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Premier Announces Historic \$8.3 Billion Investment in Education, Including Charter School Expansion

September 18th, 2024 - Yesterday, Premier Danielle Smith [announced a historic \\$8.3 billion investment in new school construction over the next three years](#), a significant increase from the previous \$2.1 billion budget. This bold move underscores the growing need for educational infrastructure in Alberta and represents a major step toward addressing the current crisis in classroom availability.

Among the key highlights is the addition of 12,500 new charter school spaces over the next four years, a meaningful commitment to address the 20,000 charter school students currently on waitlists.

"We are extremely encouraged by this investment, which highlights the government's recognition of the urgent need for more charter school spaces," said Joanne Higgins, Acting President for The Alberta Association of Public Charter Schools. "This level of support is a game-changer for thousands of families to choose the best option for their child's learning success".

Charter schools offer a wide variety of programming options to meet the needs of today's youth with unique programming including academic schools, classical education, STEM programming, English language learner programs, rural and agricultural focus, collegiate programs, programs for disadvantaged students, gifted education, focus on entrepreneurship, holistics approaches and others. As active advocates for choice in education, TAAPCS is pleased that the provincial government has heard the need for this critical investment.

There are still significant barriers that need to be addressed to meet these ambitious goals. Currently, municipal development permits for schools can take up to four months, even for sites that are already allocated and zoned. This delay is unacceptable for children and parents, and we echo the Premier's call for municipalities and school boards to collaborate in reducing red tape and expediting the permitting process.

"We look forward to gaining more clarity in the days ahead and working closely with the government to ensure these new charter school spaces become a reality as quickly as possible. Alberta's students and families deserve access to the best educational opportunities without unnecessary delays", stated Kelley Charlebois, Executive Director, TAAPCS.

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About The Alberta Association of Public Charter Schools (TAAPCS):

TAAPCS is dedicated to advancing the availability and quality of public charter schools across Alberta, ensuring that every family has access to innovative educational pathways that best meet their children's needs. For a full view of mandate and membership please visit: <https://www.taapcs.ca/>

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