

## Board of Trustees

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April 23, 2025

Honourable Demetrios Nicolaides  
Minister of Education  
10800 – 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Nicolaides,

### Re: Charter School Application Alberta Ukrainian Academy Society's Yuzuk Academy

The Calgary Board of Education (CBE) received notification from Alberta Education of a charter school application in Calgary, namely the *Alberta Ukrainian Academy Society's Yuzuk Academy*. The CBE Board of Trustees is concerned with the potential **duplication of existing programming** provided by CBE, specifically in the area of language learning, and the **implications for funding** as a result of this redundancy. Given the current fiscal strain across the province, the creation of a new Charter School focused on an area where the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) has demonstrated commitment and existing programs represents a significant duplication of resources.

Section 3(1) of Charter Schools Regulation states that the Minister of Education will *"consider any information received from any board of a public or separate school division, Francophone regional authority or charter school that receives notice under section 24 of the Act, including information about any alternative programs that currently exist in the geographic area"*.

The notification of application by the Alberta Ukrainian Academy Society's Yuzuk Academy, proposed the school would open in the 2025 – 2026 school year and would be located in Calgary, Alberta. As described in the notice, the Yuzuk Academy intends to offer

*Kindergarten to Grade 9 programming with a focus on a **Ukrainian-English bilingual education program** and a culturally enriched environment, promoting academic excellence through a content-based instructional approach.*

The Calgary Board of Education (CBE) recognizes the **significant cognitive, academic, personal, societal, intercultural, and economic benefits of second-language learning**. Research indicates that second-language learning has a positive impact on the development of general cognitive skills, language development, focus, and problem-solving abilities. Furthermore, second-language learners often show enhanced literacy, spelling ability, and reading comprehension in their first language, as well as higher achievement in other subject areas. Learning a second language also leads to enhanced communicative abilities, creative thinking, and increased connection to cultural identity.

learning | as unique | as every student

While the CBE values linguistic diversity and understands the importance of bilingual education, **the introduction of a new charter school specifically for Ukrainian-English bilingual education raises concerns about the efficient allocation of resources.** The CBE is committed to providing a wide range of educational opportunities for its students, and **already offers various language programs and supports cultural diversity within its existing school system.** Creating a separate institution for a specific bilingual program may lead to **unnecessary administrative overhead** and potentially draw funding away from established CBE programs that also support language learning and multiculturalism. This approach risks undermining the broader educational system in favor of inefficient duplication.

As stated in our response regarding another recent charter school application, it would be more beneficial to **enhance and expand the CBE's existing programs**, ensuring all students have access to quality education and diverse learning opportunities within a well-established public system. The CBE is committed to providing inclusive and comprehensive education to all students in Calgary.

Should you have further questions regarding details of CBE programming and our commitment to language learning and cultural diversity, we are happy to provide additional information. We look forward to receiving information regarding your decision regarding the preliminary applications as stated in the notice, on or before April 24, 2025.

Sincerely,



Patricia Bolger, Chair  
Board of Trustees

cc: Tania Brudler, Executive Director, System Support and  
Student Records Sector  
Joanne Pitman, Chief Superintendent  
Jennifer Turner, Superintendent, School Improvement  
Michael Nelson, Superintendent, School Improvement





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MLA, Calgary - Bow*

AR 129704

May 28, 2025

Ms. Patricia Bolger  
Board Chair  
Calgary Board of Education  
1221 - 8 Street SW  
Calgary AB T2R 0L4

Dear Ms. Bolger:

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Calgary Board of Education Board of Trustees regarding the Alberta Ukrainian Academy Society's application to open Yuzuk Academy, a public charter school in Calgary. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

I sincerely appreciate the thorough response and context you have provided regarding existing program offerings within the Calgary Board of Education and the importance the school division places on second-language learning and cultural diversity.

In addition to the materials submitted by the applicant, the department will consider the information you have provided as outlined in Section 3.2(2) of the Charter Schools Regulation.

Thank you once again for taking the time to share this information.

Best,

Demetrios Nicolaides ECA PhD  
Minister of Education