

CAPE

Centre for Academic and Personal Excellence Institute



CHARTER AGREEMENT

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Janine Bide, Board Chair

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SECTION 1. THE CHARTER SCHOOL

CAPE – Centre for Academic and Personal Excellence Institute



SECTION 2. BACKGROUND

Providing parents a choice of educational environments acknowledges the diversity of children and students within our province and that not all environments serve all students in reaching their potential. Within the community of Medicine Hat, there are distinct groups of learners whose parents believe their children's needs are best met in a smaller environment, where assessments can be conducted regularly and in a timely fashion, where personalized educational supports can be more easily adapted within an integrated, flexible learning environment, and that without these supports their children have or will "fall through the cracks" or will not reach their full potential. CAPE was established to address the needs of these students. We are the public charter school that personalizes programs for students with diverse and unique profiles by providing flexible, integrated learning within a small class environment.

CAPE opened its door in September 1994. It operated as a private school for one year and received its charter in September 1995 with the purpose of fostering academic and personal excellence. The charter was renewed in 1998, 2001, 2006, 2011, and 2016. CAPE's integrated personalized program has evolved over time in response to identified needs within its population. CAPE's integrated program started as the integration of complementary subjects only, moved to the addition of mathematics/science and language/social integration, and eventually developed into its current total integration form. The personalized program supported a select number of students through Individualized Program Plans while the majority benefited from adapted and/or modified programs within the classroom. In its current iteration, CAPE's personalized program is grounded in research, is data-driven, provides Individualized Program Plans for every child and student, benefits from the expertise of a full time psychologist and external services, responds quickly to student needs, and supports the whole person. CAPE's evolution has and continues to be based on investigations of research-based practices to best suit our ever-changing population.

Because of the type of programming and supports CAPE offers, we tend to attract a high percentage of students with identified issues: mild-moderate codes, gifted codes, twice exceptional codes, multiple codes, high-functioning autism, and a conglomerate of challenges. Not all of these needs fall within the cognitive realm. Rather, there is an increasing number of students who have required emotional supports and/or overt social skill development in addition to "schooling". Other students, who do not present with codes, still have unique learning profiles. By acknowledging the individual learner profile, CAPE strives to provide the program best suited to each student's gifts, abilities, and interests. Partnerships with post-secondary institutions keep our program grounded in current, peer-reviewed research in areas that directly impact our students such as gifted education, individualization, differentiation, numeracy, and literacy. CAPE focuses on supporting the personal and academic development of the student as a whole.

Over time, CAPE's demographics have changed. At times, the number of gifted codes has accounted for as much as 40% of our population. In other years, the number of students on the Autism Spectrum have been up to 50% in one class. Providing for each of these students requires an ever-increasing understanding of assessment procedures, impacts on learning, recommended supports from research, implementation, tracking, and reassessment. Our collaborative co-operative team approach is integral to our ability to support our students. The personalized program in particular benefits from the work within the school and with our community partners. We are thus able to respond efficiently and effectively to the challenges our students face. Our ability to immediately respond and, as one evaluator once said, 'turn on a dime' is also facilitated by our small size and school-based decision-making.

SECTION 3. VISION AND MISSION

3.1 Our Vision

To promote the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that support 21st century citizenry and life-long learning within a holistic, personalized, integrated, flexible learning environment.

3.2 Our Mission

To foster the development of academic and personal skills through the provision of a personalized, integrated program so that each child or student may achieve success in the pursuit of personal and academic goals, strive for personal excellence, become engaged thinkers and ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit, independent learners, and world citizens.

SECTION 4. PHILOSOPHY, PURPOSE, GOALS, and OUTCOMES

4.1 Philosophy and Beliefs

CAPE's personalized, integrated program within a community of learners that encompasses the school, parents, and community and supports each student's efforts in a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment. Each learner is offered opportunities for engagement in the pursuit of personal and academic goals at a pace that is appropriate for the learner, that utilizes a learning style that best suits the learner, and provides the learner with avenues for demonstration of learning. Because this program is student-centred, each learner is provided opportunities for investigations and explorations within an open-ended curriculum within the context of Alberta Education Program of Studies.

CAPE believes that:

1. Each student, as an individual, presents with particular academic and personal needs because of a variety of factors.
2. Students, when placed in a student-centred environment, have the greatest potential of becoming successful students and life-long learners.
3. Students are best served through a personalized, integrated program which is flexible, innovative, and responsive.
4. The school, as a collaborative instructional team, creates a shared learning atmosphere for all members to develop and maintain a student-centred learning environment. Students are grouped and/or streamed to create highly effective learning environments.
5. Parents, as partners in the learning community, provide valuable perspectives and support for their children and deserve to have a choice in an educational program which best supports individualized learning.
6. The community is a partner in the learning as it provides the domain for opportunities and experiences which expand beyond the school, including leadership, collaboration, diversity, and resourcefulness.



4.2 Purpose

The purpose of CAPE’s personalized, integrated program is to support the learner’s acquisition of cross-curricular competencies, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and other academic skills while also developing personal skills such as relationships-building, self-advocacy, creation of opportunities, risk-taking, and achieving goals.

CAPE’s kindergarten program is a voluntary, pre-school, full-day, every-day, educational program offered to eligible children. The kindergarten program emphasizes a developmental process that encourages every child to grow intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally at rate that respects the potential of each individual child. It therefore aligns with CAPE’s grade 1-9 integrated, personalized program.

4.3 Charter Goals and Outcomes

CAPE defines excellence as: (a) the achievement of the student’s personal best in academic pursuits; (b) the development of social and interpersonal skills (such as anger management, problem solving, democratic decision making, tolerance, and/or acceptance of different beliefs), self-esteem, self-motivation, and self-direction (independent learning), and the development of ‘citizenry’ skills.			
Charter Goals		Outcomes	
Charter Goal 1 CAPE School is focused on achieving academic excellence.		Outcome 1	Student learning is improved with personalized information from regular and timely assessments so that students are working at their own personal best.
		Outcome 2	Student progress shows above average growth.
		Outcome 3	Students become well-rounded individuals with a broad knowledge base which they can apply in flexible contexts.
		Outcome 4	Students have a greater awareness of the world around them through exposure to other cultures, ideas, and beliefs and integrate ideas from various disciplines.
Charter Goal 2 CAPE School is focused on achieving personal excellence.		Outcome 1	Students have acquired personal and interpersonal skills so that they may become productive citizens of the world and life-long learners.
		Outcome 2	Students learn the importance of caring for others, learn respect for others, and treat others fairly in both smaller and larger contexts.

SECTION 5. INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

5.1 Integrated Program

CAPE's personalized program is delivered within the context of integrated learning and teaching. Integration is a cross-curricular approach to program development, a "whole" learning process in which the core content is made richer with meaningful experiences that include the arts, wellness, multiculturalism and global awareness, citizenry, community involvement, and skills development. The program foundations come from the social studies and sciences curricula. Language and mathematics, as well as other curricula, are purposefully woven into the learning experience. Learning experiences and opportunities are added to enrich the environment, increase the relevancy of the material, and engage learners. Within this context, assessment practices are varied and reflect the diverse concepts explored. CAPE's integration program has evolved over time from integration of elective subjects only to integration under the broad descriptors of "Humanities" and "Sciences". The timetable provides for large blocks of time in support of this practice. Physical Education is accommodated within the schedule so as to provide daily physical activities.

5.2 Personalized Program

A research-based, data-driven, purposeful, collaborative, and cyclical process through which each student's personalized program is developed, implemented, monitored, and re-evaluated to maximize the achievement of personal goals through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

1. Data Collection

- Assessment of student current competencies and capacity. Assessment can be cognitive, academic, social, emotional, behavioural, and/or sensory. Valid standardized assessment tools are used to 'drill down' as needed.
- Anecdotal and survey data are collected from students, parents, and teachers, past student files, current classroom assessments, standardized tests, and current diagnostic assessment results.
- Individual learner profiles are developed.

2. Development of an Individual Support Plan

- Teachers, support staff, administration, school psychologist, parents, students, and community agencies collaborate in the development of the Individual Program Plan.
- The Individual Program Plan and the individual profile are used to establish effective learning groups.

3. Implementation and tracking of individual achievement.

- Responsive periodic re-assessment of student competencies and capacity facilitate modifications to the plan as needed.

4. Examination of viable options as the individual support plan evolves.

- The Personal Learning Plan/individual Support Plan is a living document that evolves as the student needs change.

5.3 Uniqueness

- CAPE provides a personalized, integrated, flexible, school-wide program that seamlessly blends and supports the whole child.
- Each aspect of the school program is based on investigations of research-based practices to best suit our ever-changing population of diverse learners.
- Students are supported through an effective and extremely timely response to assessed student needs through a collaborative, multidisciplinary team.
- Partnerships with parents facilitate the parents' understanding of their children's needs, ways through which the children can be supported personally, and how the school and parents can work together to create a flexible, responsive environment to maximize learning.
- Partnerships with community provide access to external services and environments that support both personalized learning and groups of learners.

- Partnerships with post-secondary institutions support research, staff development, and staff capacity as researchers, and support the sharing of best practices with regional, provincial, and national education partners.

5.4 Learning Environment

CAPE provides a safe, caring, and supportive learning environment for each learner. The learning environment is purposely designed to support student engagement, the pursuit of personal best, capacity, and citizenship.

Parents choose CAPE with the expectation that its environment is understanding, knowledgeable, and responsive to the needs of their children. Parents learn about their children as they develop and the school supports the acquisition of knowledge so that parents may support their children effectively.

The Board, the administration, and the staff are understanding, accepting, and responsive to the distinct characteristics and needs of each child/student. CAPE’s small class size and low adult/learner ratio, flexible learning groupings, integrated learning, and differentiated and personalized opportunities provide learners with essential personal, physical, intellectual, emotional, and social experiences as they pursue academic and personal excellence.

CAPE’s learning environment reaches into the community to create partnerships which are not only conducive to student engagement but also foster a sense of belonging and of community. These relationships foster and promote life-long learning, global ethical citizenry, and the entrepreneurial spirit. Collaboration within the community allows for learners-mentors and/or role model interactions and for opportunities to participate in experiences that support successful engagement.



SECTION 6. RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

A bibliography supporting the instructional strategies is found in Appendix I.

SECTION 7. DEMOGRAPHICS

7.1 Population

CAPE Public Charter School provides a safe, caring, and supportive environment for any student who believes, or whose parents believe, that CAPE's program is best suited to the needs of that student. It supports a population comprised of diverse complex learners that includes students with Mild/Moderate, Program Unit Funding, Severe, Gifted and Gifted/Disabled codes, as well as students requiring little to no additional supports.

7.2 Student Selection Criteria

Pre-Requisites to Admittance:

1. Any parent/guardian interested in enrolling a child/student at CAPE is required to complete a Waiting List Form.
2. Parents/guardians shall attend an orientation meeting at which the CAPE philosophy, mission and goals, teaching methodology, and protocols such as assessments and IPP development, student evaluations and reporting, dress code, discipline policy, and promotion standards are discussed.
3. Parents/guardians that do not agree with CAPE's philosophy, mission and goals, teaching methodology, and protocols and/or are unwilling to comply with these prerequisites, will be asked to withdraw their child/student's waiting list form.
4. Parents/guardians engage in a transparent, accurate, and timely discussion regarding the student's academic and personal needs with the administration to determine whether or not the CAPE program has the potential of meeting the student's needs.
5. A review of previous school information and parent(guardian)/administration discussion must indicate that the CAPE program has the potential of meeting the student's needs.

Admittance into grades 1-9

1. A personalized copy of the "Commitment to Return" form is provided to all parents/guardians of students currently enrolled (copy of the form can be found in Appendix III). Students whose parents fail to return this form by the stated deadline shall be considered as "not returning". This information shall be used to determine available spaces for the next academic year.
2. Waiting list students whose parent(s)/guardian(s) has/have met the pre-requisite(s) shall be admitted to CAPE school, subject to the availability of spaces, on a first-come first-served basis.
3. Siblings of students already enrolled, past students wishing to return, and staff children will be admitted to CAPE school, subject to meeting the pre-requisite(s) and to availability of spaces, on a first come first-served basis, no priority admittance.
4. The student is considered enrolled once CAPE school has received the completed written registration form prescribed by CAPE school.

Admittance into Kindergarten

1. Waiting list children whose parent(s) or guardian(s) has/have met the pre-requisite(s) shall be admitted to CAPE school, subject to the availability of spaces, on a first-come first-served basis.
2. Siblings of students already enrolled, and staff children will be admitted to CAPE school, subject to meeting the pre-requisite(s) and to availability of spaces, on a first come first-served basis, no priority admittance.
3. The child is considered enrolled once CAPE school has received the completed written registration form prescribed by CAPE school.

7.3 Some of Our Current Key Organizational Strategies

Class Size

CAPE's class size, grounded in research and Alberta Commission on Learning, is one factor that supports the school's personalized program. Classes are capped at 18+/-1 for Kindergarten to grade 3, at 22+/-1 for grades 4 and 5, and at 24+/-1 for grades 6 to 9. The smaller class sizes allow for greater time for personalized supports and reasonable, responsive implementation of accommodations and recommendations from assessments and research.

Educational Support

Educational assistants are instrumental in the delivery of the personalized program. As such, they are valued and valuable members of the educational team. Therefore, kindergarten through to grade 3 classes are provided with a full-time educational assistant while the 4-9 classes are provided with the services of an educational assistant if the student needs within the group are such that support is warranted. Students that have been identified with severe needs are supported within the class through educational assistants based on assessments and recommendations. The support from educational assistants allows for a greater variety of accommodations and recommendations to be implemented in a timely manner and tracked for effectiveness.

7.4 Attendance Area

Medicine Hat, Redcliff, and surrounding area.

7.5 Enrolment and School Building Requirements

CAPE School is intended to serve kindergarten children and grades 1 through 9 students.

The school's current facility is located at 201 - 5th Street SW, Medicine Hat, AB, T1A 4G7

SECTION 8. SHARING INNOVATION

CAPE Public Charter School has and will continue to share successful innovations with the education community. Each stakeholder group not only purposefully seeks opportunities through which to share our successful innovations but also to learn with and from our education partners.

CAPE has and will continue to:

- be actively involved with The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools;
- present at The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools conferences and meetings;
- present at provincial conferences such as the College of Alberta School Superintendents/ Alberta Education Conference and the Rural Education Symposium as well as the South East Alberta Teacher Convention;
- submit proposals for articles for publication in such publications as *The CASS CONNECTION* and CASSA's *Leaders & Learners*;
- publish articles in specialized publications; and
- engage in research and pursue publication opportunities.

CAPE will strengthen partnerships with:

- post-secondary institutions such as Simon Frasier University (Gifted Education), the University of Lethbridge (Action Research) and the Medicine Hat College (mentorship);
- education organizations such as The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools, College of Alberta School Superintendents, and other public jurisdictions such as the Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education, Medicine Hat School District #76, and Prairie Rose School Division #4 to collaborate in professional development initiatives;

- community organizations such as Community Health; and
- educational organizations such as the Regional Collaborative Service Delivery.

SECTION 9. GOVERNANCE

9.1 SOCIETY

9.1.1 The CAPE – CENTRE FOR ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL EXCELLENCE INSTITUTE is the sponsoring body for CAPE School and holds ultimate authority and responsibility for the operation and management of the school.

9.1.2 The Bylaws of CAPE - CENTRE FOR ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL EXCELLENCE INSTITUTE, describe the authority, mandate, and responsibilities of the CAPE Board and the Society.

9.2 CHARTER BOARD

Pursuant to provisions of the School Act and other relevant legislation, the Society will establish a charter board with a mandate to act on behalf of the Society in the operation and management of the school in accordance with the School Act, the Charter, and the Society Bylaws. The Board of the CAPE School Society will function as the governing Board of the School.

9.3 ROLE OF PARENTS

9.3.1 Parents are recognized as vital partners in the education of their children and as such are involved in the school through:

- a) partners in the learning;
- b) CAPE Board of Directors;
- c) CAPE School Council;
- d) input in the Education Plan;
- e) consultants;
- f) volunteers;
- g) guest speakers.

9.3.2 A School Council has been established in accordance with the School Act and functions in accordance with the School Councils Regulation (2007) and its By-Laws (2004).

SECTION 10. AMENDING THE CHARTER

10.1 Basis and Process for Amendment

(1) Any member of the Charter Board or the Society may request that the Charter Board review a term or condition of the Charter.

(2) The Charter Board shall meet within four to eight (4 to 8) weeks to consider the amendment request. The Charter Board's decision shall be communicated, in writing, within forty-eight (48) hours to the requesting member. If the amendment is rejected, it may be discussed again after one (1) year.

(3) If the amendment proposal is accepted, the Charter Board shall have between four and eight (4 and 8) weeks to provide Society members with a copy of the proposed amendment(s) and call a general meeting of the Society. At this meeting, the proposed amendment will either be approved or rejected by the Society members. Minor rewording of the amendment, which does not affect either the substance or intent of the amendment, may also be considered at this meeting.

(4) The decision of the Society is final and the result of the vote will be conveyed in writing to the requesting member within forty-eight (48) hours. If the amendment proposal is rejected, it may be discussed again after one (1) year.

(5) In the event the proposed amendment(s) are approved by the Society, the Charter Board shall seek to obtain the necessary approval from the Minister in accordance with the regulations.

10.2 Minor Amendments

(1) The Charter Board may, on its own authority, initiate and approve minor amendments that do not affect the substance or intent of the charter. Following Charter Board approval, the amendment shall be forwarded to the Minister for final approval.

SECTION 11. TERM OF THE CHARTER

11.1 Charter Renewal

The term of the Charter is that term established by the Minister, September 1, 2016 to August 31, 2021. When applying for charter renewal, the Charter Board consults with all stakeholders, considers recommendations made in evaluation reports and complies with all required changes, and adheres to the Charter School Regulations.

SECTION 12. DISSOLUTION

12.1 Basis and Process for Dissolution

- (1) At any time prior to the expiration of the Charter the operation of CAPE may be terminated by:
 - (a) a direction made by the Charter Board to terminate the operation of CAPE; or
 - (b) a direction by the Minister to repeal the Charter.
- (2) In Order for the operation of CAPE to be terminated by the Charter Board, the following process must be followed:
 - (a) the Charter Board will advise the Minister, in writing, of its intent to terminate the operation of CAPE at the end of that school year;
 - (b) the Charter Board will call a Special meeting (the “dissolution meeting”) of CAPE;
 - (c) the Charter Board will discuss with the Members the rationale behind the recommendation to terminate the operation of CAPE;
 - (d) the Charter Board will propose by Special Resolution that the operations of CAPE be terminated;
 - (e) the Members will vote on the Special Resolution to terminate the operations of CAPE;
 - (f) upon:
 - (i) passing the Special Resolution to terminate the operations of CAPE; and
 - (ii) the Charter Board receiving the written approval of the Minister to terminate the operations of CAPE; the Charter Board will begin the dissolution process, and shall be carried out by the Charter Board with the assistance and guidance of the School Council, if necessary. The Charter Board shall use its best efforts to meet financial and other obligations of the school throughout the dissolution process.
- (3) If the Charter is being terminated under the direction of the Minister, the following process must be followed:
 - (a) the Charter Board will call a Special meeting (the “dissolution meeting”) of the Charter as soon as conveniently possible;
 - (b) the Charter Board will discuss with the Members the rationale behind the Minister's decision to repeal the Charter;
 - (c) the Charter Board will begin the dissolution process, and shall be carried out by the Charter Board with the assistance and guidance of the School Council, if necessary. The Charter Board shall use its best efforts to meet financial and other obligations of the school throughout the dissolution process.
- (4) Within two (2) weeks of its decision, the Charter Board shall, in accordance with relevant legislation, give written notice to all stakeholders of the decision to dissolve the Charter Stakeholders include the Minister, the Society members, teachers and employees, and all members of the Charter Board, and the parents and students. Notice of dissolution shall provide

the reasons for, the effective date of, and the proposed plan for dissolution.

- (5) Prior to the effective date of dissolution, but no later than 90 days prior to the last day of the academic year, the Charter Board shall, in accordance with relevant regulation, provide each student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) with support for an alternate program; program descriptions, contact information, fee structures, and counsellor support.

12.2 Disposition of Property and Finance

- (1) After providing notice to stakeholders as provided above, the Charter Board shall proceed to:

- (a) provide notice pursuant to any rental or lease agreement for buildings, land, property, or facilities;
- (b) determine a value for any owned buildings, land, property, facilities, or other assets;
- (c) liquidate any owned assets either by public auction or private sale or donation to non-profit charitable organization;
- (d) discharge the liabilities of the school;
- (e) provide the Society and the Minister with a full accounting of the finances of the school;
- (f) return any surplus attributable to provincial funding to the Provincial Treasurer;
- (g) turn over to the Society any residual funds, at which point the Society shall be dissolved in accordance with the Society Bylaws.

12.3 Transfer of Student Records

(1) The Charter Board shall provide each registered student with a transfer-of-records form, which is to be provided to the receiving school. Within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the completed transfer form from the receiving school, the Charter Board shall ensure that the student's records are forwarded according to instructions on the form.

(2) The Charter Board shall remain responsible for the transfer of the student's records for a period of three (3) months from the date it provided the transfer form; thereafter, any remaining student records shall be forwarded to the Minister with a request that they be held on record until claimed by the student.

(3) The responsibility for providing accurate and fully complete information on the transfer form shall remain at all times with the parent or guardian, as the case may be, and the Charter Board shall not be held liable for acting upon inaccurate or incomplete information.

(4) The Charter Board shall ensure that all student evaluation records are disposed of in such a manner as to safeguard the privacy of the students. The Charter Board shall ensure that all school records that require storage are sent to the Minister and that all other documents are disposed of in a secure manner so as to safeguard the privacy of the teachers, administrators, students, and parents.

APPENDIX I

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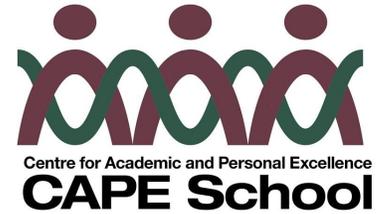
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APPENDIX II

Commitment to Return Form

CAPE - Centre for Academic and Personal Excellence
830A Balmoral Street SE
Medicine Hat, AB
T1A 0W9
 Tel: (403) 528-2983
 Fax: (403) 528-3048
www.capeisgreat.org



2016-2017 COMMITMENT to RETURN

I, _____, parent of the following student(s) make my intent known as indicated.

Student Name	Current Grade	Returning to CAPE? Please write yes or no.	Supply Pack Fee Due upon the return of this form, payable by cash or cheque.
Student legal name input via SIS			Fee input by grade.

_____ **Please initial to indicate your understanding of the following:**
 If you have committed to your student(s) returning, and your student does not return, refunds for the supply pack will not be issued due to spring order deadlines and supplies will be put into inventory. One should also note that a student that has committed to return, but does not return, negatively impacts the Board-established budget for that year.

I understand by committing to return through this signed and dated form, I am directly impacting the school’s decision-making process regarding the hiring or laying off of staff, the purchasing of school supplies (dependent on student numbers), and the registering of new students (dependent on the number of returning students in each class).

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return Commitment to Return Form with supply pack fees by (date).

APPENDIX III

Charter Review Process

- * structure a committee via open invitation consisting of Board, School Council, community, senior and site administration, staff and parent representative(s);
- * analysis of student, parent and staff surveys and student interviews;
- * collaborative review of Alberta Education documentation; Ministerial Order (#001/2013), School and Education Acts and Regulations, Inspiring Education, Curriculum Redesign, Inclusive Education, Framework for Student Learning;
- * collaborative review of other charters;
- * sectioning of original CAPE charter and revision of each section reflecting the current educational best practices within CAPE and the Alberta Education framework;
- * revisiting and review of each section by stakeholder groups;
- * first draft shared with Board, School Council, staff and parents, feedback sought and discussed/incorporated;
- * development of second draft, e-mailed to Education Manager, two charter schools superintendent and a University of Calgary professor;
- * feedback analyzed and development of final draft;
- * Presentation to the Board of Directors for review and adoption.
- * Further revisions were undertaken in response to Ministerial and Alberta Education request attached to our charter renewal letter.