



CONNECT
CHARTER SCHOOL

Connect Charter Pre-Election Information Sharing Document February 2019

What are Public Charter Schools?

- Public Charter Schools are publicly funded schools that provide basic education in a different or enhanced way to improve student learning, attitudes and knowledge.
- Alberta passed legislation in 1994 to enable Public Charter Schools and is the only province in Canada to have Public Charter Schools. They were created to increase the responsiveness of the public school system in meeting the diverse educational needs of Albertans.
- Alberta’s educational system includes Public, Separate, Franco-phone, Public Charters, Private and Home Schooling options. While meeting the standards set for education in Alberta, this structure encourages diversity, creativity and inclusive practice in education.
- Public Charter Schools must fulfill a charter mandate approved by Alberta’s Minister of Education and follow Alberta Education’s program of studies, laws, regulations, and standards.
- Public Charter Schools teach the Alberta Curriculum; they are staffed by certified Alberta teachers, led by professionally qualified educational experts and are under the guidance of elected volunteer Boards of Albertan citizens.
- Public charter schools offer families choice to fit the particular needs and aptitudes of their children while remaining part of Alberta’s public school system.
- Each of Alberta’s thirteen Public Charter Schools has a unique charter which is designed to support and assess the efficacy of a particular innovative approach to education either with a specified student population, or a specified learning approach not otherwise available in the public school system. These include:

Public Charter School	Location	Year Established	Focused Learning Approach	Grades
Almadina Language Charter Academy	Calgary	1996	English as a Second Language	K-9
Aurora Academic Charter School	Edmonton	1996	Academically-Oriented Instruction	K-9
Boyle Street Education Centre	Edmonton	1995	Traditional Education Approaches	Basic literacy - 12
Calgary Arts Academy	Calgary	2003	Arts Immersion	K-9
Calgary Girls’ School	Calgary	2003	Nurturing Confident Girls	4-9
CAPE - Centre for Academic and Personal Excellence Institute	Medicine Hat	1995	Underachieving Student Programs	K-9
Connect Charter School	Calgary	1999	Inquiry Based Outdoor and Experiential Education	4-9
Foundations for the Future Charter Academy	Calgary	1997	Character and Leadership	K-12
Mother Earth’s Children’s Charter School	Stony Plain	2003	Indigenous Teaching	K-9
New Horizons Charter School	Sherwood Park	1995	Gifted Learning	K-9
Suzuki Charter School	Edmonton	1995	Musically Immersed	K-6
Valhalla Community School	Valhalla Centre	2008	Rural Leadership Community	K-9
Westmount Charter School	Calgary	1996	Gifted Learning	K-12

- Public Charter Schools:
 - can only be operated by a non-profit organization;
 - cannot have a religious affiliation;
 - cannot turn students who fit within a charter away as long as there is space and resources for them; and
 - cannot charge tuition or make a profit.
- Public charter schools are a significant and important option for students in Alberta’s education system, providing students and their families with a distinct voice. Currently, Alberta Public Charter Schools have 9,500 enrolled students and approximately 15,000 students on waiting lists. Our over 100,000 past graduate students and their families have all contributed their voices and commitment to growing and sustaining these unique Alberta learning communities.
- Research informed innovation which is made possible by our focused charter environments, has helped stimulate growth and development of speciality focussed educational alternative programs throughout the Alberta education system.
- Some of Alberta’s Public Charter Schools have been recognized as among the best in the province by various educational research. **Alberta’s 2019 Provincial Election**
- The next provincial election in Alberta will take place this Spring (specific date to be announced). As the families who belong to the Public Charter School community are by design a minority in the public education system, it is important that we share our knowledge and our desire to influence the future of Public Charter Schools and public education in Alberta.
- Each of the political parties will have a platform with specific education policies. Education is the second largest line item in the provincial budget following health. It is important that as a community we engage with parties and candidates to ensure that their platform policies related to education are informed and supportive of sustaining and growing Public Charter Schools in Alberta’s education system.
- This is also an opportunity for our community to make informed decisions at the ballot box based on this engagement with parties and candidates.
- You can learn more about each of Alberta’s registered political parties and get in contact with them:

Party	Party leader	Website
New Democratic Party	Rachel Notley	www.albertandp.ca
United Conservative Party	Jason Kenney	www.unitedconservative.ca
Alberta Party	Stephen Mandel	www.albertaparty.ca
Liberal Party	David Khan	www.albertaliberal.com
Freedom Conservative Party	Derek Fildebrandt	www.freedomconservativeparty.ca
Alberta Advantage Party	Marilyn Burns	www.albertaadvantageparty.net
Reform Party of Alberta	Randy Thorsteinson	www.reformalberta.com
Communist Party	Naomi Rankin	www.communistparty-alberta.ca
Green Party	Cheryle Chagnon-Greyeyes	www.greenpartyofalberta.ca
Pro-Life Alberta Political Association	Murray Ruhl	www.socialcredit.com

- To determine which constituency you live in, you can go to the Elections Alberta website and search you address here: <http://streetkey.elections.ab.ca/> and then find out who your candidates will be in the upcoming election from the list here: <http://daveberta.ca/alberta-election/>
- If you don’t know if you are a registered voter or if you are experiencing a language issue and wish to speak with someone who can help you understand your voting options and how to vote, please contact your school and request assistance from within your school community. There are others who can help you understand what you need to make an informed choice and exercise your right to vote. Alternatively, you can contact Elections Alberta at www.elections.ab.ca

Engaging Parties, Their Leaders and Local Candidates

- Whether it is through direct contact with a political party or candidate; through forums, or on your doorstep- the election offers an opportunity to engage and ask specific questions important to our Public Charter School Community.
- Here are three questions to pose regarding education in Alberta:
 - What is your position on Alberta’s Public Charter Schools, do you support this choice for students and their families in Alberta’s education system?

- Currently, Public Charter Schools are excluded from special operating fund investments such as the classroom improvement fund, school fees protection, school lunch provision and school transportation expense. What is your position on equitable funding for Alberta's thirteen Public Charter Schools?
- What is your position on supportive regulation of Public Charter Schools to allow for growth in enrollment rates and enhanced timing of charter agreements?

For more information on Public Charter Schools, please visit:

[Public Charter Schools video:](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCnstwIAS1U&feature=youtu.be>