



CHARTER AGREEMENT
SEPTEMBER, 1996

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1. THE CHARTER SCHOOL

Almadina Language Charter Academy
225-28th Street S.E.
Calgary, AB
T2A 5K4

2. MISSION AND VISION

MISSION

The Almadina School Society through its partnership with the Minister and all stakeholders, ensures that our students whose second or third language at home is English reach their full potential as they prepare to meet the challenges of high school, lifelong learning and citizenship in a dynamic, democratic, knowledge-based society that respects each child's special gifts and the commitment to promote diversity in shared values.

VISION

Canada's best K to 9 Public School for students, whose second or third language at home is English, to reach their full potential.

3. PHILOSOPHY, PURPOSE AND GOALS

PHILOSOPHY AND BELIEFS

- (1) Alberta Education, through legislation, policies and regulations (Guide to Education, Page 19 (Policies):
 - (a) Specifies that English Language Learners (ELL) are entitled to a program appropriate for the student's needs, age and level of educational achievement;
 - (b) Requires that students who are ELL have access to the most enabling learning environment that meets their needs;
- (2) At Almadina Language Charter Academy, we define ELL as:

"Students who communicate in a language other than English or a dialect of English at home and who may be multilingual students."
- (3) At Almadina Language Charter Academy, we believe:
 - (a) ELL students are capable of exceptional performance.
 - (b) Acquiring a second or third language is an advantage rather than a detriment to learning.

- (c) All learners are unique and possess individual strengths in and outside of school.
- (d) Teachers of ELL students require specialized professional development to effectively guide the development of ELL students.
- (e) Parents play an important role in their children's education.

PURPOSE

- (4) The mandate of the Almadina Language Charter Academy is to provide educational programming for Kindergarten through Grade 9 students who are English Language Learners.
- (5) Almadina Language Charter Academy's kindergarten is a full time voluntary program to provide learning experiences that are developmentally appropriate to assist English Language Learners.

CHARTER SCHOOL GOAL

- (6) Goal 1: Almadina Language Charter Academy will provide opportunities for students to optimize their potential while focusing on English Language Learning.
- (7) Goal 2: Almadina Language Charter Academy will support the staff in acquiring the knowledge and skills for English Language Learning instruction.

OUTCOMES

- (8) Almadina Language Charter Academy students will:
 - (a) demonstrate successful achievement of the skills and concepts in the Alberta Education curriculum;
 - (b) demonstrate the characteristics that are taught through the values and virtues program.

STRATEGIES

- (9) In response to the needs of ELL students, Almadina Language Charter Academy will:
 - (a) support students to reach their full academic potential;
 - (b) support students in developing the qualities inherent to good citizenship;
 - (c) assess and document the progress of students through individual ELL portfolios;
 - (d) utilize the K-12 English as a Second Language Proficiency Benchmarks as outlined by Alberta Education.

- (e) provide consistent programs across divisions that support reading and writing.
- (f) ensure that language objectives are integrated into all unit and lesson plans.
- (g) provide a safe, supportive, and sheltered learning environment for ELLs.
- (h) provide first language classes to support the acquisition of English if there is an appropriate number of students.
- (i) intentionally design heterogeneous class groupings to maximize opportunities for peer support.
- (j) support professional development to enable school staff to enhance their ability to meet the needs of English Language Learners.

4. EDUCATIONAL PLAN

NEED

- (10) Almadina Language Charter Academy recognizes that ELL students have special educational needs and therefore require specialized educational programming that goes beyond that provided by regular classroom/school programs.

CURRICULUM

- (11) The curriculum at the Almadina Language Charter Academy has been developed with the following criteria:
 - (a) The Alberta Program of Studies is taught.
 - (b) Language objectives are incorporated into every lesson to support the learning of content.
 - (c) Teachers modify the curriculum to meet the needs of ELL students.
 - (d) Teachers incorporate specific strategies to assist ELL students such as;
 - scaffolding content to support varying language levels
 - providing clear expectations and directions for completing assignments
 - activating prior knowledge
 - incorporating sufficient wait-time
 - being aware of teacher talk time
 - facilitating academic conversations
 - (e) Full-time kindergarten is offered to accelerate the early development of English language skills.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

- (12) Almadina Language Charter Academy utilizes a variety of instructional methods to address the needs of English Language Learners. These instructional methods are anchored in current research in the field of English as a Second Language.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- (13) Almadina Language Charter Academy provides a safe, supportive learning environment for students. School staff are understanding, accepting and responsive to the distinct characteristics and needs of students.
- (14) The average class size will correspond to the provincial class size guidelines with a maximum target of twenty five students. The Charter Board will endeavour to keep class sizes as low as possible, while operating in a fiscally responsible manner.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

- (15) Almadina Language Charter Academy will use a variety of assessment techniques as outlined below such;
- Alberta K-12 ESL Proficiency Benchmarks
 - student portfolios (process and product)
 - interview and/or observational data (teachers, students, parents, mentors)
 - teacher-made tests
 - basic competency checklists
 - provincial achievement tests at Grade 3, 6, and 9
 - Student Progress Reports
 - standard language assessment tests

REVIEW OF THE EDUCATIONAL PLAN

- (16) The educational plan has received input from several notable individuals with expertise and experience in educating ESL students. These individuals include Dr. Hetty Roessingh from the University of Calgary. Dr. Roessingh is a specialist in the area of educating students who have English as a Second Language needs.
- (17) The educational plan has received input from teachers, parents, board members and administrators at Almadina Language Charter Academy.

SHARING INNOVATION

- (18) Almadina Language Charter Academy will share its successful innovations with the educational community through various means including:
- welcoming university and college students for education, counseling and/or social work practicum experiences

- attending and presenting at the annual AISI Conference, Charter School Conferences and other educational conferences
- networking with other professionals involved in ELL education both within and outside the province
- participating in appropriate research studies
- presenting at and participating in Alberta Education sponsored forums
- encouraging staff to become actively involved in professional associations in their areas of interest

5. DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL

STUDENTS TO BE SERVED BY ALMADINA LANGUAGE CHARTER ACADEMY

- (19) Almadina Language Charter Academy is intended to serve ELL students in grades 1 through 9.
- (20) Kindergarten will be offered on a full time basis.

STUDENT SELECTION CRITERIA

- (21) Students must fit the definition of an ESL students as defined in section 3(2)
- (22) Kindergarten students will be assessed to determine their school readiness for a full day kindergarten program.
- (23) Policy has been developed for student selection which prescribes such matters as the assessment process, qualification of prospective students, selection criteria and management of wait lists as required.
- (24) Admission to the kindergarten program does not guarantee admission into Grade one.

ATTENDANCE AREA

- (25) Almadina Language Charter Academy will draw students from the City of Calgary.

ENROLLMENT AND SCHOOL BUILDING REQUIREMENTS

- (26) Almadina Language Charter Academy enrolls a total of 600 students with projected grade distribution as shown in Appendix 1.
- (27) Almadina Language Charter Academy is currently housed in two campuses. The Mountain View Campus enrolls students in grade 1-5 and the Franklin Campus enrolls students in grades 6-9 as well as operates a full time kindergarten program for 60 students.

6. ALMADINA SCHOOL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

- (28) Parents become members of the Society as of the date their child is registered in the school. The Society is the legal entity established to operate the school in accordance with the provisions of the *School Act*. The Society also undertakes activities, including fundraising, to support the advancement of the educational objectives of the School.

7. GOVERNANCE

SOCIETY

- (29) Almadina School Society is the sponsoring body for Almadina Language Charter Academy and holds ultimate authority and responsibility for the operation and management of the school.
- (30) The Society Bylaws describe the authority, mandate and responsibilities of Almadina School Board and the Society.

CHARTER BOARD

- (31) Pursuant to provisions of the *School Act* and other relevant legislation, the Society will establish a charter board with seven members 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.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

- (32) A School Council has been established in accordance with the *School Act*.
- (33) Parents are recognized as vital partners in the education of their children. Charter Board policy describes the roles and responsibilities of parents in contributing towards the educational success of their children.

ROLE AND DUTIES OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

- (34) The Superintendent is the chief executive officer of the Charter Board and the chief education officer of the school.
- (35) The Superintendent shall carry out the duties assigned to the Superintendent by the Charter Board as required under the *School Act*.

ROLE AND DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY TREASURER

- (36) The Secretary Treasurer shall carry out the duties assigned by the Superintendent and as prescribed by the *School Act*.

APPEALS PROCESS

- (37) The appeal's process has been developed as part of Charter Board policy.

EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURES

- (38) Procedures have been developed as part of Charter Board policy and in compliance with legislation to address employment contracts, salaries, benefits, termination, professional development, grievance and appeals.

GOVERNANCE POLICIES

- (39) The Society Bylaws outline the policies on governance and contain provisions for amendments.

EVALUATION PROCESS

- (40) The effectiveness of the Charter Board shall be measured by the results of audited financial statements and by the degree to which it discharges its duties under the Charter, the Society Bylaws and pertinent legislation.
- (41) The Principals and Secretary Treasurer will be evaluated by the Superintendent pursuant to the *School Act* and in accordance with Charter Board policy.
- (42) Teachers and school staff will be evaluated by the Principal based on Alberta standards and Board Policy.
- (43) Students will be evaluated by their teachers and a record will be kept on each student in accordance with legislation. Students will participate in any mandatory testing as prescribed by Alberta Education.
- (44) The effectiveness of the school and its programs will also be measured by students and parents including parent surveys, parental input through the School Council and the analysis of the Accountability Pillar data.

8. CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS

CONTRACTS

- (45) The Charter Board will:
- (a) hire its own academic and administrative staff;
 - (b) hire or contract for Superintendent and Secretary Treasurer services;
 - (c) hire or contract for custodial, maintenance and repair services;
 - (d) enter into any form of agreement deemed suitable for the lease or provision of school facilities;
 - (e) enter into a contract to provide transportation services if transportation is to be provided, and;

- (f) enter into any other form of agreement respecting the provision of educational, managerial or other services with respect to the operation of the school.
- (46) Employment contracts will comply with all necessary labour standards, the provisions of the *School Act* and other relevant legislation.
- (47) Contracts will be subject to legal review as established by Charter Board policy.

INSURANCE

- (48) The Charter Board will carry all necessary insurance.

9. REVENUE

FEES

- (49) Almadina Language Charter Academy may charge fees in accordance with the *School Act*.

DONATIONS

- (50) Sponsors and/or donations may be sought to fund the acquisition of additional furniture, supplies and equipment or to support enhancements to the school's programs or extra-curricular activities in accordance with Alberta Education guidelines. Donations will be recognized by the school in such manner as may be approved by the Charter Board. The Society will provide charitable donation receipts upon request.

SCHOOL COUNCIL FUNDRAISING

- (51) The School Council may engage in a variety of fundraising activities in compliance with all municipal and provincial laws. School Council and the Principal will mutually agree upon the use of funds generated through the efforts of the School Council.

10. TRANSPORTATION POLICY

- (52) Bus transportation will be provided to students at a nominal cost to parents.

11. AMENDING THE CHARTER

BASIS AND PROCESS FOR AMENDMENT

- (53) Any member of the Charter Board or the Society may request that the Charter Board review a term or condition of the Charter.
- (54) The Charter Board shall meet within four to eight weeks to consider the amendment request. The Charter Board's decision shall be communicated, in

writing, within two days to the requesting member. If the amendment proposal is rejected, it may be discussed again after one year.

- (55) If the amendment proposal is accepted, the Charter Board shall have between four to eight 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.
- (56) The decision of the Society is final and the result of the vote will be conveyed in writing to the requesting member within two days. If the amendment proposal is rejected, it may be discussed again after one year.
- (57) 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.

MINOR AMENDMENTS

- (58) The Charter Board may, on its own authority, initiate and approve minor amendments which 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.

12. TERM OF CHARTER

CHARTER RENEWAL

- (59) The renewed term of the Charter will be five years commencing September 1, 2011 and continuing to August 31, 2016.

ADDITIONAL RENEWALS

- (60) It is expected that the Charter Board will consult with and consider the opinions of all stakeholders regarding the renewal of the Charter. The Charter Board will consider recommendations made in evaluation reports and will comply with all required changes. The process to renew the Charter should begin a minimum of six months before the renewal application deadline set out in legislation and will follow the guidelines in place at that time.

13. DISSOLUTION PROCESS

BASIS AND PROCESS FOR DISSOLUTION

- (61) If, at any time prior to the expiration of the Charter:
 - (a) a decision is made not to apply for renewal of the Charter;
 - (b) the student enrollment falls below the minimum limit prescribed by the regulations;

(c) the basic terms of the Charter cannot be fulfilled nor satisfactorily amended;
or

(d) the Charter has been repealed pursuant to the regulations;

then the Charter Board will call a special meeting (the “dissolution meeting”) of the Charter Board to determine the effective date of dissolution and to begin planning the dissolution process.

(62) Ideally, the effective date of dissolution will coincide with the end of a school year.

(63) The dissolution process shall begin immediately following the dissolution meeting 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

ADVICE TO STAKEHOLDERS

(64) Within two 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, the teachers and all other employees 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.

DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY AND FINANCES

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

(a) provide notice pursuant to any rental agreements 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;

(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; and

(g) turn over to the Society any residual funds at which point the Society shall be dissolved in accordance with the Society Bylaws.

TRANSFER OF STUDENT RECORDS

- (66) The Charter Board shall provide each registered student with a transfer of records form to be completed with information regarding the school to which records are to be transferred. Within fourteen days of receipt of the completed transfer form, the Charter Board shall ensure that the student's records are forwarded according to instructions on the form.
- (67) The Charter Board shall remain responsible for the transfer of a student's records for a period of three 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.
- (68) The responsibility for providing accurate and fully complete information on the transfer form shall remain at all times with the parent or independent student, as the case may be, and the Charter Board shall not be held liable for acting upon any inaccurate or incomplete information.

TRANSFER OF STUDENTS

- (69) The Charter School staff will assist students in registering at a school of the student and parent's choice. Staff would assist students in transitioning to other schools by outlining choices of schools. School tours and counselors from other schools would be given an opportunity to outline their school programs to students and their parents.

APPENDIX 1

Almadina Language Charter Academy

ENROLLMENT GROWTH & PROJECTIONS

Date: December 1, 2010

*September 30th enrolment each year

	*2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Kindergarten	60	60	65	65	85	75

Grade 1	76	48	56	60	59	80
Grade 2	81	76	48	56	60	59
Grade 3	79	81	76	48	56	60
Grade 4	67	79	81	76	48	56
Grade 5	80	67	79	81	76	48
Grade 6	59	80	67	79	81	76
Grade 7	60	59	80	67	79	81
Grade 8	56	60	59	80	67	79
Grade 9	48	56	60	59	80	67
*Total	606	606	606	606	606	606

***Note:** The total student enrolment does not include the students in kindergarten.

APPENDIX 2

SCHOOL SOCIETY OBJECTS

We, the undersigned, hereby declare that we desire to continue as a society under the Societies Act, and that the name of the society is the Almadina School Society.

The objects of the society are:

- (1) To establish and operate a Charter School(s) in accordance with the provisions of the *School Act*, Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter S-3.1.
- (2) To undertake activities, including fund raising, to support the advancement of the educational objectives of the School Partners.

Dated _____, 2011

Original application made by:

Application filed by Registrar of Corporations, Province of Alberta on _____, 2011.