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October 14, 2025

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

Dear Minister Nicolaides,

**Re: Charter School Application
New Generations Charter School**

The Calgary Board of Education (CBE) received notification from Alberta Education and Childcare regarding a charter school application in Calgary, namely the New Generations Charter School.

Our Board of Trustees is concerned with the potential duplication of existing programming provided by CBE 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 areas already well-covered by the CBE represents a significant duplication of resources. At a time when every education dollar is crucial to maintain and improve the quality of education for all students, redirecting resources to a redundant initiative would not only stretch the province's limited resources but also detract from the effectiveness of proven, existing programs. This approach risks undermining the broader educational system in favor of inefficient duplication.

Section 3(1) of the 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 New Generations Charter School proposed that the school would open in the 2027– 2028 school year and would be located in Calgary, Alberta. As described in the notice, the New Generations Charter School aims to offer

Kindergarten to Grade 12 programming with a focus on pluralism. The proposed charter school would promote academic excellence through the consideration of diverse perspectives and cultures with a focus on problem solving, conflict resolution, and navigating differences.

Pluralism, defined as the social tolerance and inclusion of individuals and groups with differing backgrounds, beliefs, and perspectives, is already deeply embedded within the CBE's foundational philosophy and daily practice. It is not a new or emerging concept within the system—it is a defining characteristic of how the CBE operates.

In the 2025–2026 school year, the CBE serves more than 142,000 students, reflecting one of the most diverse learning populations in Canada. Over 44,000 students—nearly one-third of the total population—are identified as English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners, which is 17.6 percentage points higher than the provincial average. An additional 27,000 students are identified with special education needs, and more than 3,400 new students have arrived in the past year alone. Furthermore, more than 6,200 students self-identify as Indigenous, and thousands more come from multilingual, multicultural, and multi-faith backgrounds.

This scale and breadth of diversity demonstrate that the CBE already embodies pluralism in action. The district's policies, curriculum design, instructional practices, and inclusive learning environments are all grounded in respect for human rights, cultural diversity, and individual identity. Pluralism is not an aspirational goal within the CBE—it is an operational reality.

The system's existing structures and programs—such as inclusive education supports, multicultural celebrations, Indigenous education strategies, EAL programming, equity and diversity frameworks, and faith accommodations—collectively ensure that students can learn, express, and belong without fear of discrimination or reprisal. These initiatives are not peripheral; they are embedded in every school and reflect pluralistic principles in both philosophy and practice.

The Alberta Education Ministerial Order on Student Learning establishes that *critical thinking, global awareness, and learner agency* are foundational to all schooling in the province. These priorities are embedded in the Alberta Program of Studies, which every publicly funded school—including those within the CBE—is required to implement. As a result, all students in Alberta already engage in reflective learning, goal setting, and dialogue-based instruction as part of their regular classroom experience.

Within the CBE, these priorities are not aspirational—they are operational. CBE teachers consistently employ collaborative, inquiry-based, and problem-solving approaches that foster critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and conflict resolution. These are hallmarks of CBE's existing pedagogy and align directly with the principles the proposed charter claims to advance. Creating a separate institution to deliver what is already standard practice across CBE schools is unnecessary duplication.

The argument for school choice must also be viewed in context. Alberta families already benefit from a broad spectrum of publicly funded options, including public, separate, francophone, alternative, and independent schools—each offering diverse educational philosophies and environments.



The proposed charter's emphasis on pluralism and multicultural engagement does not constitute a distinct or unmet need; rather, it reflects values already central to public education. The CBE's student body—over 142,000 learners representing more than 140 languages and cultural backgrounds—is itself a living model of pluralism in action.

In sum, the proposed New Generations Charter School offers no meaningful innovation beyond what is already available in the public system. Establishing another publicly funded entity with overlapping goals would divert scarce resources, create administrative inefficiencies, and risk fragmenting a system that already delivers excellence in inclusive, pluralistic education.

Should you have further questions regarding details of CBE's commitment to diversity and inclusion in our programming, 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 December 15, 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
Marilyn Dennis, President, Alberta School Boards Association





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Charlene May Wards 12 & 14

November 4, 2025

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

Dear Minister Nicolaides,

Re: **Charter School Applications**
The Academy of Business Literacy and Entrepreneurship Charter School

The Calgary Board of Education (CBE) received notification from Alberta Education of a charter school application in Calgary, namely The Academy of Business Literacy and Entrepreneurship Charter School. The CBE Board of Trustees would like to provide information regarding the current Business Literacy and Entrepreneurship programming in CBE schools, as we are concerned with the duplication of existing programming provided by CBE and the implications for funding as a result of this redundancy.

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 Academy of Business Literacy and Entrepreneurship Charter School, proposed the school would open in the 2026 – 2027 school year and would be located in Calgary, Alberta. As described in the notice, the proposed public charter school intends to offer grades 7 to 12 programming with a focus Human Centred Design. The public charter school:

would promote academic excellence with a focus on the development of business acumen, psychographic research skills, and financial literacy.

The Calgary Board of Education already provides academic excellence across its schools with a strong focus on these very competencies. The CBE’s Career and Technology Foundations (CTS) courses in the Business, Administration, Finance & Information Technology (BIT) cluster of CTS, focus on management, marketing and use of electronic technologies to access, use and manipulate information within family, workplace, community and global contexts.

Enterprise and Innovation supports students’ entrepreneurial spirit and assists them to create, analyse, finance, market and manage a business venture. Financial Management explores small businesses and venture planning, and informs about financial literacy and general accounting principles. Management and Marketing explores e-commerce, marketing and communication strategies.

In the area of psychographic research, CBE students are introduced to the fundamentals of consumer behaviour and market segmentation through marketing and digital design courses. They explore basic management concepts and describe retail merchandising strategies of value to the retail employee, manager and/or owner.

Financial literacy is also embedded throughout the CBE curriculum, starting from junior high and expanding into high school. Programs include personal finance units, and general accounting principles, budgeting, saving, investing, and financial decision-making. These experiences not only fulfill curricular objectives but also equip students with lifelong skills for financial independence and responsible citizenship.

The Learning Excellence Goal of the CBE Education Plan includes three distinct learning objectives:

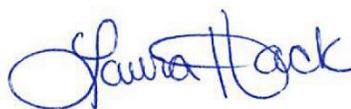
1. Students achieve excellence in literacy and mathematics,
2. Students' learning improves through fair and equitable assessment practices, and
3. Learning opportunities prepare students for future learning and success.

The third learning objective requires all CBE schools to ensure that students develop the competencies, confidence, and adaptability needed to thrive in post-secondary education, the workforce, and as active, contributing citizens. Through this framework, CBE schools intentionally design learning that connects academic content to real-world applications, including business innovation, financial responsibility, and entrepreneurial thinking.

It is our position that the charter school application identified is, in fact, duplicative of programming and opportunities already available within the CBE. To maximize the impact of education funding across the province, avoiding the approval of duplicate charter school programs allows Alberta to maintain what is already accessible to all. We encourage focused funding in a manner that leverages our existing partnerships, infrastructure, and programming in the areas identified, and we look forward to continued collaboration in strengthening student learning outcomes across Alberta.

Should you have further questions regarding details of CBE programming, we are happy to provide additional information. We look forward to receiving information regarding your decision on the preliminary applications as stated in the notice, on or before December 15, 2025.

Sincerely,



Laura Hack, 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
Marilyn Dennis, President, Alberta School Boards Association



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November 4, 2025

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

Dear Minister Nicolaidis,

**Re: Charter School Application
The Forge Charter Academy**

The Calgary Board of Education (CBE) received notification from Alberta Education of a charter school application in Calgary, namely The Forge Charter Academy. The CBE Board of Trustees is concerned with the potential duplication of existing programming provided by CBE 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 areas already well-covered by the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) represents a significant duplication of resources. At a time when every education dollar is crucial to maintain and improve the quality of education for all students, redirecting resources to a redundant initiative would not only stretch the province's limited resources but also detract from the effectiveness of proven, existing programs. This approach risks undermining the broader educational system in favor of inefficient duplication.

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 Forge Charter Academy proposed that the school would open in the 2026 – 2027 school year and would be located in Calgary, Alberta. As described in the notice, The Forge Charter Academy intends to offer

Grades 7 to 12 programming that combines rigorous academics with vocation-based training.

The Calgary Board of Education (CBE) already delivers comprehensive academic and vocational programming, rendering the proposed charter school unnecessary. Rigorous academics, career-focused learning, and student-centered inquiry are core priorities within all Alberta schools and are firmly embedded in the Alberta Program of Studies. This provincial framework

ensures that every student engages in goal setting, reflective dialogue, and critical discourse as part of their learning experience. These practices are not novel—they are foundational elements already implemented across CBE schools and other public institutions. Indeed, CBE’s longstanding commitment to academic excellence, student agency, and reflective learning is evident throughout its daily instructional practices.

Career and Technology Foundations

In junior high / middle school (Grades 7-9), the CBE and the province of Alberta ensure that students are exposed to vocational and career-oriented programming through the provincially-authorized Career and Technology Foundations (CTF) curriculum. Under the CTF program, students are provided opportunities to explore occupational areas and technologies—such as:

- business/administration,
- human services, natural resources,
- communication/design and
- technology

At the CBE, a recent report to the Board of Trustees highlighted hundreds of CTF-type courses (175 different options across 68 junior/middle school sites) were offered during the 2023-24 school year, with an enrolment of over 34,800 students. Additionally, the province’s “Career Education” overview confirms that CTF programming prepares students in Grades 5-9 to transition into the high-school level Career and Technology Studies (CTS) pathways. In practice, this means that by the end of Grade 9 students in CBE schools are not only engaging in academic work but also acquiring foundational vocational skills, occupational awareness and the ability to apply learning in practical-context situations — thereby supporting the argument that the proposed charter school’s vocational focus is duplicative of established public-school practice.

Career and Technology Studies: Foundational, Flexible, and Credentialed Pathways

CTS is Alberta’s provincially mandated framework for career-based education in high school. It offers students practical, hands-on learning experiences in occupational areas aligned with Alberta’s labor-market needs. Within the CBE, CTS courses are offered across all senior high schools and many outreach programs, and are organized into occupational clusters that include:

- Trades, Manufacturing, and Transportation (e.g., construction, welding, automotive service, and fabrication);
- Business, Administration, Finance, and Information Technology;
- Health, Recreation, and Human Services;
- Media, Design, and Communication Arts; and
- Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environmental Stewardship.

Each CTS pathway is structured through progressive modules—Introductory, Intermediate, and Advanced—culminating in practicums or capstone projects that reflect real-world employment contexts. Students earn high-school credits while developing occupational competencies aligned with Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training (AIT) standards and, where available, may acquire recognized industry certifications.

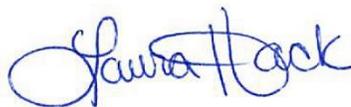
Off-Campus Education: Work Experience, Career Internships, Registered Apprenticeships, and Dual Credit

Off-Campus Education allows students to earn credits through supervised, authentic workplace experiences while developing essential employability and life skills. All CBE senior high schools have Off-Campus Coordinators who facilitate placements, ensure alignment with learning outcomes, and monitor student safety and progress. Off-campus programs operationalize the principle of “learning anywhere, anytime,” allowing students to achieve curricular outcomes through authentic contexts and transition smoothly into post-secondary education or the workforce.

In conclusion, the proposed Forge Charter Academy does not offer programming that is distinct from what is already available through the Calgary Board of Education and the broader public system. Establishing a new school would require substantial resources, introduce additional administrative and operational overhead, and fragment funding that could otherwise be used to strengthen and expand proven programs serving tens of thousands of students. In a time of fiscal constraint, every education dollar must be used efficiently to maximize benefit for all students. The Forge Charter Academy’s focus on rigorous academics and vocation-based training mirrors existing CBE offerings, including Career and Technology Foundations, Career and Technology Studies, Off-Campus Education, and Dual Credit opportunities—programs that already provide students with high-quality academic instruction, practical skills, and pathways to post-secondary success. Approving this application would therefore create unnecessary duplication, dilute resources, and undermine system-wide consistency without offering any meaningful educational advantage. The Calgary Board of Education respectfully urges the Ministry to reject this proposal and instead prioritize the enhancement and expansion of existing programs, ensuring that public education continues to deliver equitable, comprehensive, and high-quality opportunities for all students.

Should you have further questions regarding details of CBE programming, 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 December 5, 2025.

Sincerely,



Laura Hack, 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
Marilyn Dennis, President, Alberta School Boards Association



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Charlene May Wards 12 & 14

November 4, 2025

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

Dear Minister Nicolaides,

Re: **Charter School Application
The Busy School Calgary**

The Calgary Board of Education (CBE) received notification from Alberta Education of a charter school application in Calgary, namely The Busy School Calgary. The CBE Board of Trustees is concerned with the potential duplication of existing programming provided by CBE 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 areas already well-covered by the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) represents a significant duplication of resources. At a time when every education dollar is crucial to maintain and improve the quality of education for all students, redirecting resources to a redundant initiative would not only stretch the province's limited resources but also detract from the effectiveness of proven, existing programs. This approach risks undermining the broader educational system in favor of inefficient duplication.

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 Busy School Calgary proposed that the school would open in the 2026 – 2027 school year and would be located in Calgary, Alberta. As described in the notice, The Busy School Calgary intends to provide

A vocation-focused program for grades 10-12 students who are at risk of not completing high school or those not currently employed or attending an educational program. The Busy School Calgary will focus on creating opportunities for trauma informed vocation-based education and career pathways for at-risk or hard-to-reach students.

The Calgary Board of Education (CBE) is committed to ensuring that every student, regardless of circumstance, has access to meaningful learning pathways leading to high-school completion, further education, and sustained employment. In alignment with Alberta Education’s goals for student success and inclusive learning, the CBE provides a comprehensive suite of vocational, technical, and alternative programs designed to re-engage students in Grades 10–12 who are at risk of not graduating or who are not currently employed or attending an educational program. These programs are accompanied by robust mental-health and wellness supports that address the social, emotional, and behavioural barriers to learning.

Career and Technology Studies: Foundational, Flexible, and Credentialed Pathways

CTS is Alberta’s provincially mandated framework for career-based education in high school. It offers students practical, hands-on learning experiences in occupational areas aligned with Alberta’s labour-market needs. Within the CBE, CTS courses are offered across all senior high schools and many outreach programs, and are organized into occupational clusters that include:

- **Trades, Manufacturing, and Transportation** (e.g., construction, welding, automotive service, and fabrication);
- **Business, Administration, Finance, and Information Technology;**
- **Health, Recreation, and Human Services;**
- **Media, Design, and Communication Arts;** and
- **Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environmental Stewardship.**

Each CTS pathway is structured through progressive modules—Introductory, Intermediate, and Advanced—culminating in practicums or capstone projects that reflect real-world employment contexts. Students earn high-school credits while developing occupational competencies aligned with Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training (AIT) standards and, where available, may acquire recognized industry certifications. The curriculum’s emphasis on experiential, project-based instruction fosters relevance and self-efficacy, key motivators for youth at risk of leaving school early.

Off-Campus Education: Work Experience, Career Internships, Registered Apprenticeships, and Dual Credit

Off-Campus Education allows students to earn credits through supervised, authentic workplace experiences while developing essential employability and life skills. All CBE senior high schools have Off-Campus Coordinators who facilitate placements, ensure alignment with learning outcomes, and monitor student safety and progress. Off-campus programs operationalize the principle of “learning anywhere, anytime,” allowing students to achieve curricular outcomes through authentic contexts and transition smoothly into post-secondary education or the workforce.

Unique Pathways and Alternative Programs for Complex Learning Needs

Recognizing that a proportion of youth face barriers beyond academic difficulty, the CBE has developed alternative and outreach programs that combine individualized instruction with intensive social-emotional and mental-health supports.



- **Discovering Choices:** CBE’s outreach high school offers flexible, personalized programming for students aged 15–19 who have become disengaged from traditional schools. Learners work at their own pace toward a high-school diploma or certificate of achievement while accessing counselling, community partnerships, and career-readiness support.
- **Nexus:** This specialized program serves Grades 10–12 students experiencing complex social, emotional, or behavioural challenges that significantly interfere with learning. Nexus combines small class environments, targeted therapeutic intervention, and individualized academic planning. Vocational readiness is embedded through CTS modules, life-skills programming, and coordinated off-campus experiences.
- **Other alternative sites**—including CBe-Learn, Louise Dean School (supporting young parents), and Indigenous Education programs—also integrate vocational and CTS-based options to ensure equitable access for diverse learners.

These settings function as re-engagement hubs, reconnecting students to educational pathways while addressing the broader social and emotional determinants of learning.

Mental Health and Trauma-Informed Supports

CBE recognizes that re-engaging at-risk students in learning requires more than curricular innovation; it demands a coordinated, system-wide commitment to mental health and wellness. Academic success, employability, and long-term stability depend on addressing the personal, social, and emotional factors that influence a student’s ability to participate fully in education and community life.

a) Student Well-Being Framework

CBE’s *Student Well-Being Framework* establishes a comprehensive, whole-school approach to positive mental health. It integrates universal prevention, targeted intervention, and coordinated community partnerships. Each school embeds this framework within its *School Development Plan*, ensuring consistent attention to safe, caring, and inclusive learning environments.

b) School-Based Counselling

CBE senior high schools provide access to *Student Services* teams that include guidance counsellors and access to centrally deployed psychologists, and specialized mental-health professionals.

c) Partnerships and Referral Pathways

CBE sustains formal partnerships with Alberta Health Services, community mental-health organizations, and family-support agencies.

d) Professional Learning and Staff Capacity

CBE invests in continuous professional learning for teachers, administrators, and support staff, aligned with Alberta Education’s *Working Together to Support Mental Health and Mental Health in*



Schools frameworks. This training builds capacity for early identification, trauma-informed practice, and coordinated response.

e) Individualized Planning and Wraparound Support

For students with complex social, emotional, or behavioural needs, schools develop *Individual Program Plans (IPPs)* that integrate academic, vocational, and wellness goals. Planning meetings often include counsellors, family members, and community agencies, aligning interventions to sustain student engagement.

Given this comprehensive suite of existing programming and supports, The Busy School Calgary does not offer a distinctive or necessary addition to Alberta’s educational landscape. Instead, it risks fragmenting resources, duplicating services, and diluting public accountability. Each dollar directed toward creating and operating a new, parallel institution is a dollar diverted from proven programs already delivering results for Calgary students. Rather than investing in a redundant model, the Ministry should prioritize strengthening and expanding current vocational and alternative education pathways within the CBE, where oversight, community partnerships, and equitable access are already well established.

In conclusion, while we support the goal of ensuring that all students—particularly those at risk of disengagement—have access to meaningful, career-focused learning, this goal is already being achieved within the CBE. The introduction of The Busy School Calgary would not enhance educational outcomes but would instead duplicate existing efforts and strain limited provincial resources. We strongly urge the Ministry of Education to reconsider the establishment of this new institution and, instead, continue to invest in and build upon the proven, comprehensive programming already available through the Calgary Board of Education.

Should you have further questions regarding details of CBE programming, 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 December 15, 2025.

Sincerely,



Laura Hack, 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
Marilyn Dennis, President, Alberta School Boards Association



ALBERTA

Education
and Childcare

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Calgary Bow*

AR 135155

November 18, 2025

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

Dear Ms. Hack:

I am responding to the letter from the previous Calgary Board of Education Chair, Patricia Bolger, regarding the public charter school application from New Generations Charter School.

I appreciate the detailed response outlining your board's concerns that the proposed focus of this charter school may duplicate program offerings currently available through the Calgary Board of Education. In addition to the materials submitted by the applicant, the department will consider the information you have provided, along with responses from all stakeholders, as outlined in Section 3.2(2) of the Charter Schools Regulation.

I thank the Calgary Board of Education Trustees for their feedback. Alberta's government remains committed to working alongside our education partners to ensure the highest quality education for Alberta's students.

Best,

Demetrios Nicolaides ECA PhD
Minister of Education and Childcare



ALBERTA

Education
and Childcare

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Calgary Bow*

AR 135887

December 12, 2025

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

Dear Ms. Hack:

Thank you for your letters regarding recent public charter school applications from The Busy School, The Academy of Business Literacy and Entrepreneurship, and The Forge Charter Academy. I am pleased to respond.

I appreciate the detailed submission outlining your board's concerns about each application and the potential for these programs to duplicate offerings currently available through the Calgary Board of Education. In addition to the materials submitted by the applicant, the department will consider the information you have provided, along with responses from all stakeholders, as outlined in Section 3.2(2) of the Charter Schools Regulation.

I thank the Calgary Board of Education Board of Trustees for its feedback. Alberta's government remains committed to working alongside our education partners to ensure the highest quality education for Alberta's students.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Demetrios Nicolaidis".

Demetrios Nicolaides ECA PhD
Minister of Education and Childcare