

1. The school meets the terms and conditions of its Charter and has performance measures that show clear evidence of success.

Our first charter school outcome is to demonstrate successful achievement of the skills and concepts in the Alberta Education curriculum. A very important way we measure student success is with the Provincial Achievement Test scores. Our students consistently score above the provincial average in all subjects for grades 3, 6 and 9. We have been recognized many times by the Fraser Institute for our remarkable student achievement. In August 2013, the C.D. Howe Institute, (http://www.esl-almadina.com/documents/board/reports/2013_09_howe.pdf) reviewed the performance of all Alberta schools and named Almadina as one of the top twelve schools in the province. Most recently, we have reviewed this year's 2013 PAT scores and have once again produced outstanding results.

Our second Charter outcome is to demonstrate the characteristics that are taught through the Virtues Program. In August, Almadina again invited Dr. Michele Borba to provide professional development, for all staff, that focused on her Moral Intelligence Program. This Virtues Program teaches our students the skills needed to be successful in school and in life by cultivating good character and citizenship values. We weave this program into the fabric of Almadina through assemblies, bulletin boards and school wide character building lessons, etc. Teacher committees, over the years, have ensured the continued strength of this school wide program. The virtues program provides the foundation for a safe and caring learning environment for all students. Our senior classes at Mountain View school may join the Almadina Peace Keeper's (A.P.K) program . To demonstrate Dr. Borba's program, teachers choose A.P.K. volunteers based on their ability to exemplify Almadina's virtues. Once selected, the students begin learning about the conflict resolution process to solve problems amicably before adult intervention. After this training is complete, these young learners use the skills on the playground with students in conflict. This program is yet another way Almadina is focused on creating student leaders that promote peace.

The first goal of our charter is to provide opportunities for students to optimize their potential while focusing on English Language learning. We target English language acquisition which is evident in all classrooms (vocabulary walls, visual aids, and reading comprehension strategies). Home reading programs are evident at all grade levels. We assign homework to our students five days a week, as mandated in the charter. Our emphasis throughout the school is on "learning academic content through language" rather than "English as a Second Language." We have utilized Dr. Hetty Roessingh's, "Learning by Design" to modify our ELL unit planning format in alignment with the Alberta Program of Studies (POS) and our charter mandate.

Since September 2010, students have been placed in heterogeneous grade groupings. In addition, we have adopted a multi-grade level writing program by Barbara Mariconda to maintain common language among students. Additional reading and writing time is built into the time table. In compliance with our charter, students can choose an additional international language (IL), with options such as French, Arabic, additional English or Urdu.

The second goal of our charter is to support staff in acquiring knowledge and skills for English learning instruction. Staff members were given the opportunity to take the Teaching English as a Foreign Language certificate program in 2010 – 2011. This year our school calendar has designated nine days for Professional Development. Staff members are given an allowance of \$800.00 per year to pursue Professional Development (PD) of their choice. Over the last two years, teachers also have had the option to pursue training in the Discover Reading program. This year we are offering nine system-wide PD days to support teacher growth. There has been school-wide Basic Reading Inventory (BRI) training and ELL unit planning. We utilize the K – 12 ESL proficiency benchmarks as outlined by Alberta Education. Both campuses have introduced the idea of Professional Learning Communities as a means to enable teachers to improve their teaching practice.

Although most provincial class sizes have increased substantially this year, Almadina class sizes at the grades K – 3 level remain at between 20 - 21 students per class and grades 4 – 9 classes range from 20 – 25 students.

General entrance requirements and a full day Kindergarten program continues to be aligned with our charter.

Almadina gets shared input from all stakeholders while developing the education plan. The Three Year Education Plan consistently references improved student learning outcomes. Stakeholders across the board believe that Almadina provides a quality education for the students attending. Academic achievement at Almadina has demonstrated an upward trend. The parents and community members regard the school as effective and successful. Regular reporting is provided to parents through the web site, classroom web sites, school newsletters and board newsletters.

Until this year Almadina has relied heavily on the AISI research framework. Almadina completed all five AISI cycles. We continue to invite University graduate students and faculty to work with our students and staff. Research, both formal and informal, has focused a great deal on instructional practices used at Almadina. Our research has led to innovations in teaching which directly impact our student success. Working with Dr. Hetty Roessingh, from the University of Calgary, has helped shape our ELL charter mandate. Dr. Steve Truch from the Reading Foundation has recently begun a research project that looks at best practices in reading. We believe this project will help meet the literacy needs of all Almadina students. Almadina welcomes university students to complete their practicums with us. We continue to present at a variety of educational forums, and encourage our staff to become involved with professional associations. Our teachers have attended and shared at: The Calgary Teachers Convention, Edmonton Teachers Convention, Charter School Conference, Alberta Assessment Consortium, Item Development Group for Alberta Learning, Calgary Beginner Teacher Convention, AISI and ATA specialist professional development events (ESL Council). In 2013-2014, Almadina staff will be presenting a minimum of eight sessions at various conferences and forums.

2. The school operates in a manner consistent with all applicable provincial requirements.

All teachers have access to the Alberta Programs of Study (POS) and have long range plans and unit plans that reflect the Alberta POS. Specific strategies are included for enhancing English language proficiency. Daily planning is aligned with the long range and unit plans.

All grade three, six and nine Almadina students participate in the Provincial Achievement tests. Provincial documents are completed and sent in on time. School fees and school generated funds are approved. The Almadina Language Charter Academy meets the requirements and recommendations for instructional time. The school's financials are in compliance, as are the minimal transportation fees. Almadina meets the requirements for class sizes based on the Charter. Almadina class sizes are lower than its provincial counterparts.

The new Ogden campus has improved student programming, by enabling music, art, drama and robotics to be added to the options menu.

In 2009, a new portable replaced an older portable at the Mountain View site. Furthermore, security and safety upgrades have been made to both Mountain View and Ogden campuses. New cameras and safety upgrades are in line with our three year maintenance plan.

3. The students, parents, school council and community members consider the school to be successful.

*Our most recent 2013 Accountability Pillar Overall Summary shows strong stakeholder support for the Almadina Language Charter Academy. (2013 report available through Alberta Education)

In February, 2013, the Superintendent conducted home visits to ask the parents how they felt about Almadina. Almost 100% of the parents, staff and students felt that Almadina was outstanding in terms of academic achievement. Generally, the parents interviewed thought that the Virtues Project was one of the most important programs Almadina offered.

In February, 2013 Almadina surveyed parents, staff and students. 151 parents responded to the survey. Over 95% of all parents surveyed were either satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of education and the quality of teaching at Almadina. The parents felt that there should be more options available. Over 95% of parents believed their child (ren) was learning what they needed to know and that their child (ren) found school interesting. Over 90% of parents surveyed felt the schools were safe and over 95% felt that their child (ren) tried their best. 90% of all parents believed that teachers care about students and are available to their students.

87% of parents surveyed felt they were involved in decisions about their child's education, 10% did not know and 3% had very little involvement in decisions. 79% of parents felt that their input was considered at Almadina, 16% did not know. Parents felt that there needed to be more career and academic counselling for their child (ren). 75% of parents felt their child (ren) received special support while 20% did not know. Parents felt that there was a need for more services for children with learning difficulties, special needs and additional help to read and write.

Parents were given a survey to determine the level of support for a high school. 244 parents responded to this survey. 92% of our parents want a high school. Parents really want more options

with a focus on arts. We will be studying the feasibility of offering high school. Student achievement at the Charter school is consistently strong and improving.

241 students responded to a survey. More than 90% said they felt safe and that they belong. Over 90% of all students felt that their teachers treated them with respect and really cared. Almost 100% of our students believe that the teacher believes that they know what they are supposed to be learning and that they consider themselves to be good students. Almost 100% of the students believed teachers expected them to produce very good work. The students at Almadina Language Academy who responded to our survey appear to be engaged learners who feel they are safe, supported and cared for.

Finally, we conducted a survey of teachers to determine teacher satisfaction.

87% of teachers felt parents were very involved in decisions about their child's education. Teachers were very satisfied that the students of Almadina are taught the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for learning throughout their lifetimes. Options and academic counselling was identified as a need by the teachers. Teachers strongly believe students treat each other well at Almadina.

This year, our provincial achievement scores have gone up yet again. The C.D. Howe Institute examined our school achievement results compared to the socioeconomic status of our families and named Almadina one of the top twelve schools in Alberta. (<http://www.esl-almadina.com/documents/board/reports/C.D.%20Howe%20Report.pdf>) This is a clear indication that we are a very successful system.

The school clearly communicates expectations through the Parent Handbook, open house events, newsletters, agendas, the web site and class web sites. All stakeholders valued the committed, collaborative administration, teachers and support staff.

All stakeholders are pleased with the current facilities and the most recent building upgrades. These upgrades were done in consultation with our landlord, C.B.E.

4. Is the school financially viable and responsible?

Almadina has consistently shown it is financially viable and responsible. All audited statements are transparent and easy to access on the Almadina web site.

http://www.esl-almadina.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=24&Itemid=69

*We expect the 2013 Audited Financial Statement to be complete by the end of November.

5. The student achievement at the charter school is consistently strong or improving.

Almadina has extraordinary achievement data that would suggest there is consistently strong and improving student achievement. Our results have been analyzed and published in the findings of the C.D. Howe Institute as well as the Fraser Institute.

*The Provincial Achievement Tests show clear evidence of student academic success and is available through Alberta Education.

6. The Charter School is committed to engaging students, teachers, parents and community members in a model of continuous improvement.

The most recent findings from Alberta Education indicate that 95.7% of all parents believe Almadina has stayed the same or improved over the last three years (2013 Pillar results). Parents, teachers and students share a strong opinion that Almadina is continuously improving.

Administration, teachers, support staff, school council and parents are consulted every year regarding the PAT results and the goals and direction of the combined AERR and 3YEP. This empowers all stakeholders to be a part of the planning and goal setting at Almadina. We regularly survey parents and the results help to guide and direct new initiatives. After consultation these reports are submitted to Alberta Education and then posted on the Almadina web site. The Almadina Language Charter Academy web site includes a feedback link for all stakeholders to utilize.

The school council is very involved in community engagement and communicates initiatives to the board monthly. Joint initiatives between the board and the school council have resulted in successful community involvement activities. Transparency and communication regarding system changes that will result in improvement have become vital for continuity and support. Almadina prides itself on continuous improvement and community engagement.

The International Café model is used to engage staff when thinking about our system and the changes that may be required to improve. These sessions create the environment for staff to critically evaluate what works, what doesn't work and what we can be done to improve the system.

7 & 8. The Charter school uses research informed practices to create innovative learning environments and to improve student learning. The Charter school shares innovative practices and learning outcomes with others in the education community.

Almadina has created innovative learning environments to enhance student learning.

Binders of ESL best practices are available to teachers. English Language Learner (ELL) portfolios are developed for every student. Almadina completed the ESL benchmarks' field tests in 2010, as a result we provide benchmark report cards. Students are assigned daily homework that support their ELL learning needs. System-wide research is being conducted using the Discover Reading program . Extensive pre and post testing is done for every student to measure student reading and writing progress. All data is analysed and annual recommendations are made based on these results. Teachers, board and the school council have been consulted regarding results and recommendations.

Almadina's great success is directly linked to staff engagement in professional learning. All teachers at Almadina are allowed \$800.00 per year and two paid sub days for PD. At least 12 of our staff have their Masters or are working on completing it. This focus on lifelong learning has promoted innovative practice and learning.

In the past, Almadina has relied on the AISI research framework. This work has focused on action research directly in the classrooms. We have successful partnerships with the University of Calgary and Ambrose University. Many successful student practicum placements have infused new initiatives into the classroom. Some of our student teachers have become full-time teachers with Almadina. There is a strong collaborative partnership with outreach programs like the Wellness Empowerment Program (WEP) and Renfrew Services.

Our classroom structure consists of heterogeneous classrooms with modified, inclusive curriculums. We utilize common and explicit language instruction across the curriculum. We provide students with the opportunity to attend Saturday school in preparation for Provincial Achievement Testing (PAT). We provide an international language program which includes French, Urdu, Arabic and English Language options.

Our three year technology plan promotes the infusion of technology across the curriculum, enabling the hiring of an educational technologist who supports teachers.

Almadina teachers and administration have presented information on best practices for ELL students with schools province-wide, AISI conferences and local universities. Continuous sharing of best ELL strategies have occurred with: Westmount Charter School, Foundations for the Future (FFCA), Calgary Girls' School, Glengary School and Calgary Islamic School to name a few. Our teachers have published numerous papers on good ELL practices.

We have been able to share best practices with the broader education community. For example, we invited teachers from other school systems to our virtues training with Dr. Michele Borba. We also invited our Charter School colleagues to an ELL presentation with Dr. Hetty Roessingh from the University of Calgary. Almadina has been the subject of research completed by Dr. Hetty Roessingh. Many academic papers have been published by Dr. Roessingh that support the learning techniques used at Almadina. The research we are doing with the Reading Foundation is being recorded and we are hopeful we will be able to present the results at the end of this school year.

9. The Charter School reaches out beyond its walls to demonstrate broad and sustained levels of community engagement.

We provide opportunities for the students, parents, staff, school council and the board of Almadina to give back to the larger community. For instance, our grade nine staff and students have hosted and have attended Student Speak Out conferences. Other examples of ongoing community involvement and fundraising donations have supported: Multiple Sclerosis Society, Sleeping Children Around the World (school supplies and bed kits); Free the Children (India water well project); Calgary Food Bank for Calgary flood victims; Terry Fox Foundation; CIBC Run for the Cure; Heart and Stroke Foundation (Jump Rope for Heart); The Red Cross (Haiti and Pakistan Earthquakes relief); The John Howard Society; The Calgary Drop-In Centre (making sandwiches and donating food items); Alberta Children's Hospital (Ahmed Abbas Foundation and the Hockey Marathon 2012); and The Calgary Zoo (flood restoration). To live out our virtues component of our charter, we must give students opportunities to give back to those less fortunate locally and internationally.

At Almadina we provide students with opportunities to compete and engage with students from across the city and globe. We hosted and attended the “Speak Out Conference” for Grade 9 staff and students. Many of our students are new to Canada, so we support the annual trip to the legislature and other field trips that make them aware of the larger community. A former Almadina student, was chosen to represent Alberta youth on behalf of Alberta Education, and gave the opening address on their trip to China. We are very successful in local and regional science fairs, as well as the Young Einstein competition.

Our students play a variety of sports and compete with other students in Calgary and surrounding area. Our coaches also hold high positions on various athletic leagues.

We have forged a very successful partnership between the Calgary Public Library and the Ogden campus. Our students have scheduled time at this library which allows our school to access all the resources that are available to this public library. The Mountain View campus has recently launched an online database for their school library. Lastly, both the Mountain View and Ogden campuses publish monthly school newsletters on the school website.

Students’ learning has included many opportunities to interact with the community at large. Examples include: Penpals within Alberta (email and mail); Penpals from France; New Delhi e-pals with a focus on sharing customs, cultures and celebrations; Grade 9 student leadership attendance at Calgary WE Day (Free the Children), Economics for staying in school program hosted by Mount Royal University; Classroom guest speakers; and community partnerships have led to financial support (corporate matched fundraising dollars).

The board posts a monthly newsletter and has “Board Communication” and “Almadina Gives Back” tabs accessible from Almadina’s website. The school council presents monthly at the regular board meeting. The board has conducted many surveys of parents, students and staff to evaluate new initiatives. Two examples include the high school and uniform initiatives.

Our board hosts an annual staff appreciation night that is well attended. The feedback from the staff is extremely positive, so it continues to be an annual event. In addition, our stakeholders collaborated to organize the International Day (a cultural exchange) and a back-to-school Family BBQ to welcome new families to Almadina.

The Collegial Committee was formed to ensure that the teachers would have regular communication with the board office. This committee meets and presents monthly at the regular board meetings.

The school website is updated regularly to engage all stakeholders. Website communications with the community are often translated to Arabic and Urdu so that parents can access resources, including some homeroom teacher webpages. The school, in partnership with the WEP program, has provided training and support to families regarding mental health issues as well as community opportunities and cultural translations. For example, women’s fitness and yoga classes have been held after-school for families, and staff.

The Superintendent interviews administrators, parents, students and teachers annually. This provides a forum for feedback from stakeholders and is a way of opening communication as well as ensuring transparency.

At Almadina we reach out beyond our walls and can easily demonstrate broad and sustained levels of community engagement. We have noted just a few of the many partnerships we have with the community at large.

10. The Charter School is governed effectively.

Almadina continues to move toward becoming a fully functional governance board. Community members who have been elected to the board do not manage the day to day operations of the schools, board office or finances. The governance model ensures that the professionals hired are able to do their jobs without interference. The main focus of the present Almadina Board is policy and strategic planning. Over the past year and a half the Almadina Board has completed a great deal of training on the governance model. They have been involved in many training sessions; June 2012 – Board Governance Introduction, November 2012 – Review of Board policy, March 2013 – Governance Board Development Workshop, September 2013 – Strategic Planning. Board training will be ongoing to support the governance model.

This training has been valuable to achieve positive changes. The board refrains from providing management direction to administration on the operation of the school where these functions have been delegated to the Superintendent and the Secretary Treasurer. The board now acts in an advisory capacity. Policies are reviewed at every board meeting. In May of 2013 the board was evaluated by an independent evaluator. The results from this evaluation were very good and can be found on our web site.

All board agendas and minutes are posted on the web site. The board meetings are run in a timely manner and Roberts Rules are utilized. The Board member code of conduct has been reviewed by the board. In addition to training, a board mentor is attending board meetings to give feedback and suggestions. All board members consistently attend board meetings.

The board has visited other charter board meetings and another charter board has attended an Almadina meeting.

The board has complied with the advice of Alberta Education and supported the Superintendent in her work to utilize a maintenance plan collaboratively working with C.B.E. All vendors used are C.B.E approved.

Health and Safety Manuals have been revised and health and safety issues are the board's top priority.

The AGM was held in May in compliance with the Society By-Laws. At this time the Annual Financial Statement was presented.

Board committees have been reviewed and reflect the work of a governance board. The board only sits in on interviews for the Superintendent position. The board contracted the services of a qualified Superintendent approved by the Minister of Education. One board member may sit in on interviews for upper management such as the Secretary Treasurer position.

The School Council has engaged in School Council training and is functioning as a member of a broader education team.

The Charter board has embraced the 21st Century Learning initiative and the Technology Plan. They have also been very supportive of the very large system wide Discover Reading research initiative. These initiatives directly support the Charter mandate, goals, and objectives.

11. The School is administered effectively.

Both Mountain View and Ogden campuses are being administered effectively. With an enrollment of 979 students this year, programs and initiatives are administered in an effective manner by a collaborative team (Superintendent, Executive Secretary, Secretary Treasurer, Principals and Vice Principal). This administration team strives to engage all stakeholders and has continuous improvement as a top priority. The administration team works well with each other and their respective staffs. Grade level team collaboration meetings are scheduled regularly. The administrators support the concept of Professional Learning communities and shared leadership. The combined AERR and 3YEP meet all the provincial requirements. All reports and plans are completed and submitted in a timely manner.

Many teacher committees and leadership opportunities are available at both campuses. Scheduling is done extremely well and assignments are completed in a timely manner.

Safety procedures are in place and followed. Lock downs and fire drills are completed as scheduled. Supervision schedules reflect safe and appropriate staff to student ratios.

Student records are updated, confidential and are kept in designated locked areas in both campuses.

Safety and Health as well as security have been the top priorities for maintenance work in both school sites over the summer.

The Superintendent is visible and very supportive of the school administration. The Superintendent has made it her priority to move the board from a management model to a governance model. This is evidenced in the quality and frequency of board training. Our independent evaluation of the board in June 2013 showed the tremendous progress the board has made in terms of governance practice.

Conclusion

Almadina is a model Charter school. Almadina's greatest asset is its dedicated administrators and teachers. We have committed staff and very little turn over. Our staff are provided with system wide professional development that helps improve their teaching practice. Many of our staff have finished

their master's degree or are enrolled in a master's program with a focus on teaching ESL. This continuous learning provides the foundation for intentional, systematic ELL instruction that is very successful.

Our students have had outstanding success on the PAT's. Our Virtues program is integrated throughout the curriculum and provides our students with the foundations for good citizenship. The students engage in projects that allow them to give back to the community, making them stronger, more connected citizens of Canada.

We have gained a great deal of respect through our long term partnership with Dr. Hetty Roessingh at the University of Calgary. We are engaged in innovative practice and the sharing of that practice. We will continue to seek opportunities to share innovative practices.

The board of Almadina Language Charter Academy, continues to strengthen their knowledge and commitment to the governance model. Training and practice have provided the board with the tools to operate effectively. An independent review of the board's performance was completed in May 2013. This evaluation was very favourable and highlighted the board's hard work and success.

Almadina is made up of very committed administrators, teachers, parents and students. We are supportive of each other and have a high degree of communication and transparency. We will continue to support our teachers and support staff, thereby strengthening the delivery of programs to our students.