

## The Charter Agreement

### Introduction

**" Throughout the world and throughout Canada,  
there is a pressing need of safe space for respectful conversation"  
- Janice Stein**

***Community Leadership is the capacity to see what needs to be done  
The courage to take the lead;  
The ability to inspire others to action;  
The willingness to break down barriers and the fundamental ability to  
collaborate with others in the community so that together great results are  
achieved, far greater than what one could do by oneself.***

## CALGARY ARTS ACADEMY

### **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

These belief statements will act as the decision-making guidelines as CAAS Board moves towards operating the Charter school, the Calgary Arts Academy.

We believe:

1. the Arts and young children should be the focus of a knowledge society's educational system.
2. the importance of the teacher's role cannot be overstated.
3. that nurturing and creativity requires the ability to tolerate chaos.
4. as Peter Drucker stated, "few are prepared for the challenges of the next millennium, but those who prepare themselves will be the leaders and dominate tomorrow."
5. that, "if a society doesn't care for and nurture the arts, it will be finished as a major player in the knowledge area." - Dr. Luycxx
6. that education must be learner centered and accessible to students, parents and the community at large.
7. in democracy, defined as a collaboration of all stakeholders to demonstrate accountability, responsiveness, innovation and equity.
8. in optimizing human potential.

9. in assisting students to be responsible, caring, creative, self-reliant and contributing members of a knowledge based and prosperous society.
10. in life-long learning
11. in people
12. in tolerance, patience and understanding
13. uniqueness should be celebrated.

## **VISION**

Calgary Arts Academy will be an innovative school that engages children through Arts Immersion and research to become confident learners and spirited citizens. (Revised Spring, 2005)

At the Calgary Arts Academy (CAA), our vision is to teach the Alberta Curriculum through Arts Immersion to provide direct instruction in each of the five Arts: dance, drama, music, visual and literary arts - to improve student learning. For students, artistic skills will be explored and pursued in harmony with traditional academic subjects.

Students will have the opportunity to learn Alberta curriculum through immersion into the Performing, Visual and Literary Arts in an atmosphere that encourages the democratic values of autonomy, liberty, equality of opportunity, tolerance, fairness, choice and non-coercion.

## **Rationale**

We will nurture social capital by forming unique partnerships with individuals and Calgary community as we deliver public education through Arts Immersion. CAA's student-centered community approach to learning will allow students to work directly with our business partners as some will be physically located within our building.

Key to our vision is the wisdom of providing stability of program and focus from Kindergarten through to Grade Nine while focusing on innovative, stable leadership in the school.

Together, in a spirit of unity, we will discover, develop and promote Arts Education in support of public education.

Achieving significant and systematic change in schools and in the developmental paths of children will require change on multiple fronts: curriculum content; teacher behavior; artist behavior; classroom organization; the role of parental and community involvement; and elements of classroom and school climate.

CAA will be a model learning and research center, providing student teachers, seniors, artists, practicum students, the community at large and Fine Arts graduates with the opportunity to participate actively in teaching and learning. As the center of the community, we will focus on professional development for staff, parents, artists and community members in a collaborative fashion.

Senior citizens will assume their place as “elders of the community” and will engage in the educational process.

At CAA, staffing will demonstrate flexibility in order to meet individual student need. As the Arts will be core curriculum, artists will be hired to work daily with professional staff, delivering Alberta Curriculum through Arts immersion. This will reduce the student /adult ratio to 20:1.

CAA will model democracy at all levels of the organization.

Democracy Definition: Democracy means that a firm, fair and consistent approach to learning and behavior expectations will be provided. The goal of this approach will be increased development of student responsibility for self and for learning. Students will be given choice and voice. Curriculum delivery and evaluation will demonstrate democracy as staff; students, artists and parents collaborate to ensure student success.

Protecting young people from many different problem behaviors and promoting positive attitudes and behaviors will be accomplished through the “Developmental Asset Approach” which turns liabilities into assets with a focus on character education.

Staff, parents, artists and community members will participate in making informed decisions. The blend of parental, teacher and artists’ energies will enhance educational possibilities and provide triple support for students in the program.

Students will be encouraged to ultimately develop their potential beyond what would be possible for them in other schools. Curriculum change, teacher development and community involvement are at the center of the school’s restructuring – showing what can be done in the classroom when parents, teachers, community members, elders, artists, arts organizations and school administrators are free to be creative and make important decisions.

Consistent evaluation, using all authentic assessment techniques will guide teaching and learning practice.

Cultural values and tradition will be honored and celebrated.

Calgary Arts Academy will encourage and participate in research activities in conjunction with post-secondary institutions. We will develop and share research tools and activities related to practice and outcomes in Arts Immersion.

### **Mission**

Our mission is to provide a collaborative, democratic learning community, empowering each individual to become self-directed, lifelong learners who value community focused and citizen based action facilitated through effective communication, collaboration, critical and creative thinking.

Our mission is to begin with the end in mind. We will provide direct instruction in the Arts each day. Immersion into the Arts will provide the vehicle to teach the Alberta curriculum. Democratic values of autonomy, liberty, equality of opportunity, tolerance, fairness, choice and non-coercion will allow students to demonstrate increased self-responsibility on the journey to become self-directed lifelong learners. Creative thinking, critical inquiry and effective communication focusing on goal directed, generative learning and asset building will occur each day. We will provide an open culture where all will feel welcome to contribute and to learn.

## THE CHARTER SCHOOL

### NAME AND LOCATION

Name: Calgary Arts Academy

Location: Calgary City

Currently (2008) located in two campuses.

The Glenmeadows Campus at 4931 Grove Hill Road SW, and the Knob Hill Campus at 2036 20<sup>th</sup> Ave SW.

The Calgary Arts Academy is applying for Charter status, rather than alternative program status for the following reasons:

- Hiring of appropriate professional and support staff is crucial. CAA will staff differently and focus on the student to adult ratio rather than the student to teacher ratio, bearing in mind the class size requirements of Alberta Education. Adult means teacher and artist.
- We believe that current procedure within large organizations will hinder the realization of our vision.

Our preference would be to receive approval under the direction of Alberta Education. All participants of this application believe in and support public education. We look forward to sharing opportunities as Calgary Arts Academy moves forward.

## **PHILOSOPHY, PURPOSE AND GOALS**

### **PHILOSOPHY**

Our philosophy at Calgary Arts Academy is that children come first. We know that magic can happen when you nurture the whole child: body, mind and spirit.

We treat each child as an individual, a person with his or her unique way of learning and doing. We believe that this personalized approach enables each child to get the most out of school.

We believe that through Arts Immersion education, combined with the “Circle of Courage” philosophy, Democratic Discipline and a focus on “Developmental Assets” CAA students will excel.

### **PURPOSE**

Our purpose is foster academic excellence, practical skill building and spirited citizenship.

CAA will enrich Calgary City and to provide an innovative model for public education. We will facilitate, support and promote arts education.

At CAA, education goes beyond the classroom, providing students with real-life experiences that give depth and meaning to their lessons. We will build character and give children the inspiration and self-confidence they need to become responsible citizens by providing a democratic learning environment that fosters self-responsibility for learning in a democratic world.

### **GOAL**

Our goal is to serve our clientele: students, parents, grandparents and the community at large. We believe that active parental, community and partnership involvement in the educational process ensures student success.

A Philosophy of Education that:

- is founded on respect and harmony. We embrace life and learning with personal, communal and global integrity.
- demonstrates positive expectations for the academic and social development of children.
- infuses instruction across disciplines.
- promotes active parent participation in learning through the democratic process.

- promotes active parent participation in learning through professional development and participation in the classroom and at home through the use of contracts.
- addresses the whole, dynamic nature of teaching and learning.
- allows students to be creative, capable learners, building on strengths.
- allows teachers to be risk-takers, using informed practice as a guide, to create an effective learner-centered environment.
- fosters a classroom, total school community, encouraging share responsibility for school management and learning, while understanding and utilizing democratic ideals.
- invites active, collaborative reflection from the entire school community.
- believes that staff professional development is key to changing practice.

Our philosophy, purpose and goals will govern all decisions and day-to-day practice.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To improve student academic performance and teacher practice through teaching the Alberta Curriculum through Arts immersion while using best practice regarding multiple intelligence, brain research, personality and democracy.
- To provide an environment that is flexible and able to meet the individual needs of individuals and groups within Calgary City.
- To provide schooling that is sensitive to ethnic similarities, celebrating differences and which supports cultural uniqueness.
- Calgary Arts Academy will strive to improve student achievement through strengthening the teaching profession and through providing student centered learning in the classroom that is standards driven through Arts immersion.
- Our objectives will be achieved through delivering the Alberta Curriculum, including any new curriculum and revisions to current programs. Arts immersion will be the vehicle of curriculum delivery.

### **Measures**

- Multi-tiered case study conducted each year in one classroom at each level focusing on:
  - Student achievement
  - How stakeholders view the teaching and learning process
  - The level and degree of fidelity of arts immersion across the curriculum.
  - The school as a learning community

### **Data Collection will include:**

- Surveys
- Reports
- Collection and analysis of student work

- Review of Standardized Test Scores
- Interviews

### **Expected Outcomes:**

1. Changes in teacher/parent beliefs about how children learn.
2. Changes in the level of engagement of all stakeholders.
3. Increased student achievement.
4. Authentic Assessment strategies will be understood and evaluated.
5. Stakeholder view of Teaching Profession will change.

Students will understand personal, community and global values. Students will understand the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and will develop a desire to be life-long learners. We will focus on asset building.

### **EDUCATIONAL NEED THE CHARTER WILL FULFILL**

- CAA will provide an opportunity for parents to be actively involved in their children's learning experiences and are provided with the opportunity to have a better match of school program to their student needs, enhancing family choice.
- CAA will provide an opportunity for students to learn Alberta Curriculum through Arts immersion.
- CAA will provide a democratic learning environment for all stakeholders. This is particularly significant for students in that democracy encourages developing self-responsibility for the educational process.
- CAA will extend the community called school. Parents as partners, Grandparents and Seniors as elders will take their place in the educational process.
- CAA will meet the needs of various groups who require flexibility with educational programming in order to fulfill their mandate as organizations. (Calgary Boys Choir and Calgary Girls Choir)

CAA will join in partnership with outside agencies to provide the best quality learning experiences possible. Our first partnership is with Tricksters Theatre and the Action Learning Institute. The Calgary Arts Academy will provide space and in return, our students and staff will learn through active participation in curricular research.

- We believe parents and students are searching for this type of learning environment. There are large numbers of students that are falling through the cracks. We believe that many students will find their place at Calgary Arts Academy. We also believe many parents and grandparents will demonstrate

their support through becoming active, meaningful participants in the educational process.

As we move forward, all stakeholders will participate in helping make decisions that affect the day to day school operations.

All staff employed at Calgary Arts Academy will receive professional development regarding democratic community. A requirement of employment will be demonstrated ability in the Performing/Visual/Literary Arts.

The location of Calgary Arts Academy is key in that a culturally rich urban environment and the ability to access existing facilities at the Performing Arts Center can only enhance quality learning experiences.

## **CURRICULUM**

**Core curriculum will be taught through Arts Immersion.** Positive relationships amongst parents, students and grandparents will be communicated as key components to ensure academic success. Students, parents and grandparents will have the opportunity to become actively involved in the learning and evaluation process.

Self-evaluation, level of growth in relation to curriculum grade expectations, demonstration of knowledge, skills and attitudes students are expected to learn at each specified grade level, how well the student demonstrates grade level expectations and evidence of positive change in student achievement over time will all be considerations in the evaluation process. Careful consideration will be given to achievement test results and a plan of action to address areas of concern will be written in the yearly School Improvement Plan.

Good assessment is itself instructional. The ultimate purpose of any assessment by teacher or by peer is to build standards, principles and understandings that students can then use to evaluate themselves and improve their work.

Assessment should serve rather than simply reflect learning. Therefore, assessment dimensions are made public and students are constantly active in the assessment of a project, rather than only after the project is complete. Assessment after the fact occurs too late to truly help the students.

The basic curriculum will be Alberta Education's basic education program. Alberta Education's *Program of Studies* will be followed at all grade levels. New curricula and revisions to current programs will be incorporated as directed by Alberta Education.

All staff shall engage in curriculum planning. Arts Immersion curriculum delivery will include the following seven principles:

Positive contact between students, teachers, artists, parent volunteers, and Senior Citizens:

- Enhances students' intellectual commitment
- Encourages students to think about values and opinions

Reciprocity and Cooperation among students will be encouraged.

- Team effort, collaborative, social learning increases individual involvement in learning
- Sharing one's ideas and responding to others improves thinking and deepens understanding

Inquiry-Based Learning (Active Learning Techniques).

- Students do not:
  - Just sit and listen to teachers
  - Memorize/complete pre-packaged assignments
- Students will:
  - Talk about what they are learning
  - Write reflectively about learning
  - Relate learning to past experiences
  - Apply learning to daily life

Students will receive prompt feedback.

- Students will:
  - Know what they know
  - Receive help to assess existing knowledge and competence
 Have frequent opportunities to perform knowledge and receive feedback  
 Receive assistance with reflection on what they have learned, what they need to know, how they might assess themselves

Staff will set high Expectations.

- Students will experience success.

Emphasis will be placed on Time on Task.

- Time + energy = learning

Respect for Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning will be modeled.

- Students will have opportunities to show their talents and learn in ways that work for them.
- Students will be encouraged to learn in new ways that do not come so easily.
- Student involvement
- High level of cultural diversity

## UNIQUENESS OF PROGRAM

*1. Calgary Arts Academy will teach the Alberta Curriculum through the Arts immersion.*

Currently, there are no public schools in Calgary City that provide this type of curriculum delivery.

- Students will achieve mastery through an intense focus on subject content - as opposed to regularly scheduled short periods of instruction in different content areas. Required time allotments to address subject content will be followed.
- Students will receive instruction in multi-aged groupings, the groups to be changed as required, designed to enhance learning opportunities as opposed to defined, graded learning groups assigned to one teacher.
- Student will benefit from the opportunity to be lost in their work, to transcend and enlarge themselves, to stretch their minds and to enlarge possibilities. This is the best that Arts have to offer; the ability to dissolve the limiting boundaries of the self and to demand that we stretch our intellectual capacity to its utmost in complete dedication to this work, this play, this song, this painting, this dance; which, in reality is math, science, language and social studies.

Teaching the Alberta Curriculum through Arts immersion is a unique approach to curriculum delivery. This approach raises the bar one step further. This significantly different approach compliments and adds to existing local programs, as is the Charter School mandate by Alberta Education.

\*\* Perhaps the simplest way to present a picture is to imagine students immersed into the Arts, while learning core curriculum, similar to a French Immersion program.

The Arts are the main vehicle of information delivery. The content explored through the Arts is the core curriculum.

Example 1:

Art Form: Drama  
Curriculum Content: Science – Sound Waves

Students participate in physically acting out sound waves and their patterns in different conditions. Students' learning about sound waves is then reinforced through drawing, writing and discussion.

In this example, drama is used as the core delivery process and not simply a project that students create to represent something they had learned.

There is a fundamental difference in approach here – a difference in the amount of time spent using the art form, a difference in the point that Drama is used in the learning process and a difference in the level of professionalism required to use the Art form in this manner. The Arts maintain the integrity of their discipline.

The Art form is the teaching tool as well as a student project tool.

Example 2: See Action Learning Institute, Lesson Plan: The Human Ear

*2. In addition to teaching the Alberta Curriculum through the Arts, CAA will provide direct instruction in the five Arts of dance, drama, music, visual and literary arts.*

Currently, there are no public schools in Calgary City that offer direct instruction in each of these five disciplines on a daily basis with a minimum of providing direct instruction in three (3) of the Arts each day.

- Students will receive direct instruction in, at least three (3) of the Arts, as a discipline, each day of the year as opposed to receiving limited direct Arts instruction. A maximum of two and one-half (2 ½) hours per week of direct instruction in the Arts is presently provided in schools with Arts integration.
- Students will maintain a portfolio, designed to monitor growth in each of the five (5) Arts. The portfolios will include photographs to provide additional documentation.

*3. As a charter school with the Arts at the core of learning and with students immersed in the Arts while learning the Alberta Curriculum, organizational changes are designed to shift power, decision authority and resources from a large Board to the school level. It shifts authority closer to the classroom so that those who know the students best can also influence key policies and programs. The entire schooling process, from the physical environment, organizational factors, roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the school to the complete social climate of the school, has to be taken into consideration.*

This will greatly improve the educational environment and will impact student learning.

- Students will benefit from being a part of changing the delivery process in education, as CAA will be a model learning/research Center.

- Students will have the opportunity through program delivery to experience learning with a low adult-student ratio, as opposed to the more typical scenario of 28-30 students assigned to one teacher.
- Students will benefit from a 'school inclusive' environment where all employees share in the vision of the school and possess the qualifications and commitment to make realization of the vision possible.
- Students will benefit from the blend of parental, teacher and artists energies that will enhance educational possibilities and provide triple support for students in the program.
- Students will demonstrate ownership for all facets of school operation as part of the democratic culture, which is supported by all stakeholders, as opposed to limited ownership in a highly structured environment.
- Students will have the direct impact on their learning as parents; staff and the community help create the school climate. Everyone becomes involved in facilitation growth through excellence in process and product and provides a purposeful and powerful educational program that places students at the center of the curriculum, instruction and assessment.
- Students at CAA will have the opportunity of working with professional teachers who are artists and that are passionate about their positions.
- Students will receive the benefits of and understand the value of social capital. Teachers, artists, parents, partner organizations and individuals, elders and the community will work together to enhance learning experiences. With this huge social capital and students who are dedicated to the philosophy of CAA, the results for CAA students, is expected to demonstrate significant growth.
- Students will benefit from working with people of all ages, bridging the age-gap.
- Students will demonstrate an increased understanding, acceptance and appreciation for the strengths learning through the experience of seniors.

*4. As a democratic organization, one major area of focus will be to examine our day to day practice to ensure a healthy organization. Norms will be explicit, refined and practices. The norms we will strive to maintain are:*

- 1. A positive orientation*
- 2. Everyone's contribution is valued*
- 3. Caring and support is important*
- 4. Open and honest communication is vital*

Staff, parents and community help create the school climate, which has a direct impact on student learning. Everyone becomes involved in facilitating growth through excellence in process and product and provides a purposeful and powerful educational program that places students at the center of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Students at CAA will have the opportunity of working with professional teachers who are artists and that are passionate about their positions.

As a team, all stakeholders will think 'out of the box' to explore the possibilities to create enriching learning experiences.

*5. A recent article published in the Calgary Herald, written by Helen Raham. Helen identifies the following as turmoils affecting Canadian Schools. We at CAA concur.*

Identified serious handicaps to quality learning include:

- *Schools should work for kids first.*
  - At CAA, we work for kids!
- Public: Rigid class sizes, work schedules and classifications restrict creative ways to meet students needs.
  - At CAA, we have a creative model of curriculum delivery, focusing on an adult - student ratio, rather than a teacher - student ratio.
- Public: Restrict the ability of administrators to manage schools.
  - At CAA, we work together, collaboratively, to manage the school.
- Public: Seniority clauses prevent principals from putting the best teacher in the classroom.
  - At CAA, we will hire the best teachers, who are artists and will contract the best artists, who are/or want to learn how to be teachers.

*6. Parents will be actively involved in their children's learning experiences and are provided with the opportunity to have a better match of school program to their student needs, enhancing family choice.*

The blend of parental, teacher and artists energies will enhance educational possibilities and provide triple support for students in the program. Students will be encouraged to ultimately develop their potential beyond what would be possible for them in other schools. Curriculum change, teacher development and community involvement are at the center of the schools restructuring - showing what can be done in the classroom when parents, teachers, community

members, elders, artists, art organizations and school administrators are free to be creative and make important decisions.

7. The *Power of Assets Approach* to learning is not generally available in other schools.

Part of the School philosophy is to focus on the Power of Assets.

- In this school inclusive environment, students will be encouraged to ultimately develop their potential beyond what would be possible for them in other schools.
- Students will benefit from this inclusive environment where all employees share in the vision of the school, in the power of assets approach to learning and possess the qualifications and commitment to make realization of the vision.
- Students will benefit from the opportunity to develop a plan to solve their problems and take responsibility for their own behaviour and their own actions. A positive model is encouraged rather than a negative one.

Current research identifies some 40 developmental assets that represent every-day wisdom about positive experiences and characteristics for young people. Research has proven that these assets are powerful influences on adolescent behavior. These assets both protect young people from many different problem behaviors and promote positive attitudes and behaviors as students become productive citizens in a democratic community.

These assets are grouped into eight categories:

1. Support
2. Empowerment
3. Boundaries and expectations
4. Constructive use of time
5. Commitment to learning
6. Positive values
7. Social competencies
8. Positive identity

This asset framework is a framework that CAA learning community will embrace. Each partner in our learning community will actively contribute in the building of assets for students. There will be a shift from looking at students' problems to looking at students' strengths. This shift enables both students and teachers to demonstrate their gifts and talents. CAA believes that the school's responsibility is to teach to the whole student: the social, psychological, and academic aspects of each student. In order to improve students for today and the future, CAA will meet the needs of its students today. All students will complete an asset checklist

at the beginning of each term. Concrete learning objectives are identified to address building and maintenance of a healthy learning community.

Nine essential paradigm shifts have been identified for CAA:

From deficit language	.....	To Asset (positive) language
From focusing on troubled students	.....	To focusing on all students
From age segregation	.....	To Intergenerational community
From self-interest	.....	To shared responsibility
From a fragmented agenda		....To a unifying vision around developmental interests
From disconnected socializing system	.....	To connected socializing and consistent messages
		and conflicting messages
From efficiency	.....	To intentional redundancy
From constantly switching priorities	.....	To long-term commitment
From disengagement	.....	To engaging

At CAA we will make this significantly different educational service available in order to improve the learning of students by:

- educating our constituency, employees and students about their potential as asset builders.
- policies that allow parents to be actively involved in their child's daily life.
- encourage employees to contribute time, talent and support to community asset building efforts.
- encourage community to contribute time, talent and support to community asset building efforts.
- continue to plan, develop and strengthen initial programming designed to build assets; including mentoring, service-learning and peer support.

*8. In the 1997 issue of "Transforming Ideas for Teaching and Learning the Arts," Wharton states: "It is critically important that arts specialists working in the schools be excellent dancers, artists, musicians, or thespians; and it is just as important that they be skilled as teachers. Though these teachers may, and it is hoped, will continue to be productive in their chosen disciplines; it is crucial that they find major satisfaction in the growth of others for whom they open the wonders of the arts. Teaching is hard work; it requires imagination and diligence to plan the steps that lead to understanding. Arts educators are those dancers, musicians, artists and thespians who devote their lives to teaching."*

CAA will provide students with the opportunity to work with teacher/artists and artists/teachers that demonstrate passion and expertise.

- Students will benefit, as teachers will be role models for their students and are able to provide quality instruction because they share their talents with one another by team teaching, exchanging classes and planning together. The major players within the school setting become supportive and positive and all work together in a collaborative way to create a more personalized learning environment for their students.

9. *CAA's student-centered community approach to learning will allow students to work directly with our business partners as some will be physically located within our building. (Foothills Brass, Trickster Theatre/Action Learning, Visual Artists). CAA's business community have become involved in the school as stakeholders who want to establish direct linkages with the students to help them make connections between school and the world of work. By putting the students at the heart of every decision, CAA's partners are committed to doing whatever it takes to make students successful.*

The partnerships developed are unique and abundant as new grass roots initiatives connected to the Alberta Curriculum are created.

This multiple partnership 'holistic' approach in the creation of school culture is not available in any public schools in Calgary City.

- Students will demonstrate social responsibility through active participation in community and career related initiatives. An example of this will be students participating in public theatre productions, receiving direct experience with career options. Each student will be responsible for the maintenance of a 'community enhancement/involvement portfolio'. Students will work with Artists - some of whom will be on staff, some of whom will be volunteers – each day of the year as opposed to artists working in schools for a maximum of thirty-two days per year, as provided through CAPES. Students will benefit from having access to programs not readily available or known about in other school settings. Examples of this include the Calgary Boys Choir, Calgary Girls Choir, Children's Theatre, Company of Young Canadians, etc.
- Students will benefit from being allowed to share their different ways of processing information, so that new methods for learning information are continually being discovered thus enabling the students to realize that they are active participants in the learning process.
- Students will make contributions to the school so that it becomes their school and they develop a sense of pride and ownership. Students will benefit from participating in long-term active educational research designed to improve teaching and learning.

- Students will be encouraged to ask why, initiate new ideas, and will realize that they can contribute something significant to improving the school.
- Students will benefit from understanding and implementing a learning plan to enhance brain development through focusing on their own strengths based on right/left preference, in multi-aged balanced brain teams.

*10. Students will benefit from participating in long-term active educational research designed to improve teaching and learning. Students will be encouraged to ask why, initiate new ideas, and will realize that they can contribute something significant to improving the school*

*CAA will employ an artist /researcher /partnership coordinator to work with researchers from the University of Calgary Fine Arts Faculty and the Faculty of Education. This valuable information will be shared with the public. CAA will publish research."*

*11. CAA will also provide students with the following opportunities:*

- Students who demonstrate an interest in the Arts would move to a passion for excellence and to increasing and desired complexity.
- Students will create new patterns with complex variations and invent more challenging questions.
- Students will be able to experience being 'lost' in their work, to transcend and enlarge themselves to stretch their minds and enlarge possibilities. This is perhaps the best the arts have to offer; the amazing ability to dissolve the limiting boundaries of the self and to demand that we stretch our intellectual capacity to its utmost in complete dedication to this work, this play, this song, this painting, this dance which, in reality, is math, science, language and social studies.
- Learning through Arts Immersion will provide student with conscious mastery over learning and work.
- Learning through the arts offers students the chance to take control of decision making and to participate in skill building that leads to mastery of technique and expression.
- Students learn how to make sense, how to develop a disciplined mastery over their chosen means of expression and how to create intellectual order.

*"Excellence in arts programs brings life and learning. A mediocre program, the result of inadequate knowledge in the teacher or a lack of administrative support at any level, will eventually defeat learning and drain enthusiasm."*

**12. Professional development for staff, parents and community members will be an area of major focus. CAA's focus is to create a shared, collaborative learning community that enables students to discover the joy of learning and participate as active stakeholders in their school. CAA's school environment will be changed from individuals working alone to sharing each other's talents and accomplishments. A quality education demands shared responsibility and inspires high expectations and achievement of both students and staff.**

- Parents and community members will be encouraged to become knowledgeable about the provision of education in an Arts Immersion model. First areas of focus include:
  - Democracy in the school environment
  - Contract Learning
  - Teaching the Alberta Curriculum through immersion in the Arts
- We believe that the purpose of professional development is to nurture the academic growth of students and to nurture the academic growth of students by improving the skills of teachers and others that contribute to the school.
- An essential attribute of good professional development and collaboration is that good practice is identified and shared.
- We must remain open to learning from others.

Professional development will occur amongst all stakeholders on a daily basis. The school will be structured to allow sharing of success.

Together with the School Council and the Board of Directors, a plan will be developed to support professional development initiatives to a far greater extent than is presently available in public schools.

### **13. Cultural Values and Traditions will be honored.**

The Arts provide our learning community with the unique opportunity of celebrating differences and learning about uniqueness. It is clear that with this focus while learning, students will develop a love for cultural diversity and become tolerant and accepting towards others. By identifying our similarities and differences, students will recognize, respect, and develop an understanding of the uniqueness of each individual and acknowledge the contributions each one can make.

At CAA, we value and nurture creativity and individuality, in contrast to large organizations. Large organizations purport to value creativity and individuality.

In reality and in practice, conformity is nurtured and creativity and individuality are often times lost.

#### **14. CAA will provide an immersion program for K – 9.**

Calgary Arts Academy, a Kindergarten to Grade 9 school, will provide the long-term sustained continuity of programming and a quality educational foundation.

At CAA, we believe that it is essential to provide Arts immersion at an early age in order to discover the full scope of student potential through Arts Immersion.

*Achieving significant and systematic change in schools and in the developmental paths of children will require change on multiple fronts: curriculum content, teacher behavior, artist behavior, classroom organization, the role of parental and community involvement and elements of classroom and school climate.*

By offering a Kindergarten to Grade 9 structure and then, in the future, moving to a seamless Kindergarten to Grade 12 program, parents who have identified this as a primary need will be given choice of program that is presently unique in Calgary. This would permit the delivery of a philosophically coherent and well-coordinated program with a consistent methodology throughout. CAA is committed to providing a quality education that will develop student skills and attitudes necessary for life-long learning through a positive and safe learning environment in partnership with home and community.

This is an identified significant educational need that CAA can meet. This is congruent with the philosophy of the Edmonton Victoria School of Performing and Visual Arts.

Calgary Arts Academy will *intervene earlier in the lives of children*. Students develop in different ways at different levels. The schooling experiences can provide both crystallizing experiences, where students discover their own unique gifts and talents, and paralyzing experiences, where students become developmentally frozen in an area because of some unpleasant or negative circumstance.

- CAA is committed to a long-term effort which will promote educational change, both because the changes noted in children take time to materialize and because changes in schools, classrooms, teachers, artists and parent behaviors are also long-term projects.
- CAA is committed to developing materials and processes, not in isolation from schools, but in collaboration with teachers, artists, arts organizations, parents, elders, and expert educators.
- CAA is committed to allowing students to discover, display, and develop their unique ways of learning.

Stipek (1981)<sup>1</sup> has documented that there is a systematic decrease in achievement motivation across the elementary school years. During Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade, children are very task or process focused, enjoying whatever they are working on for the sake of engagement. Later years are increasingly characterized by preoccupation with outcomes and rewards - with a variety of dysfunctional consequences including disinterest and failure.

- The Calgary Arts Academy will work towards increasing achievement motivation as students develop self-confidence as learners; a belief in the value of personal effort and are motivated by the intrinsic value of learning.

Students' progress will be regarded as continuous and evaluated in terms of process and product rather than a final product. Student assessment will *serve* rather than *reflect* learning. Learning, in itself, is a lifelong process and not a final product. Students will learn to assess themselves and will be assessed while in the *process* of a project, rather than only *after* the project is complete. Multidimensional measures will be utilized to evaluate student progress that will be assessed in terms of student performance according to Alberta Curriculum and the results of achievement test scores.

*Calgary Arts Academy will be designed to increase student motivation and interest in learning engagement and learning itself. When students make contributions to the school, it becomes their school and they develop a sense of pride and ownership. When achieved for elementary students, success in secondary school and higher levels of school completion will follow.*

## **STUDENT LEARNING:**

The advantages of direct instruction for students in each of the five arts are:

### **Dance**

- Dance is a kinesthetic form of learning.
- Dance involves the total self, integrating body, mind and spirit.
- Dance develops concrete movement skills (body awareness, physical strength, flexibility, coordination, endurance, etc.) that students need to live healthy, successful and productive lives.
- Dance is participatory and encourages social development through practice.
- Dance develops creative and critical thinking skills through physical and kinetic experiences.
- Dance is a non-verbal way of communication and interaction.
- Dance is a means of expressing and learning about the diversity of human responses, life patterns, cultures and history.
- Dance is a supremely relevant aspect of life as the body is the instrument humans use to do everything and to sense and feel everything.

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<sup>1</sup> Stipek, D. "The development of achievement motivation." In R. Ames and C. Ames (Eds.) *Research on Motivation in Education, Vol. 1*. Orlando, Florida: Academic Press. 1981.

- Through dance learning experiences students develop self-esteem and respect for others.
- Work habits developed in dance are directly applicable in life process.
- Dance requires self-discipline and self-direction.
- Dance can challenge accelerated students while providing positive experiences for others.

## **Drama**

Drama calls for imagination and inventiveness. Students participating in drama must use higher-level thinking skills for comprehension of, inquiry into, and analysis of the ideas and values they present.

- Drama helps in relating to social context.
- Drama assists in aesthetic judgment.
- Drama provides beauty/pleasure.
- Drama reveals our values.
- Drama provides opportunity for productive group participation
- Drama is an interdisciplinary vehicle.
- Drama provides entertainment.
- Drama provides a unique understanding of myth, history, and spirituality.
- Drama provides vicarious, intense experience.
- Drama promotes self-esteem.
- Drama develops higher level thinking skills.
- Drama reveals the universality of human experience.

Drama will develop students' personal skills such as:

- punctuality
- courtesy/respect
- interpersonal skills
- sharing
- cooperation
- individual voice
- dependability
- group skills
- energy creating stamina
- belonging
- responsibility
- leadership
- listening
- speaking

## Music

Music can be one of the most stimulating, holistic and balanced forms of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development available in the curriculum.

Research presented at the 102<sup>nd</sup> annual convention of the American Psychological Association indicates that music is known to enhance spatial reasoning performance and spatial intelligence. Well-developed spatial intelligence is the ability to perceive the visual world accurately, to form mental images of physical objects and to recognize variations of objects. Complex math and progress in science are linked to such higher brain functions as music.

- Familiarity with music helps in the understanding of other arts.
- Music allows expression in other than text-centric media.
- Study of music improves the ability to listen, observe and imitate, memorize, concentrate, perform, be disciplined, persevere, and the abilities of the heart to feel
- The study and practice of music lowers involvement in crime.
- Study of music positively influences students not to drop out of school.
- Increased involvement in music and other arts results in increased creativity, fluency, originality, elaboration, expression, risk-taking, and imagination.
- Increased involvement in music and other arts results in increased self-confidence, in physical ability, physical appearance, peer relations, parent relations, reading, and mathematics.
- Learning a musical instrument speeds physical, mental, emotional, and social development.
- Children with special needs consistently learn academic skills more easily through music.
- Students involved in music study are better at languages, learn to read more easily, demonstrate an improved social climate, show more enjoyment in school, and have a lower level of stress.
- Music challenges, exercises and integrates thinking, feeling and psychomotor skill development.
- Music is a basic form of communication and sharing, since the beginning of time, in all known cultures.
- Music enhances spatial reasoning.
- Music provides opportunity to appreciate the value of hard work and self - discipline.
- Music provides opportunity for students to learn the rich and wordless dimensions of their own cultural heritage.
- Music provides opportunity for students to discover in the musical heritage of other cultures a common ground that minimizes national boundaries and language differences.
- Music enhances emotional development by giving students opportunity to experience and express their feelings and the power to control that expression.
- Music provides opportunities for cooperative learning.

- Music's intricacies and complexity enhances abstract reasoning by enforcing certain complex patterns of neural activity.
- Music touches the soul.

### **Visual Arts**

- Achieve their capabilities as citizens of a global community.
- Understand that visual arts are an important way of knowing.
- Use visual arts as a tool for guiding self-discovery and expression.
- Use visual arts to learn about civilization, past, present and future.
- Learn about how culture shapes us and how we shape culture.
- Understand how media, techniques and processes are used in creating works of art.
- Understand how art works are structured, and how art has a variety of functions.
- Identify, analyze and select subject matter, symbols and ideas for personal/cultural expression.
- Understand how historical and cultural contents provide meaning for works of art.
- Reflect upon the characteristics of art works and assess the merits of student's own art works and the art works of others.

### **Literary Arts**

- The literary arts teach students depth and variety in human communication, including creative, cognitive and affective content.
- The literary arts confirm and extend a student's natural affinity for language.
- The literary arts assist in the development of human intelligence and address diverse learning style of students.
- The literary arts can play a role in improving the school atmosphere and aid in increasing student attendance and decreasing student apathy.
- The literary arts are important for the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century job skills.
- The literary arts teach creative and critical processes which are applicable to many situations in human life and work.
- The literary arts encourage exploration of the timeless issues of human existence.
- The literary arts give students knowledge and insight into human history.
- The literary arts encourage students to know and respect and voices from a variety of cultures and societies.

### **EXPECTED ENROLLMENT**

The education center will begin operation with an expected student enrollment up to 300 students, Kindergarten through nine (K-9). In 2007, the Minister for Education approved an application to extend the enrolment maximum to 450 students.

The Alberta Curriculum will be delivered as provided by Alberta Education for each grade level, taking into account that each student requires some degree of individualized programming in order to reach individual potential. Students will have the opportunity to learn through the Performing, Visual Arts, and Literary Arts as well as Technology. Resources will be used to contract 'guest experts,' artists and educational research personnel to work directly with teachers, parents and students on expanding understanding, redesign and implementation of existing curriculum infused with the Performing, Visual and Literary Arts while utilizing the Performing Arts Center facilities and the culturally rich community setting to deliver unique, child centered, individualized programming.

The Alberta Curriculum, as outlined in the Program of Studies for Elementary and Junior High Schools will be our core curriculum.

There will be private on-site before school, noon and after school daycare.

## **RESEARCH**

Research supporting the Calgary Arts Academy instructional model is abundant.

The writers of this application have current research made available through 'The Galef Institute,' a nonprofit educational organization whose primary goal is to work with educators in public schools, schools of education and other reform agencies to improve student achievement by strengthening the teaching profession; and the Fort Langley, British Columbia Performing Arts School.

A dramatic revolution in understanding cognition began in the 1970's. Research supports the arts as critical to education and learning.

Most of the studies in this section are summarized in the recently completed, "Schools, Communities and the Arts: A Research Compendium," developed by the National Endowment for the Arts, in cooperation with the Morrison Institute for Public Policy in USA. Using set selection criteria, this compendium focuses on studies published since 1985, which employed sound methodologies.

" During the past quarter century, literally thousands of school-based programs have demonstrated beyond question that the arts can not only bring coherence to our fragmented academic world, but through the arts, students' performance in other academic disciplines can be enhanced as well."

Ernest I. Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Science will...produce the data...but never the full meaning. For perceiving real significance, we shall need...most of all the brains of poets. (And) also those of artists, musicians, philosophers, historians, writers in general."

Lewis Thomas, Scientist

Students of the arts continue to outperform their non-arts peers on the Scholastic Assessment Test, according to The College Entrance Examination Board. In 1995, SAT scores for students who studied the arts more than four years were 59 points higher on the verbal and 44 points higher on the math portion than students with no coursework or experience in the arts.

The College Board, Profile of SAT and Achievement Test Takers, 1995

Reading Writing and Math Skills Can Be Enhanced Through the Arts.

Students improved an average of one or two months in reading for each month they participated in the "Learning to Read Through the Arts" program.

Chapter 1 Developer/Demonstration Program: Learning to Read Through the Arts, 1992 - 93. Office of Educational Research, New York City Board of Education, 1993, 1981, 1978

Humanities

Teachers, School Administrators, parents and students have been consulted through surveys and personal interviews to determine what each of the groups sees as mandatory components of the program to ensure success.

**ADDITIONAL RESEARCH: SEE APPENDIX**

## **STUDENT ASSESSMENT**

### **Empirical Baseline Data**

Throughout year one, Calgary Arts Academy staff will:

- document how the project is unfolding
- document how research has shaped the work
- interview focus groups
- keep records – impressionistic, anecdotal
- use study groups to discuss challenges and successes
- keep journals
- keep portfolios where information can be collected to demonstrate growth
- keep case studies

### **Types of Data Collections to be used:**

- questionnaires / surveys
- notes from meetings
- interviews
- study groups

- reading groups
- outside perception of public review of program and perceptions
- photographs
- diagnostic testing
- audio and video collections

Each student will be assessed for reading and writing levels upon entry into the school. Standard informal and formal reading inventories will be used. Writing will be assessed according to Alberta Education's standards of student work.

There will be three reporting periods, each reporting academic progress relative to the learner expectations in the Alberta Program of Studies for each grade level. The Achievement indicators will be:

- Excellent
- Sound understanding
- Satisfactory
- Improvement needed

In addition to this reporting, student Achievement Test results will be monitored and evaluated yearly. The plan of action developed will be part of the School Development Plan.

At the conclusion of each term, an Annual School Report will be completed, including a report on student achievement.

Quantitative and Qualitative Measures will be used.

Initial Qualitative measures will include:

- increased student engagement
- increased understanding of Curriculum
- open-ended learning
- student engagement in curriculum planning
- increased inter-connectedness of curriculum delivery
- demonstrated expression of ideas in the affective domain
- increased sense of Community Involvement in education
- demonstrated change in motivation and risk-taking
- community of learners actively engaged in profession development activities
- all partners actively engaged in the educational process
- senior citizens engaged in all parts of the school program
- improved academic performance on achievement tests.

**Initial Quantitative Measures will include:**

Our goal is to move achievement forward to the Standard of Excellence. As such, Achievement Test Scores will be analyzed and target groups of student will be identified for monitoring progress.

Target measures for initial considerations are:

- to determine strategies to solve complex problems
- to extend a problem to solve a problem
- to identify points of view
- multi-step problem solving
- to analyze information to draw inferences

### **SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS**

Section 47 of the School Act in which students with special needs must be provided with appropriate educational services does not apply to charter schools.

However, mild and moderate students, whose parents request their children attend CAA and who require a modified program will be accommodated through the use of an Individual Student Program Plan if it is deemed that the educational program is suitable for the students. This plan will be made in consultation with the School Resource Specialist, the Classroom teacher, the parent and the student. Together, thoughtful consideration will be given to explore best alternatives to meet individual needs. This planning will use the “Developmental Asset Approach.”

The School Principal will be accountable to monitor individual progress.

### **TEACHER/ADMINISTRATOR INVOLVEMENT**

An experienced teacher and a School Administrator were involved in the creation of this plan. The School Administrator acted as a consultant to the writers of this application.

### **DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL**

#### **THE COMMUNITY**

The Calgary Arts Academy will be located near the downtown vicinity of Calgary City Center. This location is key to the success of the charter. A partnership is being developed with the Performing Arts Center to use space, when available, for teaching and learning opportunities.

In addition, learning will be extended into the downtown community, as there are so many opportunities to enhance quality programming.

## **STUDENT SELECTION CRITERIA**

All students will be accepted on first come, first serve basis where vacancies exist..Enrollment interviews will be conducted by school administration and staff to ensure parents and students have a clear understanding of the philosophy, mission, vision, purpose, and expectations surrounding student learning expectations and parental involvement.

## **DESCRIPTION OF STUDENTS**

Calgary Arts Academy will serve all students whose parents value education delivery through Arts immersion, who are going to support teachers and the school's objectives.

## **REGISTRATION AND ADMISSIONS POLICY**

The registration policy will be in accordance with the School Act, Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, section 23.

It is expected that the school will operate on a traditional calendar.

CAA will not deny access, where space and resources are available, to students who could potentially benefit from the educational services and resources provided by CAA.

First priority will be given to students living in the Calgary area.

Students will be placed on a waiting list, each request for placement being stamped with the date on which it was received.

Students presenting special needs will not normally be admitted to the school. In certain circumstances, where the school believes it can provide appropriate program and support, an exception to this policy may be approved by the school administration.

Such decisions of the administration may be appealed to the Minister of Education.

### **Orientation:**

All students and their parents will be required to attend a presentation by CAA at a specific mutually agreed upon time assigned by the Board of Directors.

At this time, the students and their parents will meet the faculty in the company of a Board member and hear a presentation about CAA. The presentation will outline the program offered at CAA, and parents and students may then make a final decision as to whether this is suitable for them.

For those parents who wish to choose CAA, an application form will be filled out. Enrollment interviews will be conducted by school administration and staff to ensure parents and students have a clear understanding of vision, mission, purpose and expectations surrounding student learning expectations and parental involvement.

Immunization records and birth certificates must be presented at this time. Students and parents will also receive their orientation package that will include such items as:

- Parent/Student Handbook, which shall include such items as the list of fees, codes of conduct and dress code.
- supply list per grade

“Release Records Form” from the students’ previous school.

## **GOVERNANCE**

### **CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS**

**The Bylaws of CAAS (Article 4.1.4) explain the rules of eligibility to sit on CAAS Board.**

Candidates are required to be 18 years of age. Candidates should have some type of experience in the business sector and must be knowledgeable on educational issues.

The applicants for incorporation as a society shall become the first Directors of the Board, where the term of office shall be the term for "the setting up" of the school.

At the beginning of the first school term, the Board of Directors, then elected, may replace the directors named in the Charter Application of the Society.

The general membership may, at the first meeting, by majority vote, replace the provisional directors.

### **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CORPORATE BODY AND STAKEHOLDER GROUPS**

The relationship between corporate body, Charter Board administration, teachers, students and school council is clearly outlined in the Charter proposal.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Board of Calgary Arts Academy Society will be comprised of up to 12 Directors who will:

- Support the school vision and are committed to operating the school.
- Have an understanding of the Arts Immersion and Curriculum delivery.
- Focus on long-term planning and Board succession.

### **Responsibilities of the Board**

CAA Board of Directors will comply with the Regulations of the Minister of Education as outlined in the School Act. (CAAS Policies B-100 – B-131 )

For clarification purposes, the following summary is provided:

The responsibilities of the Board will include three areas: Program, Finances and Evaluation.

#### **Program**

- Establish and oversee general operational policies
- Select and hire the Principal
- Approve Annual School Report
- Participate in school activities
- Provide advise as requested by the Principal
- Establish articulate communication channels and a grievance process when a decision cannot be resolved through the Principal or Superintendent

#### **Finances**

##### **Secretary-Treasurer**

Refer to CAA Policy C-100 and Role – Secretary-Treasurer

##### **Asset Management**

- Write policies with regard to the use of resources and to secure appropriate lease space

#### **Budget**

- Review and approve annual budget
- Review and approve staff make-up
- Review budget at specific intervals throughout the year

#### **Funding**

- Approve and participate in fund-raising activities
- Align, with the Principal the use of all funds received

#### **Evaluation**

- To carry out an annual evaluation of the organization based on annual goals
- Review the by-laws and make amendments as required
- Plan an annual meeting to evaluate vision, mission and purpose.

### **Committees**

Broaden the community and school relationship most of the work of the Board will be done through committees in order to:

- Divide the work of the Board
- Expedite Board meetings and identify special abilities and knowledge of the members and focus on strengths

### **Board Members Code of Conduct**

See CAAS Policy B-103

All Board members of CAA will model democracy and demonstrate respect and mutual support for the philosophy, purpose and goal of CAA. All Board members are expected to:

- be present at all board meetings
- read materials in advance, as presented
- maintain confidentiality
- maintain and support appropriate communication channels
- avoid professional conflict of interest
- deliberate as a Board while maintaining a cohesive group mentality
- maintain the integrity of the Principal by referring concerns directly to him/her

### **Superintendent**

The Superintendent's role is described in Board policy. (Role and Responsibilities – Superintendent)

CAA's philosophy, purpose and goals will guide the practice of all bodies. The corporate Board will ensure that the Alberta Curriculum is being delivered in a responsible manner.

The mandate of the CAA Board of Directors will be to ensure accountability as per the Charter School Application, bylaws and Policies.

The Board of Directors will be directly responsible for Administrative Staffing and Evaluation.

## **Principal**

The role of Principal at CAA is in compliance with Section 15 of the School Act and is outlined in CAAS Policy – Roles and Responsibilities - Principal

In addition, at CAA:

The Principal will serve as a motivator and facilitator to ensure the realization of the vision.

The Principal will be responsible for the day to day managing of the school.

Principal responsibilities include:

- providing visionary leadership
- attending all Board meetings
- presenting School Improvement Plan and Annual School Report
- consulting with the Board in developing strategic actions
- coordination of Professional Development of all staff

Management of school operations in accordance with policies set by the Board

- day to day supervision of staff
- oversee student registration
- responsible for day to day student discipline
- supervise student assessment

## **Role of the Teacher**

All staff answers directly to the Principal and will demonstrate professional practice according to professional codes of conduct as outlined for each group.

In addition all staff will:

- demonstrate ability and interest in the Arts and have knowledge of teaching the Alberta Curriculum through Arts Immersion.
- model democracy in all facets of their job
- teach Alberta Curriculum through Arts Immersion
- assume responsibility for their own individual professional development
- demonstrate strong commitment to the realization of the Vision, Mission and Purpose Statements
- welcome artists, parents, grandparents and community members as partners in the educational process
- provide in-service for the general public and public educators
- communicate openly in a spirit of collaboration

## **Parents**

- have a commitment to making informed decisions
- participate in the educational process
- communicate openly in a spirit of cooperation
- volunteer time and energy to the school

## **Students**

According to the School Act:

A student shall conduct himself so as to reasonably comply with the following code of conduct:

- a) be diligent in pursuing his studies;
- b) attend school regularly and punctually;
- c) co-operate fully with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services;
- d) comply with the rules of the school;
- e) account to his teachers for his conduct;
- f) respect the rights of others.

In addition, at CAA, students will:

- **participate in decisions related to learning**
- **demonstrate increased responsibility for learning**
- **share learning and success with others**

Students are the key constituents. Students will work with all staff to ensure success in the school setting.

The School Council mandate will be to assist all groups in the realization of the vision.

## **School Council**

For year one, facilitators of this Charter Application may be members of the School Council. In accordance with the School Act, the majority of members will be parents and students of CAA.

Membership, purpose, school based decision making, liability and accountability will be in accordance with The Alberta School Council Resource Manual written by Alberta Home and School Councils' Association in cooperation with The Alberta Teachers' Association.

Participation will be governed by:

- a) an underlying emphasis on mutual respect
- b) alignment between the goals and values of the

- c) organization and the goals and values of the staff
- d) appropriate levels of empowerment
- e) appropriate approaches to accountability

Performance Reviews and Planning Meetings will be called as required by the Chairperson of the Board.

During these meetings, the following guidelines will be followed:

- Mutual respect, person to person.
- Recognition that we are all customers and performers.
- Feedback and discussion regarding past performance, and clarity regarding what, if any matters are outstanding.
- Clarity regarding new requests (what will success look like, what resources are available, what level of empowerment is being agreed upon).
- Clarity regarding accountability agreements relative to future performance of the Principal and by the organization (when will the task be completed, how will ongoing performance be reported upon and monitored, how will requests for additional resources be brought forward and dealt with, what type of document or result will be produced upon completion of the task, what type of feedback will be provided and what will the consequence be for failure to complete the task).

The School Council will be an open forum. The following formal positions will be required initially. Parents will participate in a voting procedure for each position and the Principal of CAA will be responsible to facilitate this process. Role definition will be clarified at the first School Council Meeting.

### **Principal**

#### **Chairperson (Parent)**

The Chairperson completes agenda and facilitates meeting according to Roberts Rules of Order.

#### **Vice-Chairperson (Parent)**

Shares responsibilities with the Chairperson and facilitates meetings and completes the agenda as required.

#### **Secretary/Treasurer (Parent)**

Is responsible for recording and distributing meeting minutes and handles all financial matters pertaining to the School Council.

#### **Community Liaisons ( 2 Parents)**

Serves as a resource/ contact person for parents and the community at large, collects items regarding clarification and will add agenda items as required.

### **Artist/Partnership Coordinator**

Is responsible for representing the artists and partnerships involved with CAA.

### **Student Representatives (Student)**

Represents student's interests and facilitates student leadership within the school.

### **Teacher Representative**

Shares information from the teaching staff and facilitates professional development/staff participation in decision making and professional development.

The Principal is responsible for the day to day operation of the school. Should staff disagree with a decision that is made, the appeal process would generally be:

- discussion with the individual who made the original decision
- discussion with the immediate supervisor if applicable (ie: Curriculum leader)
- discussion with school administration
- discussion with School Council
- discussion with Charter Board
- discussion with Superintendent

Performance evaluation disputes would be forwarded to the Superintendent of the charter school and would follow board protocol.

Should the school council wish to appeal a decision, the appeal would go directly to the charter board and then to the Superintendent.

In all circumstances, the appointed Superintendent would have the final decision, before referral to the Minister.

- Appeals shall be submitted in writing and shall state the nature of the complaint and outline the steps that have been taken to resolve it. A copy shall be provided to party directly involved.
- Within fourteen day of the receipt of a request, the individual involved in the process will make a decision and inform parties concerned in writing.
- An appeal under this policy will not proceed if the issue of concern is simultaneously under consideration by another dispute resolution process.

## **APPEALS**

For appeals regarding student marks, the appeal shall be dealt with in the following manner:

- student and Parent will meet with the teacher and Principal on appeals day at the end of June.
- should resolution not occur, an appeal should be filed with the Superintendent of the Charter within seven days.
- within fourteen days of receipt of the appeal, the Superintendent shall appoint a designate to review the appeal and issue a decision in writing. The designate review shall normally include an examination of the relevant marks/evaluation records and an interview with the person making the appeal.  
Also refer to CAAS Policy B-201 Appeals to the Board

## **EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURES**

### **Employee Contracts**

#### **Teacher Employment**

CAA staffing will be compliant with the School Act, the Labor Relations Code, the Employment Standard Code and the Alberta Teachers' Association Professional Code of Conduct.

#### **Salaries**

Administration of the basic salary schedule will be within ten percent of the Collective Agreement of local jurisdictions.

CAA Board:

Shall pay the annual salary of every teacher who teaches on all the teaching days of the school year on which his school is in operation.

Shall pay the teachers full salary less .5% of the salary for each teaching day on which the teacher does not teach.

The ten- percent flexibility may allow for merit pay as determined by the Board of Directors for teaching staff.

#### **Benefits**

Information we have received indicates that for certificated and uncertificated staff benefits costs are approximately 20% of the gross salary. This is indicated in CAA's budget under 'Cost for Benefits'.

### **Termination**

Termination of employee contracts will be compliant with the School Act and Board policy.

### **Suspension**

Refer to CAAS Policy D-220 Suspension and Dismissal of Staff

### **Contractual Arrangements: Non Teaching Staff**

#### **Non Teaching Staff**

##### **Artists**

Artists will be paid at a rate which reflects their experience and arts-based education profile.

#### **Facilities and Resources**

The Calgary Arts Academy will contract with the City of Calgary, the Calgary Board of Education or another appropriate property owner to lease facility space. The contract will be a standard lease contract used for leasing arrangements. CAA will seek legal council in this area.

#### **Instructional Resources**

The Board of Directors will purchase required materials and resources as per the Alberta grant allotment for this purpose. Appropriate library services will be negotiated as required. All educational staff will screen materials used from community facilities.

### **POLICY FOR CONTRACTS AND CONTRACT RENEWALS**

CAA will consider hiring a business manager who will develop and tender contracts, review particulars, accept tendered quotes and enter into negotiations.

### **ADDITIONAL REVENUE**

Calgary Arts Academy is open to receiving additional revenue from existing organizations, foundations etc., specifically for start-up costs. Decisions regarding the spending of any funds received will be done in collaboration with the educational staff, the Board of Directors and the funding agency. An annual report including financial accountability will be completed at the end of each year term.

There is a possibility of receiving additional monies from the operation of an on-site daycare, profits from which would be put toward instructional resources.

Honoraria for Elders may be provided.  
Refer to CAAS Policy H-111 Honoraria.

### **TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

CAA will serve students in Calgary City and area. Every effort will be made to provide school bus transportation to students who wish to use this service. As far as possible, school bus routes will be designed so that the longest trip is no more than one hour. Transportation fees will be established so that the service can break even.

### **CUSTODIAL SERVICES, MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR**

Custodial maintenance and repair services will be contracted by the Board of Directors, based on the grant received for this purpose from Alberta Education.

### **AMENDING THE CHARTER**

Procedures for amending the Charter are outlined in CAAS Bylaws, Article 11.

### **DISSOLUTION PROCESS**

Refer to CAAS Bylaws Article 10.

If, for any reason prior to the expiration date of the charter:

- **the basic terms of the charter cannot be fulfilled**
- **student enrollment falls below the minimum limit of 75 students as set out in the School Act for Charter Schools.**

Then the charter will be dissolved through a dissolution meeting of the Charter Board no later than five months prior to the end of the school year.

A motion for dissolution can either be initiated by a group of at least twenty-five (25%) of the members of the Society or by the Board of Directors itself. Once the motion is initiated, a general meeting of all members of the Society will be held. At this meeting, at least fifty (50%) percent of the membership must be in attendance and a vote at least seventy-five (75%) in favor of dissolution must be achieved before the motion is passed. Unless due to extraordinary circumstances, this general meeting must be held at least ninety (90) days before the end of the school term to give the staff and students alike the needed time to make other arrangements for the forthcoming academic year.

No later than four months prior to the expiration date of the term of this charter, the Charter Board will meet to determine, by discussion and vote of all members present at the continuation meeting, whether or not the Charter should be extended for an additional term or be dissolved.

### **PUBLIC MEETING**

Should dissolution be contemplated, a public meeting will be called to discuss all pertinent information in relation to the dissolution, at least four months before the scheduled dissolution.

Should the Charter be dissolved, members present will determine the date of dissolution of the Charter and preliminary plans for dissolution will be made.

An application to the Minister of Education to approve the dissolution of the Charter will be submitted immediately following this meeting.

Within two weeks of the decision to dissolve the Charter, all stakeholders will be notified in writing, with an explanation of the decision to dissolve the Charter, the proposed plan and the effective date of dissolution.

### **DISSOLUTION OF ASSETS**

The assets of the Society will be sold at auction. Any proceeds will be used to pay off outstanding debts and the remainder will be given to a charitable organization agreed upon by the Board at the time of dissolution.

Once all financial obligations have been discharged, a final audited set of financial statements will be prepared, all bank accounts will be closed and all signing authority will be revoked.

As a final act, the Society will complete a letter of authorization that will inform the Society registry of our dissolution so that they, in turn, can delete our Charter from the registry. Sixty (60) days prior to dissolution, a letter of information will be sent to all financially interested parties informing them in advance of our decision.

The Charter will maintain a lease that will be renewable from year to year. If dissolution occurs, the LANDLORD will be notified sixty (60) days before the end of the school year of our intention not to renew the lease.

### **STUDENT RECORDS**

Each registered student shall be provided a transfer of record form for his or her completion and return. The Board of Directors will be responsible for the transfer of student records for a period not exceeding three months from the day of the transfer form being provided. The accuracy of the information on the form shall remain the responsibility of the student and parent. Student records will be

completed before dissolution and delivered to the appropriate authority within Alberta Education.

### **PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEPLOYMENT**

Teaching records, references and all other pertinent information will be completed and given to all departing teachers before the end of the school year. Contact will be made with other educational agencies within the province to assist teachers in relocating.

### **DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION**

Once the Board passes a motion of dissolution, a letter of confirmation to this fact will be sent to the last known address of all parents, teachers and known interested parties involved with the program. This letter will be mailed within five (5) business days of all affected parties.

### **TERM OF THE CHARTER**

The term of the charter will be five (5) years or as determined by the Minister of Education from Time to time.

The initial term of the Charter was from 2003 to 2008. The Minister of Education has approved an extension of the Charter to 2013.

### **SCHOOL EVALUATION**

After four (4) years of operation, a general meeting of the members will be called to discuss the renewal of the Charter. Information will be given as to the progress of the students and goals and objectives for the future. Suggestions will be taken by the membership on improvement, changes to the Charter, etc. All changes to the Charter must be ratified by majority vote. A vote will be taken as to whether to renew the Charter School status.

If the vote is to continue the Charter School, the Board of Directors will submit an application in writing to Alberta Education, or to whomever granted the Charter, at least eight (8) months prior to the end of the term of the Charter requesting the Charter be renewed for a 3-5 year term. Any modifications to the Charter must accompany the request for renewal.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Our code of conduct policy operates under democratic principles.

We will create a safe democratic environment in which teaching and learning is success oriented and continuous in nature.

We recognize that children come to school with different strengths and life skills, and learn in different ways and at different rates. Our goal is to provide learning opportunities, which best meet, the individual needs of our learners and encourage students to reach their potential.

**We believe that:**

- **A democratic community provides choices that are clear, behavior management, which is fair, logical and encourages self-discipline in every child.**
- **A supportive, caring environment fosters positive outcomes such as risk-taking, responsibility, personal development, a feeling of school community and a sense of accomplishment.**
- **Learning is a continuous process, which is personal, collaborative and strives for academic success.**
- **Children are able to assume ownership for their learning when given voice, choice and support.**
- **Learning is enhanced through clear curriculum delivery and active involvement, which is meaningful and relevant.**
- **Learning is the shared responsibility of all contributors: the child, the family, the school and community.**

**Guiding Assumptions and Expectations**

**We believe that all people have the right:**

- **to a safe and secure environment**
- **to be treated in a caring manner**
- **to learn and work in a positive environment**
- **to be taught to use problem solving skills effectively**

**We believe all people have the responsibility:**

- **to work and play safely**
- **to treat people, property and the environment in a caring manner**
- **to contribute to a positive learning community**
- **to apply problem solving skills to resolve conflicts appropriately**

**DISCIPLINARY STRATEGIES**

All staff facilitates the creation of a democratic classroom environment where choices are clear, discipline is logical and self-discipline is encouraged.

A democratic approach to behavior expectations and discipline:

- **establishes a climate of equality and mutual respect**
- **encourages students to be the best that they can be in all aspect of their lives**
- **offers students a role in decision making**
- **offers consistent, logical and understandable guidelines for behavior**

Discipline is defined as “Instruction and practice designed to teach proper conduct or action.”

Misbehavior is defined as “Any conduct, which interferes with, threatens or is injurious to people or property.”

Below are a few examples of logical discipline strategies, which could occur for common daily concerns.

Student is given the opportunity to resolve the conflict by:

1. **discussing the incident**
2. **identifying the problem**
3. **identifying their role/responsibility in the incident**
4. **choosing an appropriate resolution**
5. **choosing alternative behavior for the future**

Natural consequences for inappropriate behavior that might be assigned:

1. **writing an explanation of misbehavior**
2. **community service (sorting lost and found items)**
3. **staying with an outside supervisor over the recess period**
4. **removal from situation**
5. **time out**
6. **behavior contract**

### **Misbehavior**

- **Misbehavior is documented**
- **Parent is contacted**

When natural consequences occur:

**Step 1 - Problem solving**

**Step 2 - Parent notified**

**Step 3 - Contract**

For more serious behavior difficulties, it may be necessary to move to suspension.

- **Suspension (1 to 5 days, either in school or out of school)**
- **Suspension process is progressive in nature.**

Suspensions will usually only occur when the incident has compromised the safety and security of others.

Expulsion of a student would occur in consultation with the Charter Board and Superintendent. The student file would be reviewed and all steps prior to expulsion, as per section 103 and 104 of the School Act would be followed.

### **APPEALS REGARDING STUDENT EVALUATION**

For appeals regarding student marks, the appeal shall be dealt with in the following manner:

- **student and Parent will meet with the teacher and Principal on appeals day at the end of June.**
- **should resolution not occur, an appeal should be filed with the Superintendent of the Charter within seven days.**
- **within fourteen days of receipt of the appeal, the Superintendent shall appoint a designate to review the appeal and issue a decision in writing. The designate review shall normally include an examination of the relevant marks/evaluation records and an interview with the person making the appeal.**

### **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

At CAA, “attendance officer” will mean the Superintendent.

### **RESEARCH**

Research supporting the Calgary Arts Academy and Research Center is abundant.

The writers of this application have current research made available through 'The Galef Institute,' a nonprofit educational organization whose primary goal is to work with educators in public schools, schools of education and other reform agencies to improve student achievement by strengthening the teaching profession; and the Fort Langley, British Columbia Performing Arts School.

A dramatic revolution in understanding cognition began in the 1970's. Research supports the arts as critical to education and learning.

Most of the studies in this section are summarized in the recently completed, "Schools, Communities and the Arts: A Research Compendium," developed by the National Endowment for the Arts, in cooperation with the Morrison Institute for Public Policy in USA. Using set selection criteria, this compendium focuses on studies published since 1985, which employed sound methodologies.

" During the past quarter century, literally thousands of school-based programs have demonstrated beyond question that the arts can not only bring coherence to our fragmented academic world, but through the arts, students' performance in other academic disciplines can be enhanced as well."

Ernest I. Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Science will...produce the data...but never the full meaning. For perceiving real significance, we shall need...most of all the brains of poets, and, also those of artists, musicians, philosophers, historians, writers in general."

Lewis Thomas, Scientist

Students of the arts continue to outperform their non-arts peers on the Scholastic Assessment Test, according to The College Entrance Examination Board. In 1995, SAT scores for students who studied the arts more than four years were 59 points higher on the verbal and 44 points higher on the math portion than students with no coursework or experience in the arts.

The College Board, Profile of SAT and Achievement Test Takers, 1995

Reading Writing and Math Skills Can Be Enhanced Through the Arts.

Students improved an average of one or two months in reading for each month they participated in the "Learning to Read through the Arts" program.

Chapter 1 Developer/Demonstration Program: Learning to Read through the Arts, 1992 - 93. Office of Educational Research, New York City Board of Education, 1993, 1981, 1978

Humanities

Teachers, School Administrators, parents and students have been consulted through surveys and personal interviews to determine what each of the groups sees as mandatory components of the program to ensure success.

