Foundations for the Future Charter Academy
Calgary, Alberta

Charter Authority Evaluation Report
February 28, 2024

Prepared by:

Alberta Education Charter Authority Review Team:
Randy Billey
Connie Ohl
Michael Mauro
Roman Sus
Hardeep Toore
Leta Youck-McGowan

Alberta Education

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

Background 1
Terms of Reference 5
Evaluation Process 6

II. EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS, COMMENDATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND REQUIRED CHANGES:

1. The authority meets the terms and conditions of its charter and has performance measures that show clear evidence of success 8
2. The authority operates in a manner consistent with all applicable provincial requirements 9
3. The charter authority is governed effectively 9
4. The charter authority is administered effectively. 10
5. The charter authority is fiscally viable and responsible. 11
6. The students, parents, staff, school council(s), and community members consider the school program to be successful. 12
7. Student success is determined in accordance with Ministerial Order (#028/2020) 14
8. The charter authority shares its innovative practices and learning outcomes with others in the educational community 14
9. Student achievement is consistently strong or improving 15
10. The charter authority exhibits in multiple ways ongoing committed to engaging students, teachers, parents, and community members in a model of continuous improvement 16
11. The charter authority works collaboratively with stakeholders and demonstrates broad and sustained levels of community engagement 17
12. The charter authority uses research-informed practices to create innovative learning environments and improve student learning 18

APPENDIX

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy Self Evaluation.....20

I. INTRODUCTION

Background

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy is a publicly funded charter authority in the city of Calgary. From its humble beginnings employing a staff of 12 and educating a student population of 224 students, Foundations for the Future Charter Academy has grown to encompass eight campuses across all four quadrants of the city and a central office site. With an enrolment of over 3,700 students, Foundations for the Future Charter Academy is currently the largest charter school in Alberta serving over 2,700 families and employing over 300 staff.

In May 1994, the Alberta Legislature passed Bill 19, the *School Amendment Act* which authorized the creation of charter schools in Alberta. Foundations for the Future Charter Academy applied for and received approval to operate as a Charter School from March 20, 1997 to June 30, 2002 from Gary G. Mar, Minister of Education. This approval was further extended until June 30, 2007 by Dr. Lyle Oberg, Minister of Learning, and subsequently extended until June 30, 2012 by Gene Zwozdesky, Minister of Education. On March 1, 2012, Foundations for the Future Charter Academy was approved for one of Alberta's first fifteen-year charters.

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy's charter is based on a direct instruction approach. Direct instruction uses a teacher-directed method. Foundations for the Future Charter Academy's direct instruction approach is supported through a focus on foundational competencies, literacy and numeracy competencies, character and leadership development, educational technology, and academic excellence. Their direct instruction pedagogy is guided by the Foundations for the Future Charter Academy Framework for Teaching and Learning.

Foundations For the Future Charter Academy is in the 12th year of their current 15-year charter. The current charter will expire on August 31, 2027.

Student Enrolment

The following is Foundations for the Future Charter Academy's student enrolment for the past 12 years since their last charter renewal.

	School Year											
Grade	**2012 2013**	**2013 2014**	**2014 2015**	**2015 2016**	**2016 2017**	**2017 2018**	**2018 2019**	**2019 2020**	**2020 2021**	**2021 2022**	**2022 2023**	**2023 2024**
Early Childhood Services	299	301	303	304	306	307	311	355	311	310	309	309
1	303	305	310	310	306	311	310	312	354	310	310	308
2	302	305	304	309	310	311	310	309	309	353	312	309
3	297	304	305	304	302	303	307	309	307	313	351	311
4	282	284	295	290	292	291	297	303	306	303	303	364
5	283	283	292	291	287	291	290	297	308	308	307	308
6	277	281	286	290	290	291	291	297	307	308	308	308
7	262	263	280	285	288	286	289	298	305	308	307	308
8	232	260	260	276	278	285	286	297	308	306	308	308
9	222	216	245	243	272	269	256	259	268	314	307	299
10	172	192	179	207	190	230	213	226	222	208	261	243
11	136	156	174	143	176	162	196	209	195	196	184	228
12	120	128	146	165	153	169	162	192	198	188	189	169
Total	3,187	3,278	3,379	3,417	3,450	3,306	3,518	3,663	3,698	3,725	3,756	3,772

(Source: Student Population Analysis Interface, Alberta Data Catalogue, Alberta Education – January 10, 2024)

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy provides half-day kindergarten programming.

In 2023, Foundations for the Future Charter Academy reported, 2.5 per cent of their students are foreign-born English as an Additional Language students, 19 per cent are Canadian-born English as an Additional Language students, and 40 per cent of the student population speaks a language other than English at home (over thirty languages from around the world).

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy reported to Alberta Education, in 2023, they have a waiting list of over 15,000 students. The long-term growth vision of the charter authority is to expand to 6,000 students.

Facilities

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy currently operates eight school sites.

Name of School	Capacity	Enrolment (F.T.E. - Full Time Equivalence)	Utilization Rate
North High School Campus	632	458	72.5%
North Middle School Campus	580	560	96.6%
Northeast Elementary Campus	433	378	87.3%
Northwest Elementary Campus	270	259	95.9%
South High School Campus	526	481	91.4%
South Middle School Campus	699	672	96.1%
Southeast Elementary Campus	510	379	74.3%
Southwest Elementary Campus	577	433	75.0%

The overall utilization rate for Foundations for the Future Charter Academy is 85.6 per cent.

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy's newly constructed North High School will be open in September 2024 and will have a capacity of 1,000 students. The current North High School is in the final stages of demolition.

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy is pursuing opportunities to expand their enrolment and acquire additional facilities in Calgary. They are working with Alberta Education, through Capital Planning to explore and acquire potential facilities and sites.

Staff

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy employs 311 individuals.

Current staffing (FTE – Full Time Equivalent) as of January 15, 2024 is:

- Superintendent – 1. 0 FTE
- Deputy Superintendent – 1. 0 FTE
- Secretary Treasurer – 1.0 FTE
- Administrators – 19.0 FTE
- Teachers – 206.0 FTE
- Educational Assistant – 10.11 FTE
- English as an Additional Language Assistants – 9.17 FTE
- Library Technicians – 5.7 FTE
- Counselors – 8.0 FTE
- Administrative Assistants – 7.19 FTE
- Campus Secretaries – 8.51 FTE
- Custodians – 11.38 FTE (contracted services are used at some campuses)

The above information was provided from Foundations for the Future Charter Academy.

Mission

To provide a safe and caring environment where academic excellence, character development, and staff leadership are valued and fostered.

Vision

Excellence in student achievement and character development through distinctive teaching and learning.

Charter Goals and Outcomes

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy charter goals and outcomes.

Goals:

In order to provide a highly engaging and positive learning experience for all students, Foundations for the Future Charter Academy will:

1. Provide a consistent and coherent learning experience for students from Kindergarten to Grade 12.
2. Develop essential understandings of character that will help students to think critically, care deeply, and act ethically.
3. Engage parents as partners in the educational experience of students.
4. Foster staff leadership.

Outcomes:

1. Students will achieve academic success in relation to the core knowledge and skills presented in the Alberta Programs of Study.
2. A high percentage of parents, staff, and students will be satisfied with the overall educational experience provided by Foundations for the Future Charter Academy.
3. Opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate an understanding of character will be maximized.
4. A high percentage of staff will be satisfied with their leadership opportunities.

Key Charter Elements

Direct Instruction

Direct instruction, a methodology that is based on a teacher directed instructional pedagogy, is a pillar of the Foundations for the Future Charter Academy's Charter. The Foundations for the Future Charter Academy Framework for Teaching and Learning is a guiding document in their direct instruction approach.

Character and Leadership Education

The Foundations for the Future Charter Academy's character vision is to foster sustainable communities that are caring and ethical. The character and leadership education mission are to prepare students to be ethically engaged citizens who care deeply, think critically, and act courageously. Core virtues at Foundations for the Future Charter Academy are respect, responsibility, compassion, self-discipline, and integrity. This key charter element is guided by the Foundations for the Future Academy Character Education Program of Studies.

Educational Technology

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy believes their role includes teaching students how to be responsible in handling their interactions with digital tools and technology. Digital citizenship helps Foundation for the Future Charter Academy students to navigate the digital world more effectively. The Nine Elements of Digital Citizenship are used to guide staff and students in using technology responsibly.

Active Living and Physical Education

Active living and physical education are highly regarded and required for all students at Foundations for the Future Charter Academy. Opportunities are provided for students through the physical education curriculum, extracurricular activities, teams, and clubs to enhance their mental and physical wellbeing through exercise and fitness activities.

Homework

There is an expectation from teachers that all students do work at home outside of school hours on a regular basis for practice and to enhance their learning. This expectation is designed to further develop foundational knowledge, skills, and work habits.

Terms of Reference

The *Charter Schools Regulation* requires that all charter authorities in the province be evaluated at least once in the term of their charter. There are several purposes for the evaluation of a charter authority:

- To provide evidence to the Minister and the board that the charter authority is in compliance with provincial requirements and the requirements of the charter, inclusive of charter amendments, approved by the Minister.
- To report to staff, parents, and the community on the success of the charter authority and to identify areas of strength and areas that may require additional attention.

- To focus the attention of the board and staff on the goals and objectives of the charter and the need to establish and confirm measurable outcomes and measures.
- To facilitate continuous improvement in the charter authority consistent with the assurance requirements of the Ministry and with the local direction established by the charter authority community and authorized by the board of directors.

The criteria by which the charter authority is evaluated are:

1. The charter authority meets the terms and conditions of its charter and has performance measures that show clear evidence of success.
2. The charter authority operates in a manner consistent with all applicable provincial requirements.
3. The charter authority is governed effectively.
4. The charter authority is administered effectively.
5. The charter authority is financially viable and responsible.
6. The students, parents, staff, school council(s), and community members consider the school program to be successful.
7. Student success is determined in accordance with Ministerial Order (#028/2020).
8. The charter authority shares its innovative practices and learning outcomes with others in the educational community.
9. Student achievement is consistently strong or improving.
10. The charter authority exhibits in multiple ways ongoing commitment to engaging students, teachers, parents, and community members in a model of continuous improvement.
11. The charter authority works collaboratively with stakeholders and demonstrates broad and sustained levels of community engagement.
12. The charter authority uses research-informed practices to create innovative learning environments and improve student learning.

Evaluation Process

The findings of the evaluation were established using the following processes and activities:

1. The charter authority was asked to develop and submit to Alberta Education a self-evaluation report based on the 12 criteria named above (see Appendix page 18).
2. Alberta Education established a team of six individuals to review the self-evaluation report submitted by the charter authority and to determine appropriate school site evaluation processes.
3. During the two and a half day onsite meeting process with the Alberta Education five-member team, focus group sessions were established to provide opportunities

for the board, superintendent, principal, teachers and staff, students, and parents to share insights about the authority's successes and ideas about how the charter authority might become even more effective.

- Two focus group sessions with students were conducted.
- Interviews were conducted with the superintendent and secretary-treasurer.
- One focus group session with administrators was conducted.
- Two focus group sessions with teachers were conducted.
- Two focus group sessions with support staff were conducted.
- One focus group session with board members was conducted.
- Two focus group sessions with parents were conducted. These groups included representatives from the School Councils.

Focus group sessions with teachers, support staff, administrators, and parents were combined to include representation from elementary, middle, and high school.

4. Evaluation team members participated in classroom observations in randomly selected classrooms to observe instruction, the design of student learning activities, and student engagement. While debriefing these classroom observations, individual impromptu conversations were held with teachers and support staff.

II. EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS, COMMENDATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND REQUIRED CHANGES:

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

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy has clearly met the terms and conditions of its charter and has performance measures that show clear evidence of success. The charter authority has a relational focus with the learners to model and practice a character and personal leadership development process combined with the Direct Instruction Framework delivery model of the Alberta Programs of Study. The relationships between the students, staff, and parents are critical for their success and the quality of teamwork and communication has led to positive achievement. The focus on habit installation of appropriate character is developed with specific targets for grade groupings and modelled by staff.

Students, staff, parents, and the board can articulate the mission and vision of the charter and can readily describe the direct instruction approach. There is a shared understanding and appreciation of the charter and its' goals and outcomes by stakeholders.

The Alberta Education assurance measures have historically demonstrated exceptional achievement results for Foundations for the Future Charter Academy. The local survey measures used by the charter authority to quantify quality and levels of supports for optimal learning are consistent with the Alberta Education assurance measures and represent high levels of satisfaction from stakeholders.

Commendations:

- Stakeholders demonstrated a clear understanding of the charter and can articulate their understanding effectively.
- Evidence of commitment to and success in providing a welcoming, safe, and caring environment where achieving high levels of academic excellence, character and leadership education, parental partnership, and staff leadership are valued and fostered.
- There is strong support and encouragement of professional learning for staff at all levels, by the administration.

Recommendations:

- Continue development of the internal Foundations for the Future Charter Academy's Learner Profiles and Classroom Support Plan model that has been initiated.
- Refine strategies to increase informal leadership opportunities and development for staff.

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

Based on the findings and evidence, Foundations for the Future Charter Academy meets the provincial requirements of the Charter Schools Regulation (Alberta Regulation 85/2019) and the *Education Act*. The school follows the Alberta Programs of Study and provides access to the required amount of instructional time. Regular monitoring of the school by Alberta Education staff confirms its coherence with Ministry expectations. The school complies with Alberta Education planning, reporting, and funding requirements in providing timely information.

Commendations:

- Demonstrates a commitment to strong engagement, involvement, and active participation by stakeholders, including the board.
- Consistently demonstrates a high-quality standard for their reporting to Alberta Education and stakeholders, examples include their Education Plan and Annual Education Results Report.
- Dedication to a growth mindset through their willingness to work with Alberta Education staff to comply with all legislative requirements.
- Support for professional learning and alignment with the Teacher Quality Standard (TQS), Leadership Quality Standard (LQS), and Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS) requirements and expectations.

Recommendations:

- Continued development of documentation and reporting of individual student accommodations and supports through Learner Profiles and Classrooms Support Plans or other documents to support the transition of students (within or to outside the school – including into post-secondary).
- Continue to work closely with Alberta Education through Capital Planning to address facility solutions for expansion.
- Continue to expand partnerships and focus on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit teaching and learning.

3. The charter authority is governed effectively.

The board of Foundations for the Future Charter Academy is a dedicated group of individuals that continues to demonstrate its commitment to effective governance through their sound practices. There is a strong collaborative working relationship between the board and the charter authority administration. The board clearly delineates decision making of the board and school administration through the *Governance Through Engagement and Collaboration (G-TEC) policy.* The board has twenty policies, which they review on a five-year cycle.

The board has aligned its Society Bylaws with best practices in not-for-profit governance. The nine-member board has set three-year staggered election terms for

board members with director term limits of six consecutive years and nine years in total. Using the current Standing Committees (Executive, Governance, and Audit) helps ensure their effective oversight. The board does due diligence in informing interested board members in the role. Additionally, they provide a thorough governance orientation and require board members to complete a formal not-for-profit governance training course through the Institute of Corporate Directors for Canada.

To promote parental involvement, the board rotates through each of the campuses for their monthly meetings. They also have refined the process for electing board members to include a skills gap analysis for the board, information sessions, sharing of candidate profiles, holding a candidate forum to respond to parent questions, and providing candidate recommendations for each board election.

Commendations:

- Stakeholders described the board as being respected, open to input, accessible, and responsive to the needs and direction of the charter authority.
- Evidence of transparency and clear communication between all levels of the organization.
- There is a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, which appears to be understood by the board, superintendent, school administration, staff, and parents.

Recommendations:

- That the board continue to review their policies and administrative procedures to ensure alignment with current legislation and continue to ensure the clear delineation of roles and responsibilities of the board and administration.
- The board and administration create succession plans to address vacancies when long-serving staff, administration, or board members leave.

4. The charter authority is administered effectively.

The administration demonstrates a strong commitment to ensure effective operational procedures and practices are followed to meet their charter commitments. The Administration Council meets regularly with the senior leadership teams from each of the eight campuses. They focus on operational matters such as emergent issues, district and provincial updates, the Education Plan, and the Annual Education Results Report.

To facilitate professional learning, staff at each campus participate in a “Generative Dialogue process” every six weeks. These meetings focus on professional learning plans and address emergent teaching and learning issues staff want to discuss.

A mutually respectful working relationship was observed throughout the onsite observations and meetings during the charter evaluation process by the Alberta

Education Charter Evaluation Team between the administration and students, staff, and parents. Staff and parents expressed a high regard for the leadership at the school and system levels through their words and actions.

The superintendent, along with other school and system leaders, continue to model the merits of professional learning through their personal endeavours to complete doctoral and graduate studies degrees. This expectation of continuous personal and professional growth and development for staff is encouraged and supported throughout the charter authority.

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy has been challenged over the past few years to continue to provide learning in a safe manner during the COVID Pandemic and after a school fire that caused the relocation of students. They attribute their success in maintaining high academic achievement to the resiliency, adaptability, and effectiveness of their administrative practices, school leaders, and staff.

Commendations:

- Stakeholders expressed confidence and respect for the superintendent and administrative team.
- Parents and students expressed appreciation for the support they receive from school administration, teachers, and support staff.
- The willingness and ability of the administration to make difficult financial and staffing decisions to better meet the diverse and growing needs of their students.
- For the leadership and advocacy of the Superintendent and his administration in charter schools being eligible to receive Alberta Education Specialized Learning Support grant to support students with special needs.

5. The charter authority is fiscally viable and responsible.

Through a review of their financial reporting and on-site meetings, Foundations for the Future Charter Academy has demonstrated they are fiscally viable and responsible. They are committed to their vision, values, and culture by applying these principles to their fiscal management approach and practices. This is evident in their practice of retaining their previous Secretary Treasurer to ensure organizational knowledge is transferred to their new Secretary Treasurer before retirement. Foundations for the Future Charter Academy identified key personnel and relationships as important in their financial operations and in their desired goal to expand their school campuses and increase the number of students enrolled.

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy is to be commended on their approach to fiscal management by actively engaging their Board of Directors to be a part their fiscal management process. The creation of the Audit Committee is an example of this. The administration and board have established transparent and efficient financial reporting processes that continue to serve them well.

The last three years of financial audits shows that Foundations for the Future Charter Academy is managing its finances responsibly. The Accumulated Surplus from Operations shows an increase over the past four years; this indicates that they can alleviate immediate financial issues. Despite projecting small annual surpluses, Foundations for the Future Charter Academy tends to report much higher actuals for their annual surplus.

Foundations for the Futures Charter Academy's Budget Surplus (Deficit) Summary for the last four years is as follows:

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Actual Expenses	$34,955,110	$37,407,109	$39,027,008	$44,185,811
Budgeted Expenses	$37,686,993	$36,877,770	$38,167,294	$39,793,784
Accumulated Surplus (Deficit) From Operations*	$1,065,709	$1,479,794	$1,688,811	$1,631,168

*Excludes school generated funds

Commendations:

- The charter authority is commended for the responsible stewardship of its finances.
- Foundations for the Future Charter Academy's current enrolment and waiting list should be able to provide long term stability for funding based on enrolment.
- The charter authority is commended on achieving a clean financial audit from three independent audit firms over the past three fiscal years.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended a creative and innovative short term and long-term strategic plan, that is fiscally responsible, be developed to address future growth and expansion.
- It is recommended Foundations for the Future Charter Academy continue to work closely with Alberta Education Capital Planning and School Finance staff to address facility planning, lease costs, and desired expansion.

6. The students, parents, staff, school council(s), and community members consider the school to be successful.

Stakeholders highly regard and appreciate the successful program the charter authority is providing for students and the learning community. Students, parents, and staff see Foundations for the Future Charter Academy as successful. This

includes academic achievement, developing citizenship, life skills, work ethic and personal responsibilities.

Teachers, students, and parents stated Foundations for the Future Charter Academy is providing a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment for students, staff, and parents. Strong, supportive, respectful relationships between the students and staff members were observed by the evaluation team.

The most recent, October 2023, provincial survey results show that parents, teachers, and students feel that the school is successful. The October 2023 Alberta Education assurance measures indicated 93.0 per cent of their students achieve the Acceptable Standard on Provincial Achievement Tests and 42.5 per cent attain Excellence. On diploma exams, 90.2 per cent of their students achieved the Acceptable standard and 43.8 per cent achieved Excellence. In addition, the charter authority maintained extremely high results in both education quality (91.5 per cent) and citizenship (87.0 per cent).

Staff spoke about the rich and productive culture of the schools and that even though they have several campuses, the culture is similar in all schools. Administrators, teachers, and support staff stated they have high expectations of self, students, and parents. Stakeholders identified a caring family environment existing in their schools.

Students articulated the importance of being kind, respectful, and never giving up. Students said they appreciated the hard work of their teachers in making learning relevant, fun, and meaningful. Students stated they are proud to be part of Foundations for the Future Charter Academy.

Parents stated they appreciate the focus on character development at all grade levels and that Foundations for the Future Charter Academy prepares their children for their future. Parents described the school as having a strong sense of community, stating the school fosters independence in all students, and that the teachers lead by example. Parents also stated they are grateful their children are attending Foundations for the Future Charter Academy.

Commendations:

- Stakeholders highly regard and appreciate the successful program the charter authority is providing to students and the learning community.
- Strong relationships are evident between members of the school community.
- Staff work hard to get to know the students and families well and to tailor the education of students on a personal level, while achieving personal and academic success.

7. Student success is determined in accordance with Ministerial Order (#028/2020).

The charter for Foundations for the Future Charter Academy is aligned with the Ministerial Order on Student Learning. Character development is in the forefront of the school authority's charter and is understood by all stakeholder groups. The teaching model and support for learning demonstrates a commitment to knowledge acquisition of the Alberta Programs of Study. Foundations for the Future Charter Academy has embraced the foundation of the Ministerial Order in their focus on literacy and numeracy. The commitment of Foundations for the Future Charter Academy to this Ministerial Order is also evident in their approach to professional learning and development by teachers and the administration and through their efforts and success in engaging stakeholders.

Commendations:

- The character focus of the charter aligns directly to the Ministerial Order.
- Commend Foundations for the Future Charter Academy for being recognized by Ever-Active Schools for its quality programming for over 10 years.
- Foundations for the Future Charter Academy's current and longtime focus on literacy/numeracy as well as focusing on core knowledge development for all students.

8. The charter authority shares its innovative practices and learning outcomes with others in the education community.

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy is exemplary in their sharing of its innovative practices, teaching and learning outcomes, knowledge, and experience on a local, provincial, national, and international basis. This is evident in the numerous publications, presentations, and collaborative ventures in which they currently and historically have been involved.

The sharing of leadership development, governance, and educational practices among the charter school community and beyond by Foundations for the Future Charter academy is both valued and appreciated by their colleagues. Foundations for the Future Charter Academy's participation and leadership as contributing members of The Association of Alberta Public Charter School (TAAPCS) and with the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS), locally and provincially, is commendable.

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy has reached well beyond their walls into the international educational community, through doctoral work, research, and partnerships. Their research explores global competencies of teachers and students, the impact of diversity, and classroom pedagogy in their efforts to adopt innovative practices to improve learner outcomes. This work has taken staff to places that include New South Wales, China, and Thailand to explore innovative practices, learn and share their vast knowledge and experiences with others.

Commendations:

- Facilitating a strong community of practice and a culture of learning within and beyond the charter authority and community that fosters professional learning and sharing of best practices, research, pedagogy, and values that contribute to the continuous improvement of self and others.
- Willingness to engage in learning, sharing and partnership opportunities with other charter, public, and separate school authorities, locally and provincially.
- Willingness to share and cultivate leadership, wisdom, and knowledge within and beyond the charter authority and with the broader educational community.

9. Student achievement is consistently strong or improving.

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy students continue to achieve and maintain exceptionally strong academic results. In the 2022/23 school year, Foundations for the Future Charter Academy's graduating students were projected to earn over $487,000 in post-secondary scholarships, including the Rutherford Scholarship. The administration stated the personal and academic success students have achieved is largely attributed to the dedication, commitment, and passion of their staff and stakeholders in providing the best possible education for students.

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy's October 2023 Alberta Education assurance measure results indicate 93.0 per cent of their students achieved the Acceptable standard and 42.5 per cent of their students achieved Excellence, on the Provincial Achievement Tests. On diploma exams, 90.2 per cent of their students achieved the Acceptable standard and 43.8 per cent achieved Excellence.

Teachers reported using various strategic assessments to measure student growth and performance. Teachers said they feel it important to share results and assessments with students in a timely manner and on an ongoing basis to ensure they are aware of their strengths and areas of need. Common assessments are used across grade levels that support the rigor of their program. Staff stated they feel the direct instruction approach, foundational literacy, and numeracy skill development, and focus on critical thinking skills, is paramount to students personal and academic success.

Parents appreciate the school's commitment to parental involvement, indicating there are opportunities for them to be involved through volunteering and participating in classroom, school, and school system events and activities. Parents said they are pleased with the quantity and quality of feedback they receive about their child's progress at school. Parents stated this feedback includes meeting with teachers three times per year following reporting periods, character reports, direct emails from teachers, and regular reporting through Edsby and Powerschool.

Students referenced that they feel that teachers care about their success at school and that Character Education starts in kindergarten. Students said they felt they

could get help if they needed it and that they have access to supports they need to be successful at school. When students were asked if they would recommend their school to others, the resounding answer was “Yes.”

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy’s Teaching and Learning Pedagogical Framework has supported their vision of excellence for their students. Elements of this framework were evident upon classroom observations and conversations with staff and students who referred to “I do, You do, We do” as part of their direct instruction focus.

Commendations:

- Achieving and maintaining exceptionally strong academic results.
- The effective implementation of Foundations for the Future Charter Academy Teaching and Learning Pedagogical Framework to achieve quality results for students.
- On the high levels of communication that are maintained to inform student and parents of the personal growth, success, and academic achievement of students.
- Providing opportunities for staff to grow and learn through collaborative teamwork and through professional learning and development and the significant impact it is having on student success and achievement.

10. The charter authority exhibits in multiple ways ongoing commitment to engaging students, teachers, parents, and community members in a model of continuous improvement.

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy stakeholders are highly supportive of and expressed confidence in the school to ensure the best possible education for students. Staff and parents are familiar with the charter goals and are committed to the direct instruction teaching and learning approach, supported by a strong focus on foundational competencies, literacy and numeracy competencies, character and leadership development, and educational technology. Staff are committed to achieving the best possible results with all students, and teachers demonstrated that they could provide supports to ensure all students are successful. Teachers and principals were able to give numerous examples of how they are consistently reflecting on their practice and taking steps to improve.

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy continues to focus on improving an already effective communication plan and approach with parents and stakeholders. There are multiple strategies employed at the school and system level to engage stakeholders in their efforts to continuously improve. Parents are provided with regular and frequent updates on student success and academic progress (formally and informally), school events, initiatives, presentations, and activities.

The board is reflective of their role and responsibilities in ensuring they are supporting students, both in their personal growth and academically. Stakeholders expressed an appreciation of the support of the board and their role in the shared quest for continuous improvement.

Commendations:

- Developing and maintaining strong organizational relationships that promote a positive atmosphere and a powerful sense of community that stakeholders describe as “family.”
- Creating a culture of continuous improvement that is understood and practiced by students, staff, parents, and stakeholders.
- Developing and implementing an action plan approach to addressing areas of concern.

Recommendation:

- Continue to pursue partnerships, involvement and support of the community and business partners.

11. The charter authority works collaboratively with stakeholders and demonstrates broad and sustained levels of community engagement.

The COVID Pandemic had a significant impact on community engagement. A shift to online communication was a necessity, and it shaped the way engagement took place. The administration stated they will continue to implement online communication but look forward to more face-to-face interaction in the community and at school with stakeholders, moving forward.

Stakeholders stated they are satisfied with the level of engagement with the charter authority. Staff spoke highly of the collaborative environment at Foundations for the Future Charter Academy, where they feel their input is valued and appreciated. Parents stated they feel valued and respected, with opportunities to receive and share information and perspectives at school, and through school council and public meetings of the board. The charter authority features information sessions for stakeholders on topic of interest and to better inform them.

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy provides students with opportunities to participate in extracurricular clubs, activities, and teams. These activities take students beyond the walls of their school to participate in the community and in other schools in the region.

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy continues to educate their communities about the values and purpose of charter schools. They are engaged in developing community and relationships through community service projects and events, partnerships with post-secondary institutions, and through hosting local municipal

and provincial leaders and community members at school events. Foundations for the Future Charter Academy has been engaged in consultation with the Montgomery Community Association as they prepare to open the new North High School in 2024, in the Montgomery community.

Commendations:

- Developing and maintaining a high degree of stakeholder engagement, building on a mutually respected and valued relationship.
- Creating meaningful opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback and ask questions at the school, system, and board levels.
- Being accepted into the Canadian Association of Public Schools – International, with the recommendation and support of school authorities, such as Golden Hills, Palliser, and Canadian Rockies School Divisions.

Recommendation:

- Continue to develop and seek opportunities for community engagement with First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities and organizations that can increase staff knowledge of history, traditions, and protocols that can be incorporated into school programming.

12. The charter authority uses research-informed practices to create innovative learning environments and improve student learning.

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy models the expectation that charter schools conduct research to evaluate innovative and unique aspects of their charter. Their engagement and participation in partnerships with various post-secondary institutions to further investigate theory and practice to improve student learning is evidence of their strong commitment to this charter obligation. Further evidence of this practice is demonstrated in the joint research projects, professional learning, collaborations, and leadership they have provided while working with The Alberta Association of Public Charter Schools (TAAPCS), the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS), public, separate, and independent school authorities, as well as other charter authorities.

The strong focus on teacher professional practice to improve student learning has been shared at local, provincial, national, and international conferences and in publications through and with leading educational professors such Dr. Hetty Roessingh (University of Calgary) and Dr. Marilyn Chasling (Southern Cross University, New South Wales). Foundations for the Future Charter Academy continues to be a leader in creating innovative learning environments in their pursuit to improve student learning.

Superintendent, Dr. Roger Nippard, is well respected in the educational field for his many contributions to the education community locally, nationally, and internationally through his studies and for his willingness to share his leadership and knowledge on

research based effective teacher professional practices. Through the efforts of Dr. Roger Nippard and his team, Foundations for the Future Charter Academy continues to be a leader in enhancing their teaching practices and in supporting provincial partners to strengthen the charter school landscape provincially and beyond.

Commendations:

- The collaborative spirit of the superintendent and his team to working with and assist other charter schools and school divisions.
- The willingness to engage in partnerships with various post-secondary institutions to further investigate theory and practice to improve student learning.
- The pursuit of higher education is supported by the administration and is reflected in the numbers of staff that have or are completing Master and doctoral degrees.

Recommendations:

- Continue to encourage staff to engage in action-research and to record observations, data, and evidence of the successes of implementing promising practices that lead to student growth and success.
- Continue to seek opportunities to present the numerous exemplary high yielding teaching practices being used at Foundations for the Future Charter Academy and continue to collaborate with post-secondary and school division partners for sharing and learning purposes.

Conclusion

As a result of the evidence provided and demonstrated in our evaluation process, the Alberta Education Evaluation Team is confident that Foundations for the Future Charter Academy is meeting the requirements of legislation and regulations for charter schools. All twelve evaluation criteria and associated quality indicators have been met as reflected in the commendations and recommendations identified in the body of this report. There were no required changes emerging from the evaluation. As Foundations for the Future Charter Academy moves forward in its endeavour to provide the best possible education for students, it is encouraged to celebrate its successes, while implementing the recommendations provided by the Alberta Education Evaluation Team.

The Alberta Education Evaluation Team extends its sincere thanks to the board, administration, staff, students, and parents for their time, perspectives, insights, and hospitality.

APPENDIX
FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE CHARTER ACADEMY SCHOOL'S SELF-EVALUATION NOVEMBER 7, 2023

Foundations for the
Future Charter Acader

FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE CHARTER ACADEMY

CHARTER AUTHORITY SELF-EVALUATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW **1**

INDICATOR 1 ..... **2**

EVIDENCE AND STRATEGIES: CHARACTER AND LEADERSHIP EDUCATION 2
REFLECTION: CHARACTER AND LEADERSHIP EDUCATION 2
EVIDENCE AND STRATEGIES: PARENTAL PARTNERSHIP 2
REFLECTION: PARENTAL PARTNERSHIP 3
EVIDENCE AND STRATEGIES: STAFF LEADERSHIP 3
REFLECTION: STAFF LEADERSHIP 4

INDICATOR 2 ..... **4**

EVIDENCE AND STRATEGIES *4*
REFLECTION *5*

INDICATOR 3 ..... **5**

EVIDENCE AND STRATEGIES *5*
REFLECTION *5*

INDICATOR 4 ..... **6**

EVIDENCE AND STRATEGIES *6*
REFLECTION *7*

INDICATOR 5 ..... **7**

EVIDENCE AND STRATEGIES *7*
REFLECTION *8*

INDICATOR 6 ..... **8**

EVIDENCE AND STRATEGIES *8*
REFLECTION *8*

INDICATOR 7 ..... **9**

EVIDENCE AND STRATEGIES *9*
REFLECTION *9*

INDICATOR 8 ..... **10**

EVIDENCE AND STRATEGIES *10*
REFLECTION *11*

INDICATOR 9 ..... **11**

EVIDENCE AND STRATEGIES *11*
REFLECTION *12*

INDICATOR 10 ..... **12**

EVIDENCE AND STRATEGIES *12*
REFLECTION *12*

INDICATOR 11 ..... **13**

EVIDENCE AND STRATEGIES *13*
REFLECTION *13*

INDICATOR 12 ..... **14**

EVIDENCE AND STRATEGIES *14*
REFLECTION *14*

CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW

In preparing this self-reflection, we reviewed the provincial data, where possible, in the 2012-13 and subsequent Accountability Pillar/Assurance data, Foundations for the Future Charter Academy (FFCA) Three-Year Educational plans, Annual Educational Results Reports and board/superintendent performance reviews. For local measures, we relied on longitudinal Schollie Report data over the Charter's term. The methodology has changed over the years, and the charter term averages for these local measures may start in 2014 or 2018.

On March 1, 2012, FFCA was approved for one of Alberta's first fifteen (15) year charters. In the 2012-13 school year, the FFCA enrolment of 3044 students was distributed across seven (7) campuses in Calgary. The FFCA charter pedagogical emphasis on more explicit teacher-led instruction through the FFCA Framework for Teaching and Learning; a structured approach to the Foundational Competencies of literacy and numeracy; and success of the school in the foci of the Charter – academic excellence, character, staff leadership and parental involvement – led to a growing demand as evidenced by the 2012 waitlist of over 6000 children/students.

Our ethos of care and continuous improvement in student success, as evidenced by the Alberta Education Accountability and Assurance Measures, triangulated by parent "word-of-mouth" stories and independent third-party assessments, has led to significant growth in the FFCA student population to 3787 across eight (8) campuses over the past twelve (12) years. In 2012, admission to FFCA was determined on a "first-come/first-served" basis, with new parents often signing up their newborn while still in the hospital delivery room; this system essentially gave priority to babies born earlier in the year. We noticed that children born in August and September, five years before their kindergarten year, were often too far down the waitlist to be offered a seat. To align with the proposed language in the new Education Act of a more inclusive education system as well as give all children an opportunity to enroll, in 2012, FFCA removed any student description from the Charter and, in 2016, instituted a lottery process for admission. With these changes, the lottery waitlist has further expanded to 15,149. Although admission to FFCA is now a possibility for all Calgary families, enrolment remains significantly constrained by a lack of access to capital facilities.

While FFCA appeals to a broad demographic, the demand for structured FFCA programming is especially high amongst Canada's newest Canadians. Consequently, FFCA serves a significant number of Calgary's recent immigrant population. FFCA has evolved from a culturally homogenous school to one that serves an increasingly culturally diverse population. In 2023, 2.5% of our students are foreign-born English as an Additional Language (EAL) students, 19% are Canadian-born EAL students, and 40% of the student population speaks a language other than English at home (over 30 languages from around the world).

In summary, we trust that the objective longitudinal metrics reviewed through this evaluation and charter review process, when combined with the subjective experiences of the Alberta Education External Review team members during their on-site interactions with our students, staff, and parents, will support our contention that FFCA is one of Alberta's greatest educational success stories. We hope the data collected will lead to a recommendation for charter renewal. After 27 years of successful operation, we are optimistic that this evaluation will position both Alberta Education and FFCA to jointly leverage the reputational excellence of both entities to explore the next iteration of charter renewal, namely a non-specific term or continuous Charter as contemplated under Section 25(3) of the Education Act.

INDICATOR 1 ***The authority meets the terms and conditions of its Charter and has performance measures that show clear evidence of success. [7(3)(a)]***

Four key elements in the FFCA mission statement define our identity and impact our culture: **Academic Excellence**, **Character and Leadership Education, Parental Partnership,** and **Staff Leadership**.

Essential to the core of how we approach teaching and learning, evidence of success in applying these elements to our work spans the history of our existence. Academic Excellence, the first of these elements, is discussed more deeply in Indicator 9. To move directly to Indicator 9, click here. The other three key elements of our mission statement are discussed below.

Evidence and Strategies: *Character and Leadership Education*

Provincial Measures	FFCA 2012	Charter Term Average	FFCA 2023	AB 2023	FFCA Achievement Evaluation
The percentage of teachers, parents, and students who agree or strongly agree that students are safe at school, learning the importance of caring for others, learning respect for others, and are treated fairly at school.	91.8%	91.3%	90.2%	79.1%	Very High
Overall, teacher, parent, and student agreement that students model the characteristics of active citizenship.	86.9%	87.8%	87.0%	80.3%	Very High

Local Measures

Schollie survey data indicates that the average over the current charter term (Charter Term Average) for students who agree or strongly agree that their campus provides opportunities to develop character and leadership is 92.2%. 90.8% of staff and parents are very satisfied or satisfied with activities provided by the campus that promote ethically engaged citizenship through service learning (i.e., volunteerism, community contributions, etc.). Finally, 90.2% of staff, students and parents are very satisfied or satisfied with their knowledge about the elements of digital citizenship.

Strategies include FFCA developing a K-12 Character and Leadership Program of Studies, providing an intentional scope and sequence for explicit and embedded character and leadership education. Several board-approved, locally developed courses support character and leadership education, including Life Choices & Leadership (gr 5-9), Leadership with Character (gr 9), and Leadership with Character 15, 25, & 35 based on selected CTS Modules with a leadership focus (gr 10-12).

FFCA includes character comments in its summative reporting to parents K-12. The process for generating those comments includes a self-reflection component and teacher feedback on the current focus of instruction.

Digital Citizenship is a significant focus within character education. FFCA presented at many conferences in Canada and the United States, such as the Future of Education Technology (FETC) from 2013 to 2016.

Reflection: *Character and Leadership Education*

Character development is infused into FFCA's culture (K-12). It is modelled, referenced, and explored in all subject areas. As our students mature, leadership education extends the learning at the elementary level and challenges students to develop skills and attitudes that will serve themselves and their communities well. From K-12, there is an intentional focus on service to our schools and communities, as evidenced by a review of each campus's monthly newsletters.

Evidence and Strategies: *Parental Partnership*

Provincial Measures	FFCA 2012	Charter Term Average	FFCA 2023	AB 2023	FFCA Achievement Evaluation
Teachers and parents satisfied with parental involvement in decisions about their child's education.	90.1%	87.7%	86.3%	79.1%	Very High

Local Measures

Schollie survey data indicates that the average over the current charter term (Charter Term Average) for parents who are very satisfied or satisfied with the opportunities they have to be involved within their school community is 95.5%.

Additional evidence includes FFCA's waitlist (currently 15,149) size resulting from the compelling voice FFCA parents exercise in the community and the consistent demand for our programming. FFCA parents volunteer thousands of hours yearly. 3,537 hours were voluntarily reported in 2022-2023 as campuses re-opened following COVID restrictions. Parents serve in various roles, including room parents and on ad hoc special projects such as graduation committees and our 25th Anniversary celebration at Heritage Park on June 4, 2022.

FFCA has active School Councils and parental fundraising committees at all eight campuses and an active Association of School Councils. The Board of Directors is also mainly comprised of parents; at least seven of the nine members must be parents.

Reflection: *Parental Partnership*

Parental partnership has been a core value at FFCA since its first Charter in 1997. Parents have always been welcome and present in our schools. There are very few days when parents are not contributing in some way, whether on-site or off. Parent involvement opportunities have adapted to school needs over time. Our parents have consistently embraced the opportunities presented and volunteered their individual time and talents to enrich the educational experience for their children. In 2017, FFCA formalized expectations by adopting Policy 18 - Parental Partnership, which differentiates between basic and extended forms of parental involvement.

Parental Partnership at FFCA is grounded in an ongoing dialogue between teachers and parents. Beginning with Family Orientation Conferences in the fall and facilitated by Edsby, email, monthly newsletters, etc., communication is transparent, proactive, and responsive. Administrators appreciate parents bringing them ideas and concerns in an open, productive partnership. As we embraced technology more fully in response to the need for online learning, parents expressed appreciation for their expanded ability to participate beyond their child's classroom in opportunities such as online school council and board meetings.

We continue to look for ways to involve our parent community more fully in their child's school and to celebrate the diversity of FFCA's student population to create inclusive, safe, welcoming communities for students and their families.

Evidence and Strategies: *Staff Leadership*

Local Measures

Schollie survey data indicates that the average over the current charter term for staff who are very satisfied or satisfied with their opportunities to take on leadership roles that promote ethical citizenship is 89.6%.

FFCA evidence includes that over the past five years, FFCA certificated staff attrition numbers have averaged 1.9%. This measure reflects our teaching staff's satisfaction with FFCA and being a valued member of this organization. As a result of the system's focus on developing staff leadership and lack of staff attrition, internal candidates fill most internal staff leadership opportunities. Nineteen of twenty-one school-based and Central Office senior educational administrators come from FFCA as teachers.

FFCA strategies include a long tradition of staff leadership in refining our teaching pedagogy (FFCA Framework for Teaching and Learning) and developing curricular materials. Instructional coaches, mentors, and working group members of jurisdictional or provincial committees are just some of the leadership roles FFCA teachers assume, along with their generous contributions of time and talent to coaching, productions, service projects and community events.

FFCA has always engaged staff in reflecting on refining curricular resources, creating core instructional documents and common grade-level summative assessments. The following is just a current sample of work that is being done in this area:

New Science Curriculum Working Group (K-4)	Grades 5 – 8 Leadership Working Group	Grades 5 and 6 New ELAL and Math Curriculum Collaboration Groups	Grades K-4 Basic Facts Working Group
20 teachers involved	*16 teachers involved*	*12 teachers involved*	*20 teachers involved*

FFCA is committed to building the leadership capacity of FFCA administrators through participation in learning experiences such as a 5-part leadership series with Judy Riege sponsored by the TAAPCS Leadership Network, which focuses on relational leadership. Through networking in this type of professional development, FFCA administration can learn and support the building leadership capacity across TAAPCS (The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools).

Reflection: *Staff Leadership*

With limited opportunities for formal leadership between our 8 campuses, we have more teachers interested in leadership roles than we can accommodate. This makes the active involvement of staff in the educational milieu essential in retaining talented staff. FFCA is financially committed to supporting current administrators holding their Leadership Quality Standards certification in acquiring their Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard certification.

One challenge that FFCA faced in this area is that COVID–19 limited or changed leadership structures (e.g., cross-campus working groups) that we used regularly in the past due to our intentional prioritizing of staff and student physical and mental health. Due to the intense and urgent collaborative learning to maintain our focus on teaching and learning, leadership intentionally limited work on other identified priorities during those challenging and uncertain times. Many of our staff took on new leadership opportunities by taking on an online teaching role, which FFCA had never offered prior to the pandemic. Being impacted by the pandemic was unavoidable, but our clear vision, collaborative culture and determined dedication supported the organization and the students it serves.

INDICATOR 2 ***The authority operates in a manner consistent with all applicable provincial requirements. [7(3)(b)]***

Local Measures

Evidence and Strategies

FFCA adheres to all provincial requirements. Examples include:

All Annual Education Results Reports, 3-Year Educational Plans, Three-Year Capital Plans and annual budgets are collaboratively developed, circulated to stakeholders, Board-approved, and posted on our website in compliance with provincial timelines and ministerial requirements.	Compliance with Employment Standards and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation. The latter includes a designated OHS Officer and Workplace Safety Committee. OHS training modules are completed by staff using the PublicSchoolWORKS interface.	The Chief Operations Officer (COO) serves as the designated FFCA Attendance Officer.	Designated Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection (FOIPP) Head (Superintendent) and Officer (HR Officer). All FOIPP requests have been dealt with in compliance with legislation, and all Commissioner rulings have been in FFCA's favour.
FFCA is organized under the Societies Act and compliant with that legislation. Bylaws are regularly reviewed to align with best practices in not-for-profit governance. Current Bylaws were approved by the Societies registrar in June 2023.	All FFCA teachers, administrations and central office leadership team members have completed the applicable TQS, LQS and SLQS certification requirements. All central office team members are active CASS members and compliant with the certification requirements outlined in the CASS Act.	Qualifications for Proposals or Requests for Proposals are issued when required for all FFCA major purchases, including facility projects in compliance with provincial tendering procedures and the New West Partnership Trade Agreement. Legal opinions are sought when such purchases may meet the exceptions clause of the agreement.	Compliant with the requirements of the Alberta Human Rights legislation. All (two) complaints heard by the Commission have resulted in rulings in favour of FFCA.

Reflection

Over the charter term, FFCA has complied with all provincial reporting requirements with no knowledge of exceptions. Three-year education plans, AERRs, annual budgets and capital plans have all been developed and submitted respecting provincial requirements and timelines. In instances where litigation has been filed or complaints to the provincial Commissioners (Human Rights, FOIPP), all rulings have been in FFCA's favour. No complaints have been filed under the Practice Review Regulation or the more recent Alberta Teaching Profession Commission. FFCA has also been able to appropriately deal with complaints to the Minister referred to us by ministerial staff with no appeals to the Minister during the Charter term.

Internally, all provincial external documents, such as Alberta Education Monitoring Reports, and all internal departmental reports are shared with the Board through Superintendent reports at regular public board meetings. All required reports are specified and scheduled in the joint Board and central administration work plan, updated annually.

Overall, this indicator of organizational management is reflected upon annually through the Board and Superintendent performance reviews. Over the Charter term, stakeholders consistently rated this indicator as exceeding expectations.

INDICATOR 3 ***The charter authority is governed effectively. [7(3)(a) and (c)]***

Local Measures

Evidence and Strategies

The Schollie survey charter term average indicates that 93.5% of FFCA parents and staff are very satisfied or satisfied with the leadership that the FFCA Board of Directors demonstrates. In addition, 93.3% of parents and staff are very satisfied or satisfied with how the FFCA Board of Directors keeps them informed about the work of the Board.

Additional evidence includes the Board completing annual comprehensive Board and Superintendent evaluations. Board goals/priorities are on board agendas. Board motions are reviewed annually to ensure that they are governance and oversight-focused and followed through on by administration.

The CASS SLQS Supporting Effective Governance competency module was originally written by the FFCA Superintendent and, for the first three years, delivered by the Superintendent and FFCA Board Chair at the CASS Summer conference.

Strategies included in 2015, the Board adopted the G-TEC (Governance Through Engagement and Collaboration) policy model for governance to clearly delineate the decisions to be made by the Board, with the remainder delegated to administration. The Board has twenty policies on a five-year review cycle. The Board Governance Committee provides a policy update at each regularly scheduled board meeting, and the Superintendent provides an update, for information purposes only, at each Admin Council meeting. Changes to administrative procedures are provided to the Board as a standing item, for information purposes only, at each regular public board meeting.

FFCA has worked with governance experts, including Terry Gunderson, Dr. Keith Seel, and Becky Kallal and engaged with legal counsel to review and align Bylaws and Board policies and adopt best practices in not-for-profit governance. Practices adopted include - term limits for board members, alternating three-year terms, a skills matrix to identify gaps in board composition, and a requirement for board members to complete formal not-for-profit governance training courses annually through the Institute of Corporate Directors for Canada.

Internally, Policy 4 - Role of the Director is currently in second reading with revisions highlighting the Board's governance and oversight role. The Board governs through its Standing and Ad Hoc committee structure, which has evolved to its current Executive, Governance and Audit Standing Committees.

Reflection

Several notable achievements have characterized the effective governance of FFCA. FFCA has successfully advocated for Specialized Learning Support funding and the construction of a new high school. The Board's dedication is further evident through their annual "Board Crawls," during which they visit all campuses, fostering direct engagement with the

educational community. The recent development of a comprehensive strategic plan has laid the foundation for FFCA's continued growth and success. To enhance parental involvement and comfort, FFCA has taken the initiative to hold board meetings at various campuses, reducing geographical barriers and promoting engagement.

Reinforcing their commitment to effective leadership, the Board has allocated one weekend each year for a retreat, during which they engage in team building and strategic planning, and another weekend to review both their performance and that of the Superintendent.

Furthermore, selecting Board members has evolved into a more rigorous election process. This includes an information session for prospective board members to understand their role, the sharing of candidate profiles, and a panel-style board forum where candidates respond to questions, which is recorded and live-streamed for the FFCA community. These advancements in governance underscore FFCA's dedication to transparency, community involvement, and effective leadership.

INDICATOR 4 ***The charter authority is administered effectively. [7(3)(a) and (c)]***

Evidence and Strategies

Provincial Measures	FFCA 2012	Charter Term Average	FFCA 2023	AB 2023	FFCA Achievement Evaluation
Teacher, parent, and student agreement that students are safe at school, learning the importance of caring for others, learning respect for others, and are treated fairly at school.	91.8%	91.3%	90.2%	87.5%	**Very High**

The 2023 Alberta Education Assurance Measure Results report provides an objective, insightful external overview of how FFCA is administered effectively. FFCA currently has achieved an Assurance rating of **Very High** on all achievement measures, **Maintained** in all but one improvement indicator and an overall **Excellent** rating on all the reported measures.

FFCA engages a third party for annual Board and Superintendent performance reviews. The review is based on ten role expectations and examines indicators of success across a broad spectrum of organizational metrics. The Board has concluded that FFCA administrators have exceeded all ten role expectations in all reviews. This alignment between external evaluations and internal assessments underscores FFCA's performance on this indicator.

Evidence also shows that FFCA is fiscally responsible and "lean" in its central office and board administration. In all years of the current Charter there has been a significant net transfer from the Board and System Administration grant to Instruction. For example, in the past two years, $209,432 and $237,431, respectively, have been transferred from the grant ranging from 1.5 - 1.7M.

Strategies include regularly scheduled Administration Council meetings of the senior leadership team and all campus-based administrators. These focus on emerging issues, district and provincial updates, 3-year education plan needs and feedback and approval of updated or newly created administrative procedures. Elementary, middle, and high school administrative teams also regularly collaborate on divisional priorities.

The administration commits two full days during the second half of the school year to engage in an Administration Retreat. These retreats have focused on strategic planning, FFCA's 3-year Education Plan development, distinctive features of FFCA and professional development in areas such as leadership development, managing change, inclusive education, First Nation/Metis/Inuit knowledge sharing, etc.

In 2016, FFCA instituted an Ad-Hoc Human Resources Standing Committee of Admin Council. Its mandate included coordinating the staffing process, dealing with anomalies, building HR capacity, and reviewing/updating admin procedures and the staffing handbook. Admin Council adopted its recommendations and informed current HR practices.

Since 2016, FFCA facilitates professional learning for certificated staff through the Generative Dialogue process. Learning the Leading sessions between the Superintendent and campus administrators are held every six weeks. These campus meetings focus on the administrative team's professional growth plans and any additional administrative concerns they wish to discuss. The Generative Dialogue approach, with its focus on *professional learning that is cyclical*, *exploratory*, *differentiated*, *responsibility-focused*, *collaborative*, *individualized*, *context-dependent*, *site-embedded*, *and shared between colleagues* (Adams, Mombourquette, Townsend, 2019. p.129) is also utilized as the administration works through each teacher's professional growth/learning plans.

Reflection

FFCA, guided by a culture of staff leadership development, has effectively administered its school division, fostering a remarkable tradition where campus administrators emerge from the ranks of our dedicated teachers. This commitment to leadership development is underscored by many of our educators pursuing Leadership Quality Standard certification as they aspire to advance in their careers. Over the past five years, we have witnessed the new appointment of 5 out of 8 Principal Educators and 5 out of 8 Associate Principals internally, a testament to our belief in nurturing talent from within while maintaining or improving high-performance standards.

During the turbulent period from 2019-20 to the current school year, FFCA confronted an array of unprecedented challenges. We successfully navigated a global pandemic, swiftly transitioning to online instruction despite our initial lack of experience in this domain. We grappled with the structural collapse of our single-site high school, necessitating the division of our student and teacher population into two separate sites, North and South high schools. A fire temporarily shut down the newly established South High School, compelling us to teach from Mount Royal University until the end of the 2022-23 school year. While other schools across Alberta faced similar administrative burdens due to COVID, the ability of FFCA to maintain high academic and assurance framework results speaks to the resilience, adaptability, and remarkable effectiveness of our administrative practices.

Whether supporting existing charter schools in their expansion or new charter schools approved since the recent Choice in Education Act, FFCA has stepped up to support key administrative needs. Other charters have sought guidance and support in technology, facility management, and administrative procedures, underscoring FFCA's widely recognized administrative effectiveness and leadership.

INDICATOR 5 ***The charter authority is fiscally viable and responsible. (7(3)(c))***

Evidence and Strategies

Evidence regarding this indicator includes FFCA's commitment to financial excellence demonstrated by receiving the ASBOA International Meritorious Budget Award for fifteen consecutive years. This prestigious international recognition highlights FFCA's dedication to preparing and issuing budgets of the highest quality. During the entire review period, FFCA has maintained an exemplary record by receiving clean audit reports from three audit firms. These reports consistently emphasize the absence of significant internal control weaknesses and verify compliance with all financial regulations. FFCA's fiscal management is both robust and resilient.

The Board is provided with regular quarterly financial results reports complete with financial forecasts. Through accurate reporting and forecasting, FFCA has consistently remained within the ministry's acceptable range (currently 4.29%) of operational reserves. The Board Audit Committee has historically provided oversight to the audit process and, in 2021, to implementing an Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Framework and Risk Register. The Register is reviewed semi-annually by the Audit Committee and annually by the corporate Board, with risk mitigation plans developed for the areas of greatest organizational risk (i.e., cybersecurity).

Furthermore, FFCA's financial prudence is evident in its successful mortgage approval in 2017 to purchase its Central Office building and maintenance shop. The building's cost efficiency, supported by lease revenue, contributed significantly to reduced operational costs. FFCA's proactive approach led to the early payoff of the mortgage upon renewal in July 2022 and further subsidization of instruction from board and system reserves.

In a significant development in 2023, FFCA secured its first school land ownership for the new North High School, marking a major milestone in the organization's growth and expansion.

By conducting regular Administrative Assistant meetings, strategies include ensuring that fiscal procedures are consistently adhered to across all campuses. This commitment to maintaining financial consistency reflects the organization's dedication to financial stewardship.

FFCA participates in the Public Purchasing Group to ensure that both contract services and purchasing are done consistently and responsibly. In 2022, FFCA completed a third-party contracted services review, demonstrating its continuous pursuit of excellence in its financial operations.

Reflection

FFCA's financial success stems from rigorous fiscal procedures and effective fiscal leadership, enabling the institution to meet immediate demands while strategically planning for long-term objectives. With a focus on improvement and growth, FFCA is preparing to implement a 10 to 20-year development plan upon charter renewal, aligning the expansion with timely funding from Alberta Education. This strategy is bolstered by Policy 15 - Managed Growth Plan, which outlines a systematic and research-driven approach. This policy emphasizes alignment with Charter and strategic priorities, responsible community programming access, efficient resource utilization, geographic balance, consideration of structural changes, alignment with capital plans, and offering multiple entry points into the school system. FFCA's financial acumen, underpinned by prudent planning and visionary leadership, has positioned the institution for sustained growth and continued excellence in education.

INDICATOR 6 ***The students, parents, staff, school council(s) and community members consider the school program to be successful. [7(3)(d)]***

Evidence and Strategies

Provincial Measures	FFCA 2012	Charter Term Average	FFCA 2023	AB 2023	FFCA Achievement Evaluation
The percentage of teachers, parents and students satisfied with the overall quality of basic education.	93.2%	92.9%	91.5%	88.1%	Very High
The percentage of teachers, parents and students satisfied with the opportunity for students to receive a broad program of studies, including fine arts, career, technology, and health and physical education.	79.8%	81.2%	77.8%	82.9%	Intermediate

Local Measures

The Schollie Charter Term Average indicates that 82.5% of students, parents and staff are very satisfied or satisfied with the opportunities students have to receive a broad program of studies, including fine arts, career, technology, and health and physical education.

Reflection

FFCA's Charter is academically focused, including mandatory leadership and physical education courses up to grade 12, and does not offer a broad program of studies beyond the academic stream. It does offer carefully selected opportunities in fine arts, technology, health, and physical education. Our focused programming is seen as high quality by all stakeholders.

A closer examination of the details indicates that teachers, parents, and students are generally satisfied with the opportunities to learn about the arts, drama, music, health, physical education, technology, and library services. There is dissatisfaction with opportunities to learn another language. FFCA currently offers mandatory language instruction (Spanish) in grades 7 & 8, while our high schools offer language instruction based on demand and fiscal viability. Dissatisfaction with language offerings is the primary downward driver in the overall indicator.
The splitting of the high school into two smaller populations with now more limited course offerings at both campuses exacerbates this reality and is also reflected in the teacher and student detail at that level.

INDICATOR 7 *Student success is determined in accordance with Ministerial Order (#028/2020). [7(3)(a) and (d)]*

Evidence and Strategies

Provincial Measures	FFCA 2023	AB 2023	FFCA Achievement Evaluation
PAT Acceptable Rate – Grade 6 English Language Arts	94.8%	76.2%	Very High
PAT Excellence Rate – Grade 6 English Language Arts	48.7%	18.4%	Very High
PAT Acceptable Rate – Grade 6 Mathematics	94.8%	65.4%	Very High
PAT Excellence Rate – Grade 6 Mathematics	54.9%	15.9%	Very High
PAT Acceptable Rate – Grade 9 English Language Arts	96.7%	71.4%	Very High
PAT Excellence Rate – Grade 9 English Language Arts	28.8%	13.4%	Very High
PAT Acceptable Rate – Grade 9 Mathematics	89.5%	54.4%	Very High
PAT Excellence Rate – Grade 9 Mathematics	34.3%	13.5%	Very High

FFCA's definition of student success and the charter aspirations for our students' futures are consistent with the **Vision for Learning** described in Ministerial Order (MO) (#023/2020). The MO identifies "literacy and numeracy as the **Foundations for Learning**. Historically, FFCA has always intentionally focused on developing these foundational competencies in our students, beginning in kindergarten. Our recent PAT (Provincial Achievement Testing) data confirms the continued effectiveness of our instruction in these areas, as 89.5% or more of our students achieve the acceptable standard on each exam, which is, on average, 27.1% higher than the provincial acceptance rate.

Additional evidence indicates that the **Outcomes for Learning**: knowledge development, character development and community engagement are supported in many ways. FFCA's coherent course development and lesson planning approach supports mastery of foundational, subject-specific content essential to a knowledge-rich learning experience. This robust learning is "reinforced, enriched and supplemented" (p.2) through its use of specialist teachers (K-12) in physical wellness and the fine arts. FFCA has been recognized by Ever-Active Schools for its quality programming for over ten years.

Reflection

One of our core strengths has been our ability to respond effectively to the mandates provided by Alberta Education. Recently, we strategically concentrated on enhancing core literacy and numeracy instruction to reinforce foundational competencies impacted by the pandemic. This intentional focus is evidence of our proactive approach to aligning our educational practices with the shifting needs of our students, emerging evidence, and the broader educational context.

We continue to grow, adapt to our students' needs, and review relevant research. In our recent three-year Annual Education Plan, we state our intention to revise our current FFCA Character Program of Studies to include some of the more recent global competency work in which FFCA has been involved. This acknowledgment underlines our commitment to ensuring our educational offerings remain effective in preparing students to develop the skills needed to solve problems, communicate effectively, and think critically in local, national, and global contexts.

FFCA has full-time Youth Development Counsellors (YDCs) at its elementary campuses and Family School Liaison Workers at the middle and high schools. We also have a central team of behavioural assistants deployed as needed. These individuals, along with additional contracted psychological services, provide a strong network to respond to our students' mental, physical, and emotional needs. Ministerial Order's focus on developing resilience, empathy, positive relationships, and good judgement as students learn to take personal responsibility for their own mental and physical health is well supported by our character education, leadership courses, mental health professionals and our long-standing emphasis on physical education.

INDICATOR 8 ***The charter authority shares its innovative practices and learning outcomes with others in the educational community. [7(3)(a) and 13]***

Evidence and Strategies

FFCA's evidence indicates that sharing innovative practices and learning outcomes with the broader educational community is a responsibility that the FFCA community values. We have participated in and shared a variety of research studies. In addition, FFCA continues to lead professional learning for colleagues, conduct research studies and pilot curriculum. An overview of some highlights over time include:

Publication; Study Participant: Journal of Sport and Health Science (2013) *The Effects of a 6-Week Exergaming Curriculum on Balance in 4th Graders*
In this study, a purposely built exergaming center in an elementary school was used to test fourth-grade students with a specially designed exergaming curriculum oriented toward improving postural stability.

Presenter: Director of Technology at Technology Conferences (2015)
Presented on innovative technology integration practices and digital citizenship at FFCA at the 2015 Connect Conference in Niagara Falls and 2015 CUE (Computer-Using Educators) conference in Palm Springs, among others

Presenter: Having a positive impact on schools: symposia series (2016) New South Wales
Roger Nippard, FFCA Superintendent, and 3 administrators addressed: "In what ways and to what extent does the purposeful implementation of a collaborative inquiry model of professional development affect professional growth of school leaders and ultimately improve student outcomes."

Hosted: New South Wales teacher delegations (2018-2019)
Delegations of teachers (18 in 2018, and 7 in 2019) visited Alberta to learn about best practices in generative dialogue and instruction. FFCA hosted two days of observation and dialogue at its elementary, middle, and high school campuses,

Publication: CASS Connections Magazine: Placing System learning at the Heart of System Leadership (Fall, 2018)
Co-written by Kurtis Leinweber, Dr. David Townsend and Dr. Marilyn Chasling, Southern Cross University, New South Wales. This article describes how some of FFCA's current system leadership structures, methods and processes help build current and future leadership capacity.

Research Participant: "Building, Supporting, and Assuring Quality Professional Practice: A Research Study of Teacher Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation in Alberta." (2018) University of Calgary
In 2017, Alberta Education requested a comprehensive research study to inform an update to the existing Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy (TBSE), and to identify associated requirements for the growth, supervision, and evaluation of principals and superintendents. The study was conducted and published by a team of researchers from three Alberta universities.

Doctoral Dissertation: Symonds, J. (2019). Global competency and international context at Aspiring Public Charter School (Doctoral Dissertation). Western University. Retrieved January 8, 2022.

Publication; Study Participant: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group (2019) *Gross Motor Competence and Peak Height Velocity in 10-14 Year-Olds*
A longitudinal research study involving FFCA evaluated gross motor competence and growth spurts in Canadian youth.
The aim of this study was to explore how the adolescent growth spurt affects gross motor competence in male and female youth. A further goal was to evaluate the development of gross motor competence in typically-developing Canadian youth who participate in a quality school PE program over a period of 5 years and to compare it to the North American normative scores for children of the same age and sex.

Publication: Study Participant: Scientific Research: Advances in Physical Education (2020)
Reducing the Object Control Skills Gender Gap in Elementary School Boys and Girls
Study aimed to understand the effect of a customized physical education (PE) program on object control skills (OCS) in third-grade female students and to compare their skills to their male counterparts.

Publication: Evoking Empathy Through Art and Humane Education (2020) Rebecca Carruthers, University of Victoria

Research Study: *Exploring Global Competence of Teachers & Students: Impact of Diversity, Classroom Pedagogies, & Teacher Professional Learning* (2021)
In 2018, we received a research grant from AB Education and partnered with U of Calgary, U of Alberta, Golden Hills School Division, and the International School of Macao on a formal research project. The most important findings from this study were the multiplicity of understandings of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values associated with global competencies, the need for global competency measures aligned with the Alberta curriculum, and the strength of professional learning when working on a curriculum tailored to the local context.

Curriculum Implementation Pilot Participant: ELAL Draft Curriculum, K-4 (2021) Science Gr. 1 (2021), Physical Education and Wellness (2021) K-4
FFCA intentionally piloted the ELAL draft curriculum in grades K-4 because of the curriculum's focus on fundamental literacy skills. In doing so, FFCA believed that we could support other teachers and districts within the province by sharing our approach and in providing robust experienced feedback as part of the curriculum piloting process. We piloted science and physical education and wellness on a smaller scale.

Doctoral Dissertation: Nippard, R. (2022). "*Analysis of the Global Competence Aptitude, Leadership Practice Standard(s) and Administrative Practices of K-12 Alberta System Education Leaders in the Strategic Implementation of Student Global Competence Programming."*

Publication: Study Participant: Nippard, (2022). *Global Competence Matters: An Analysis of System Education Leaders in Alberta, Canada* Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research in Asia. August 2022. Roger Nippard. A quantitative results paper based on his dissertation.

Publication: Study Participant: Nippard, (2022). *Leadership in Culturally Diverse Schools: The Administrative Practices of Canadian System Education Leaders Most Impactful in Student Global Competence Development*. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research in Asia.*

Facilitators: Health and Physical Education Council (HPEC), 10th Annual Physical Education Summer Symposium (2023)
During this symposium, FFCA PE specialist teachers facilitated sessions to share their and others' knowledge with teachers from various districts.

Strategies for this indicator have been more formal opportunities for sharing; FFCA is an ongoing active member in the College of Alberta School Superintendents and is engaged in provincial working committees for digital assessment, provincial assessments, and curriculum.

Finally, FFCA is pleased to support teachers learning about the FFCA approach to literacy instruction by welcoming work with schools such as Swanavon School in Grand Prairie.

Reflection

Continuous improvement is a prominent FFCA value; our commitment to work alongside scholars and education colleagues to understand and apply research and evidence-based practices supports us in continually honing our craft. Collaborative work with education partners across the province and internationally has enhanced FFCA's practices and supported provincial partners' work to strengthen Alberta's educational landscape.

INDICATOR 9 ***Student achievement is consistently strong or improving. (8(1)(a))***

Evidence and Strategies

Provincial Measures

Year	Measures	FFCA	Province	FFCA Achievement Evaluation
2014-2015	PAT Acceptable Rate (3-Year Average)	95.2%	73%	Very High
	PAT Excellence Rate (3-Year Average)	37.5%	18.8%	Very High
	Diploma Acceptable Rate (3-Year Average)	90.9%	85.2%	Very High
	Diploma Excellence Rate (3-Year Average)	32.6%	21%	Very High
	Diploma Participation Rate - 4+ Exams (3-Year Average)	87%	54.6%	Very High
	Rutherford Scholarship Eligibility Rate	83%	60.8%	Very High
	Drop-out Rate (3-Year Average)	0.4%	3.2%	Very High
2021-2022	PAT Acceptable Rate (3-Year Average)	94.1%	73.8%	Very High
	PAT Excellence Rate (3-Year Average)	42.0%	20.6%	Very High
	Diploma Acceptable Rate (3-Year Average)	92.7%	83.6%	Very High
	Diploma Excellence Rate (3-Year Average)	41.1%	24.0%	Very High
	Diploma Participation Rate - 4+ Exams (3-Year Average)	91.6%	56.6%	Very High
	Rutherford Scholarship Eligibility Rate (Rolling Average)	96.5%	70.2%	Very High
	Drop-out Rate (3-Year Average)	0.0%	2.3%	Very High
2022-2023	PAT Acceptable Rate	93%	63.3%	Very High
	PAT Excellence Rate	42.5%	16.0%	Very High
	Diploma Acceptable Rate	90.2%	80.3%	Very High
	Diploma Excellence Rate	43.8%	21.2%	Very High
	Diploma Participation Rate - 4+ Exams (3-Year Average)	93.4%	56.6%	Very High
	Rutherford Scholarship Eligibility Rate	96.8%	71.9%	Very High
	Drop-out Rate	0.0%	2.5%	Very High

Additional evidence includes the 2018 – 2019 Annual Education Report, where FFCA was ranked 5th in Alberta on the Fraser Institute's High School Report Card. Within Calgary, FFCA was ranked #1. Even more important than the overall ranking is that our current ranking reflects a 13-year record of continuous improvement since 2005, when we were ranked 223rd in the province.

In 2022 FFCA's graduating high school students were projected to earn over $487,000 in post-secondary scholarships, including the Rutherford Scholarship.

Reflection

The historical record at FFCA reflects our unwavering commitment to educational excellence and continuous improvement. The fact that FFCA has consistently outperformed provincial averages in all areas of provincial testing is a testament to our dedication and passion for providing the best possible education to our students.

The most notable achievement is the improvement we have witnessed in the "excellent" rate in the Provincial Achievement Tests (PAT) and Diploma exams during the current Charter. The provincial averages witnessed a considerable decline over the past year. However, FFCA's results remained steadfast and, in some instances, surpassed the 2021-2022 three-year average. This reflects the immense effort and hard work that FFCA has put into recovering from a series of impactful events. It is heartening to see that FFCA's success results from careful planning and an effective educational framework.

Our FFCA Teaching and Learning pedagogical framework has been pivotal in guiding our path to excellence. Over the term of the current Charter, we embarked on a journey of exploration and clarification, seeking to refine our approach to teaching and learning. Through thoughtful discussions and rigorous research, we honed our model to include a deep understanding of critical thinking skills and student engagement. Additionally, incorporating research in assessment and the principles of *Understanding by Design* have significantly influenced our current pedagogical approach.

As a system, FFCA has steadfastly committed to developing an understanding of how to best support students and improve instruction through standardized testing. We have evolved from using the Canadian Test of Basic Skills and Canadian Achievement Tests-3 to implementing literacy and numeracy screeners, even beyond the grades mandated by the province. The "Test of Silent Reading Efficiency and Comprehension (TOSREC)" for literacy and the Elk Island Catholic Schools Math Assessment for numeracy are now integral to our assessment practices. This data-driven approach is helping us understand the unique needs of our students, enabling us to provide both universal support and more targeted interventions where necessary.

Looking ahead, FFCA is committed to further enriching the educational experience for all learners. The complexity of student needs in our classrooms, as seen in all school districts, necessitates an exploration of research-supported methodologies. Concepts like *Universal Design for Learning* are currently under examination for integration into our FFCA Teaching and Learning Framework. This intentional approach has consistently supported the evolution of our pedagogical beliefs, sustained the excellent results that FFCA achieves, and, most importantly, supports all learners within the FFCA community.

INDICATOR 10 ***The charter authority is committed to engaging students, teachers, parents, and community members in a model of continuous improvement. [8(1)(b))***

Evidence and Strategies

Provincial Measures	FFCA 2012	Charter Term Average	FFCA 2023	AB 2023	FFCA Achievement Evaluation
Percentage of Teachers, parents and students indicating that their school and schools in their jurisdiction have improved or stayed the same the last three yrs.	84.2%	82.8%	74.6%	75.2%	**Very Low**
Percentage of teachers, parents and students satisfied with the opportunity for students to receive a broad program of studies, including fine arts, career, technology, and health and physical education.	79.8%	81.2%	77.8%	82.9%	**Intermediate**
Percentage of teachers, parents and students satisfied with the overall quality of basic education.	93.2%	92.9%	91.5%	88.1%	**Very High**

Reflection

FFCA has performed at a high level over the Charter, and its Accountability/Assurance/Schollie results demonstrate its commitment to continuous improvement. Areas of strength are celebrated, and when areas of decline or concern are identified, those have been noted, and when those persist, FFCA has developed an action plan to address concerns. On this indicator, there is a disconnect between FFCA's objective improvement over the years and stakeholder subjective perceptions driven by the school improvement measure. The decline has been most pronounced since 2021 and can be attributed to COVID restrictions but, on closer examination, are driven primarily by teacher responses related to inclusion

or programming for increasing numbers of at-risk students. With full inclusion funding, the expectations of our staff in terms of the provision of services to our more challenging students particularly were quite high, and we are still in an "implementation dip" in terms of working to reconcile what inclusion for all students looks like in a school that is focused on academic excellence. In addition, while more significant resources are available, they are finite and similar to other school districts in Alberta, there have been challenges in finding additional specialized staff for more targeted supports.

INDICATOR 11 ***The charter authority reaches out beyond its walls to demonstrate broad and sustained levels of community engagement. [8(1)(b)]***

Evidence and Strategies

FFCA's strategies to engage the broader educational community include active participation in CASS and fostering a positive and enduring relationship with others in similar roles within Zone 5 and provincially. In addition, from 2014-2016, Superintendent Nippard served as the President of the Canadian Association of School System Administrators (CASSA).

Local municipal and community leaders, including MPs and MLAs, are warmly invited to FFCA's Welcome Back Breakfast, where all staff gather to kick off the school year. During the development and consultation phases of the new North High School, campus administration proactively engaged with the Montgomery Community Organization, demonstrating a strong commitment to involving the local community in decision-making.
Furthermore, FFCA has established meaningful connections with Indigenous leaders, notably Randy Bottle, who has served as the FFCA Elder-in-Residence.

FFCA forges partnerships with post-secondary institutions, particularly to welcome preservice teachers and engage in research-based partnerships, reinforcing its dedication to engaging with a diverse range of stakeholders within the community. During the charter term, we have had as many as sixty-three practicum students, in a given year, from many Calgary-based post-secondary institutions placed in FFCA classrooms and mentored by FFCA staff.

As our campuses are not "neighborhood" schools our students and staff make a concerted effort to engage in local initiatives to become part of the community "fabric" where each campus resides. Typical initiatives include:

Community service

Rake Fest

Reading with the Elderl

Other Community Service

FFCA's Association of the School Councils engages our entire school community in support of the Interfaith Food Bank

The common practice of inviting and highlighting FFCA family connections to military service during our Remembrance Day ceremonies.

Reflection

In its commitment to expanding engagement within the broader public education community, in 2022, FFCA successfully gained acceptance into the Canadian Association of Public Schools – International (CAPS-I). Notably, FFCA's admission required CAPS-I to amend its bylaws to include charter schools. This decision was made with the recommendation and

support of other AB school authorities, such as Golden Hills, Palliser, and Canadian Rockies Divisions. This example highlights the degree of collaboration FFCA has engaged in within the broader Alberta and Canadian educational contexts. While FFCA prioritizes broad engagement with the local community beyond its physical campuses, one notable limitation is that our students typically reside outside the walking distance from the school, making it challenging for them to actively participate in the communities where FFCA campuses are located. For the current school year, only 119 out of 3,768 students (3.2%) reside within 2.4 km of their campus. Despite this limitation, FFCA's campuses provide opportunities for students and the broader community to come together, interact, and build connections. Examples of such initiatives include organizing Welcome Back BBQs, Winter Fest celebrations, and Cultural Heritage Fairs.

INDICATOR 12 ***The charter authority uses research-informed practices to create innovative learning environments and improve student learning. [8(1)(d)]***

Evidence and Strategies

FFCA's evidence regarding this indicator includes the following research projects were conducted by FFCA in partnership with academic colleagues and have had a direct impact on our charter foci and teacher professional practice:

Roessingh, H. (2013). A Look at Grade 2 Writing: Successes & Challenges in Early Literacy Development. *LEARNing Landscapes*, 7(1), 269-281.	U. of C. Professor Emerita Dr. Hetty Roessingh (2013), in partnership with FFCA's elementary campuses, explored how a strong foundation in printing and spelling skills are key components in early literacy development to the end of Grade 2.
Roessingh, H & Elgie, S. (2014). From thought, to words, to print: Early literacy development in grade 2. *AB Journal of Educational Research*. 60. 576-597.	Dr. Hetty Roessingh & Susan Elgie (2014), in partnership with FFCA's elementary campuses, undertook a study exploring how printing, spelling and vocabulary choices influence the quality of writing at the end of Grade 2.
Sheehan, D. (2017). An Evaluation of Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity in an Elementary School QDPE Program. *Physical Health & Education Journal*. 83 (2).	MRU Professor Dwayne Sheehan (2017), in partnership with FFCA's Southwest Elementary Campus, conducted a study to determine if elementary school students could attain 50% MVPA (moderate to vigorous physical activity) during PE class time when led by a kinesiology-trained Physical Education specialist.
Burke, J., & Chaseling, M. (2022). Reading is not just Something, It is Everything: Using Collaborative Inquiry Twinned with Generative Dialogue for School Improvement in Elementary Classrooms. *The Canadian Journal of Action Research*, 22(2), 46-71.	This paper reports on a four-year study where campus leaders used collaborative inquiry twinned with generative dialogue to facilitate teacher growth, improving the teaching and learning of reading in a school where reading results were already strong. The paper contributes to school improvement literature by capturing the two main cycles of inquiry that emerged during the study. It also found evidence of tasks that improved the teaching and assessment of reading.

Reflection

FFCA's extensive work with Dr. Hetty Roessingh has led to a number of publications. Beyond these focused studies, there has been ongoing work with Dr. Roessingh to support teacher practice. This work extends to the high school level when, in 2014, teachers took a deep dive into applying the lexicon tool to understand the needs of and support English Language Learners. The relationship with her over the years has provided rich learning for teachers supporting our continuous improvement in literacy instruction.

As highlighted previously in Indicator 8, the work of FFCA's physical education teachers at a scholarly level has been rich over time. The rigour with which the Elementary physical education teachers have engaged in research to understand best practices in their field assures that FFCA students experience the highest quality educational experience.

FFCA involves teacher working groups in scholarly studies to create guiding frameworks and materials. Some examples include the Assessment and Report Framework, re-vitalization/updating of our elementary literacy program, collaborative creation of K-3 science materials for the new curriculum (inc. shared summative assessments), updating the use of K-4 JUMP math materials to support new curriculum and emphasis on visualization and dialogue in a middle school math class.

With the equalization of funding for education that is inclusive in Charter Schools, FFCA has new opportunities and responsibilities to support learner diversity. At present, we are building system-wide capacity at all levels with professional learning and implementation supports that will embed Universal Design for Learning, the CASEL Framework, Collaborative Problem Solving and Classroom Support Plans into the fabric of our operations.

Emphasis is placed on how these evidence- informed approaches make sense within FFCA's Framework for Teaching and Learning.