p>Calgary Girls' School 6304 Larkspur Way SW Calgary, AB T3E 5P7 Tel: (403)220-0745 / Fax: (403)217-1371 www.calgarygirlsschool.com Offers: grade 4 to grade 9 Focus: all-female student body</p> 	<p>New Horizons School 53145 Range Road 222 Ardrossan, AB T8E 2M8 Tel: (780)922-8087 / Fax: (780)922-8784 www.newhorizons.ab.ca Offers: kindergarten to grade 9 Focus: gifted education</p> 	

- ❖ **Funding and Finances** – Membership dues remained at \$1000 per school for two attending representatives, with a fee of \$100 for each additional attendee. Our grant from Alberta Education (\$20,000) was renewed to supplement the dues and help defray the costs of our Education Advisory Committee Meetings in Red Deer.

“Charter Schools are here to stay....”

In October of 2008, TAAPCS again finds itself in a favourable financial position:

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Opening Balance at Sept. 1/07			\$26,925.06
Revenue	\$34,170.00		
Expenses		\$27,939.94	
Bank Balance at Aug. 31/08			\$33,155.12

❖ Tidbits

- TAAPCS bid fond farewells this year to Pier de Paola (Almadina) and Norm Diemert (Suzuki) – their contributions to our group will be greatly missed. We welcome Dr. Marie Keenan (Almadina), Lee Lucente (Suzuki), Freddi Bromling (Valhalla) and David Panas (Mother Earth’s) as Superintendents new to our group.
- To reduce costs and increase value, it was determined this year that it would be more appropriate to hold our conference every second year, with two consecutive years in Calgary and the third in Edmonton. Consequently the next one will be held in Calgary in October of 2009. The current thinking is to have the conference focus on a particular theme, with fewer breakout sessions and more keynote presentations. Specific suggestions include broader applicability K-12, pre- and post-sessions using video-conferencing, and parent & Board development sessions.
- Representation on Provincial Committees –
English as a Second Language - Pier de Paola (Almadina)
Directions for Special Education – Jim Rigby (New Horizons)
Wellness Curriculum Review – Kurtis Leinweber (FFCA)
- In-house Committee to look at TAAPCS Preferred Future – Consisting of Ken McNeill, Judy Gray, Jay Pritchard, Bill McGregor, Laurie Westwood and Kurtis Leinweber.

Thank you from your TAAPCS 2007-08 Executive:

Judy Gray, Co-Chair
Jay Pritchard, Co-Chair
Meredith Poole, Secretary-Treasurer

