



# Proposed Amendments to the Aurora School Ltd. Charter Document

*June 2022*



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## 1. The Charter School

### Name and Location

Aurora School Ltd. is located in Edmonton, Alberta

### Enrolment, Grade Distribution, and Building Requirements

The September 2020 student enrolment at Aurora Academic Charter School (Aurora) is 833 FTE students. Our current facility can accommodate 962 students.

The current grade configuration is from Kindergarten to grade nine, but our charter allows for enrolment to grade twelve. Our Board has always hoped to expand our program to include an academic high school. The Aurora Board of Directors, in consultation with Aurora parents/guardians, is determined to pursue this goal and will request support for a high school facility.

## 2. Vision, Mission, Values, Purpose, Goals, and Philosophy

### Vision

The best choice for highly-structured and enhanced academics.

### Mission

Empower learning excellence through sequenced instruction in a student-centred environment, supported by families. Instruction is informed by research and delivered in a whole group setting with a focus on academic rigour and mastery.

### Values

Innovation, Hard Work, Empowerment, Respect and Integrity, Empathy and Compassion

## Purpose

The purposes of Aurora School are:

1. To assist and encourage students to develop the highest level of academic achievement possible
2. To help develop in students a lifelong love of learning and a pursuit of physical and mental well-being
3. To produce responsible citizens who recognize the value of hard work and enterprise
4. To develop in students effective communication skills
5. To ensure students are prepared upon graduation to make meaningful contributions to their communities and the world

## Goals

The primary goals of Aurora are:

1. To have an enhanced language arts program
2. To have an enhanced mathematics program

The primary student learning outcomes of Aurora are:

1. That students, on average, are reading above grade level in language arts
2. That students, on average, are achieving above grade level in mathematics

## Goals Stated in Measurable Terms

Aurora demonstrates attainment of its goals and anticipated outcomes through the use of consistent and predetermined measures. Provincial testing as well as Canadian standardized testing are utilized.

## PHILOSOPHY

It is the philosophy of Aurora School that children, when presented with an orderly and structured environment, and in the presence of properly sequenced whole group classroom instruction, can excel in an academically-oriented program.

The acquisition of skills in reading and writing from the earliest age is considered to be the foundation of the Aurora philosophy. Children learn the rules of the English language to a degree that renders them excellent spellers and excellent writers who read well above their respective grade levels. The Aurora program also stresses the importance of neat, high-quality work in their notebooks. Students are taught to be systematic in how they approach all subject areas.

The teachers who are committed to such an approach have seen in their own classrooms the advantage of phonics, proper spelling, good reading and writing skills, and math abilities.

Aurora offers a highly structured, whole group delivery system with high expectations in language development that are achievable with traditional methods. This emphasis on language and mathematics produces improved learning opportunities, especially given the highly disciplined, respectful environment that is in place.

A unique feature of Aurora is the degree to which parents/guardians and teachers share the same philosophical views of education. This blend of parent/guardian and teacher energies not only enhances the educational possibilities, but it also provides double the support for children in the program to be encouraged and ultimately to develop their potential. One of the significant strengths of the school is the strong level of parental support. Parents/guardians agree to support their children who are assigned homework regularly.

Teachers, who sincerely believe in what they do and who are committed to quality education, creatively enhance their courses to teach beyond the Alberta Program of Studies. Its outcomes show what children can accomplish in a highly academic, orderly, and creative environment. It is these outcomes that Aurora relies on to demonstrate the effectiveness of this program.

### **Decision-Making Guidelines**

The philosophy/mission statement are clear and concise, and provide constant and strong direction in the process of decision making. All decisions can be quickly measured against the philosophy and mission to ensure that the school stays on the intended path.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHARTER BOARD AND ITS PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

1. The Board's sole responsibility is the governance of the Charter School. The Board operates under its Articles of Association, the Charter, the Education Act and Regulations, and in compliance with Alberta Education expectations. The Directors are guided by the philosophy, objectives, and focus of the Charter School.
2. The Articles of Association of Aurora School clearly explain the rules of eligibility to sit on the Aurora Board.
3. A group of Aurora parents/guardians was responsible for drafting and implementing the initial charter proposal to the Minister.
4. The Board of Directors of Aurora is comprised of a maximum of seven members, all of whom may be parents/guardians of children attending Aurora School.
5. All parents/guardians of children attending Aurora are members of Aurora and have voting responsibilities at the School's annual general meeting.

## SCHOOL COUNCIL

The School Council, may, at its discretion,

1. advise the principal or the Board respecting any matter relating to the school,
2. perform any duty or function delegated to it by the Board in accordance with the delegation,
3. consult with the principal so that the principal may ensure that students in the school have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister,
4. consult with the principal so that the principal may ensure that the fiscal management of the school is in accordance with the requirements of the Board and the superintendent and
5. do anything it is authorized under the regulations to do.

### 3. Stakeholder Engagement

#### Key Messages:

Aurora's desire is to be an active participant and contributor to the educational community in Edmonton.

#### Objectives:

- A. To ensure that parents/guardians, community members, and professional organizations are aware of Aurora's program innovations and its successes.
- B. To fulfill the Minister's requirements to communicate Aurora's program and successes to the community.
- C. To share Aurora's best practices and ideas with the community.
- D. To provide opportunities for Aurora stakeholders to be aware of and participate in decision making at Aurora.

| Audience                    | Strategy   |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Parents/Guardians Community | Aurora will communicate regularly through its website.   |
| Parents/Guardians Community | Aurora's vision and mission will be prominently displayed in the school. All visitors will be able to see immediately the core values of our school. |



Parents/Guardians  
Community

Aurora will produce two monthly newsletters (Elementary and Middle School) on the website that informs the public of school news and activities including updates from the principal(s), student activities, and upcoming events.

Parents/Guardians  
Alberta Education

Aurora's Annual Education Plan and Annual Education Results Report will be posted on the school's website.

Parents/Guardians

Aurora hosts several evening information sessions for parents/guardians such as: Kindergarten Orientation, Phonics Night, Grade 5/6 orientation, PAT information nights, Town Halls, stress management and study skills night.



Professional Community

Aurora will take part in activities and events along with other schools. This will enable students and staff from other schools to have direct contact with our own students and staff. Understanding, awareness, and acceptance of charter schools in the public school realm will be fostered through these activities (i.e. Science Fair, extracurricular sport teams).

Professional Community

Aurora will foster a relationship with post-secondary institutions by accepting student teachers. Aurora will collaborate on research projects with post secondary institutions and other school authorities.

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Professional Community | Aurora School will participate in events with other educational organizations such as The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools (TAAPCS), the Alberta School Councils' Association, Edmonton Regional Science Fair, College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) and other schools. |
| Community              | Aurora will engage research and inquiry about Aurora as a charter school and the educational successes we are enjoying.   |
| Professional Community | Aurora School staff will communicate our successful educational practices of our school to teacher organizations.   |
| Community              | Aurora School will foster relationships with local community stakeholders and encourage participation in school activities, use of our facility, and cooperation in areas of joint interest.  |

## 4. Educational Plan

### EDUCATIONAL NEED THE CHARTER FULFILLS

The primary need that has been identified by parents/guardians who support this charter is for a school that empowers learning excellence through sequenced instruction in a student-centered environment, supported by families. Instruction is informed by research and delivered in a whole group setting with a focus on academic rigour and mastery.

Secondly, Aurora fills the need for a continuous, seamless academic program. This permits the delivery of a philosophically coherent and well-coordinated program with consistent methodology throughout.

### ADDRESSING THE NEED

The Aurora charter makes it possible for students to participate and excel in a highly academic environment.



## Basic Curriculum, Instructional Methodologies, and Student Assessment: Congruence with Alberta Education Basic Education and Programs of Study

### Basic Curriculum

Aurora offers a program from kindergarten to Grade 9. The basic curriculum uses as a guideline the Alberta Education *Program of Studies* as amended from time to time. The Aurora program is designed to address the requirements of the Program of Studies for the appropriate grade levels. The specific program offered in each classroom in many cases exceeds the curricular requirements of the Program of Studies. The curriculum that is in addition to the Program of Studies can be found in the appendix under Scope and Sequence, which describes the significant embellishments and traditional teaching approaches being employed.

Each teacher, in collaboration with their grade and subject partners, presents the principal with a long-range plan, showing the topics to be covered and the approximate completion date of each topic. Specific resources to be used and an explanation of how each course will be evaluated must be included with the plan. The principal reviews, amends, and/or approves each plan, ensuring the Program of Studies is being suitably addressed.

### Methodology

The curriculum is defined in terms of coherent lessons, each carefully designed to fill the class period with sustained attention to the development of some concept or skill. Thus, the overall instructional planning and individual lessons are teacher-directed and designed for whole group class delivery. Teaching also involves mastery in foundational, subject-specific content and regular homework assignments, all done with close corrective attention to error. Efforts are made to favor sequential instruction.

### Methodologies, Innovations, and Enhancements

*Those that will make Aurora unique in terms of overall program*

At Aurora, a structured, sequential program with an academic emphasis is delivered in a disciplined environment:

Aurora promotes whole-group, teacher-led instruction. Instruction includes a knowledge-based lesson delivered in a sequential manner, followed by exercises on the specific concept and homework. Daily routines often require drill and memory work. Assignments are marked, with close attention paid to errors.

The program, again, is “knowledge-based” and systematic. This pertains to all core subject areas. The delivery of Language Arts, for instance, is highly structured through the use of the Writing Road to Reading, as adapted by the Riggs Institute, to develop skills in phonics, spelling, and reading. Grammar is systematically instructed beginning in kindergarten. Mathematics instruction stresses the development of powerful mental math skills as well as embellishments outlined in the Scope and Sequence. The sciences allow for instruction that encourages all students to engage in the whole group learning of key concepts including the application and analysis of this material, as well as hands-on learning, inquiry and self study through the science fair, and practice with the experimental process both individually and in small groups.

Aurora employs a multidisciplinary team that includes an educational psychologist, an occupational therapist, and a speech language pathologist. The Student Learning Supports team provides support and guidance to students, families, and staff.

## Student Support Services

### Student Evaluation

Report cards keep parents/guardians informed of progress. The evaluation is designed to be quantitative in nature and measures the extent to which curriculum objectives are met. Evaluation is also a diagnostic tool to determine areas of strength or weakness in individual students, and it keeps students, parents/guardians and teachers informed of their progress.

The overall aim of evaluation is to help teacher, student and parents/guardians work to improve all aspects of the child’s learning, and to accurately reflect where the child stands at a given time.





## 5. Demographics of the Charter School

### REGISTRATION AND ADMISSIONS

Students are **assessed to place** and no child will be turned away when a space is available. Students are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. When there are no available spaces **they enter into Aurora's waitlist process, as outlined below:** is full, students are placed on a waiting list, each request for placement being stamped with the date on which it was received.

~~First priority is given to prospective students whose siblings are already in the program. Again, these students must have the potential to benefit from the educational services provided by Aurora.~~

~~Second priority is given to children of Aurora employees.~~

Beginning in 2026-2027, the process will be:

- First priority is given to prospective students whose siblings are already in the program. These students must have the potential to benefit from the educational services provided by Aurora.
- Second priority is given to children of Aurora employees.
- The remaining positions are reserved for
  - local children (10%)
  - The remainder of positions are through a weighted lottery. For each year a child is on the waitlist, the child earns one entry into the lottery. Entries are electronic and managed through an electronic system. The lottery is held once per year, where names are drawn to fill vacant seats.

~~Children admitted need to be at grade level. This is determined by an entrance grade level assessment. Prospective students and their parents/guardians arrange a meeting with the school administration. Students and parents/guardians have an interview with administration to go over basic elements of Aurora's program. Students then write an assessment instrument to determine whether they are at grade level in mathematics and English.~~

~~It is at the discretion of administration as to whether a child who is not at grade level will be admitted to that grade. This judgement will be based on whether the child can benefit from the curriculum and resources Aurora offers. The parent/guardian of the affected student may within a reasonable time from the date that they were informed of the decision appeal that decision to the Board. The parent/guardian may request in writing that a decision to deny enrolment by the Board be reviewed by the Minister.~~

When there is an available space, the placement process is as follows:

- Prospective students and their parents/guardians attend a meeting with the school administration to go over basic elements of Aurora's program.
- Students are assessed to determine whether they are at grade level in mathematics and English
  - For placement in Kindergarten this assessment is based on verbal responses, fine motor skills, and the ability to follow sequenced directions or instructions.
  - For placement in Grade 1 and above, a written assessment is used.
- The above assessments will determine *where* in Aurora the student will best succeed and which supports will be provided to that student.



### Orientation

All new students and their parents/guardians are encouraged to visit Aurora at a Parent/Guardian Orientation evening.

At this time, the students and their parents/guardians will meet the staff and one or more Board members. A presentation will outline the program offered at Aurora and expectations of parents/guardians.

### Attendance Area

Aurora draws students from the City of Edmonton and surrounding areas.

## 6. Amending the Charter

Any member of the Charter Board or the Corporation may request in a signed letter that the Charter Board review a term or condition of the charter where the said term or condition is perceived to be contrary to the intent or spirit of the Charter.

The Charter Board shall meet within eight (8) weeks to consider the amendment request. The Charter Board's decision will be communicated in writing within seven (7) days of the nearest Board meeting to the requesting member. If the amendment proposal is rejected, it may be discussed again after one year.

If the amendment proposal is accepted, the Charter Board shall have eight (8) weeks to provide Corporation members with a copy of the proposed amendment(s) and call a special meeting of the Corporation. At this meeting, the proposed amendment(s) will either be approved by a vote of at least two thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) of the Corporation members present or rejected.

The decision of the members is final and the result of the vote will be conveyed in writing to the requesting member within seven (7) days. If the amendment proposal is rejected, it may be discussed again after one year.

In the event that the proposed amendment(s) is approved by the Corporation, the Charter Board shall seek to obtain the necessary approval from the Minister in accordance with Section 8 of the Charter School Regulations.



## 7. Transportation

Aurora makes provision for buses to serve different sectors of the city. The full transportation policy can be found in the Transportation Handbook.

## 8. Termination

Notwithstanding that the term of the charter has not expired, the Board of Directors may terminate the operation of the school at the end of a school year, with the approval of the Minister in writing, by voting to terminate the operation of the school. The Board shall notify the Minister in writing by January 31 of its intent to terminate the charter at the end of the school year.

## 9. Dissolution

If the operation of the charter school is terminated by the charter board, or a motion for dissolution is passed by a vote of the members in a general meeting as hereafter provided, the charter school must be dissolved and wound up in accordance with the following procedures.



## **DISSOLUTION PROCESS**

Where the operation of the charter school has been terminated by the charter board, with the approval of the Minister, the charter board shall call a general meeting of the members of the corporation to review the decision to terminate the charter school and to outline the procedures that will be followed. A motion for dissolution can also be initiated by either a group of at least 25% of the members of the corporation or by the Board of Directors itself. Once the motion is initiated, a general meeting of all the members of the corporation will be held. Except in extraordinary circumstances, this general meeting must be held at least 90 days before the end of the school term to give staff and students the time needed to make other arrangements for the forthcoming academic year. At the general meeting called to consider the motion for dissolution, at least 50% of the membership of the corporation must be in attendance and at least 75% of those members in attendance must vote in favor of the motion for dissolution before it will be passed.

## **NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION**

Once the process of dissolution has been approved, the charter board shall provide a notice to the Minister, the Superintendent, all corporation members, the principal, all teachers, any known creditors of the corporation, and other known interested parties. The charter board will attempt to send this letter within five (5) business days after the process of dissolution has been approved.

## **DISSOLUTION OF PROPERTY AND FINANCES**

In the event of dissolution, the Charter Board shall:

- A. provide notice pursuant to any rental agreements for land, buildings and facilities, chattels or equipment, or other property
- B. provide notice to all known creditors of the corporation
- C. determine a reasonable value for any land, buildings, equipment, chattels, and other property and assets
- D. sell or liquidate any owned assets
- E. discharge the liabilities of the corporation
- F. provide the members, the Superintendent, and the Minister with a full accounting of the finances of the school
- G. comply with the requirements of the Companies Act and the Education Act concerning the dissolution of the corporation
- H. return any surplus to the Provincial Treasurer

Under no circumstances shall any of the assets or the remaining surplus be distributed to the members.

### **Transfer of Students**

A list of programs with similar educational objectives and philosophies will be catalogued and distributed to parents/guardians of students. People representing these various programs will be encouraged to make presentations to interested parents/guardians and a resource booth will be set up at the school to help assess educational alternatives.

The charter board shall ensure that the charter school assists with the transfer of students to other schools as requested by parents/guardians by providing information and records.

### **Student Records**

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. Upon receipt of the completed form, the Charter Board shall ensure that the student's records are forwarded according to the form's instructions. The responsibility for providing accurate and complete information on the Transfer of Records form shall remain with the student and the student's parents/guardians, and the Charter Board and charter school shall not be held liable for acting upon any inaccurate or incomplete information provided to them. The Charter Board shall remain responsible for the transfer of a student's records until the dissolution date. Thereafter, any remaining student records will be forwarded to Alberta Education to be held until claimed by the student.

### **School Records**

Any remaining school records including board minutes, school council minutes, and financial records will be forwarded to Alberta Education or disposed of in accordance with any directions given by Alberta Education.

## **10. Term of Charter**

**The term of the current charter is from September 1, 2021, until August 31, 2036.**

