

# Calgary Girls' School 2012 Charter



Our vision is to be a centre of excellence enabling girls and young women to become confident and innovative leaders in a complex and global world.



## Calgary Girls' School 2012 Charter

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# Calgary Girls' School

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Calgary Girls' School

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# Calgary Girls' School

## 2012 Charter

### Preface

The 2012 charter supersedes the original Calgary Girls' School's charter, approved March 2003 and the 2007 Charter. It serves to support the current operation and anticipated future of the Calgary Girls' School and bring the language and intent of the charter in close alignment with practice. The document is comprised of relevant sections from the 2007 Charter that have been updated together with pertinent sections from the 2012 Charter Renewal (Table of Contents #21).

### The Charter

#### 1. Philosophy

The Calgary Girls' School is characterized by a broad-based, enriched educational program with high academic standards. The learning environment is stimulating and supportive, with a focus on leadership, good citizenship and integrity. The curriculum prepares girls for responsible participation in their private lives, their communities, and in society as a whole. Graduates of the Calgary Girls' School will be noted for their confidence, intellect, imagination, compassion, leadership and high aspirations.

The Calgary Girls' School strives to prepare girls to think critically and creatively, make thoughtful decisions, facilitate change and solve problems. As graduates, the students will be:

- innovative and persistent,
- respectful of differences, and
- curious as learners at every stage of life.

Within a nurturing environment, each girl will be encouraged and challenged to push herself beyond her own expectations every day, to discover her own capacity, value and identity, and to decide for herself what her contributions will be in the world.

Each graduate of the Calgary Girls' School will be:

- aware of her value and the important role she plays in society,
- an agent in her own life,
- responsible in her attitudes,
- independent in her thinking,
- self disciplined in her pursuits,

- considerate and skilled in relating with others,
- confident in herself and in her ability to deal with change, with a great enthusiasm for learning, living, and sharing.

The ways girls negotiate their lives highlights their active struggle to make sense of their complex world.

The Calgary Girls' School attends to the education of girls in a manner which assists girls to thrive. Key to the achievement and healthy development of girls is intentional work designed to:

- Celebrate girls' strong identity
- Respect girls as central players
- Connect girls to caring adults
- Ensure girls' participation and success, and
- Empower girls to realize their dreams

Numerous studies have determined that girls' schools offer significant advantages to their students. Based on research about how girls learn, the Calgary Girls' School has developed programs, teaching approaches, and operational practices designed to enhance girls' learning (particularly in the areas of math and science, and social development and awareness). Staff learning is enhanced through the operation of a healthy, collaborative and progressive school culture. Specifically, successful strategies include:

- The extensive use of collaboration as a strategy between and among parents, girls and staff. Similarly, the model used for school-based decision-making is that of collaboration among administrators, staff, parents, girls and the Board of Directors.
- A pedagogical approach which reflects the tenets of an inquiry-based approach to learning and teaching.
- The implementation of the Go Girls Curriculum and the infusion of the stories and experiences of girls and women into mandated curricula.
- The provision of a quality physical education program, designed to foster in girls an appreciation for daily active living as part of a healthy lifestyle.
- The creation of opportunities for girls to contribute to their community through service leadership.

## **Why an All Girls School?**

There is a growing body of research which speaks to the advantages of all-girls schools. These studies show that girls in single gender settings:

- Are more likely to choose mathematics, science and technology courses and excel in them
- Have greater self-esteem
- Do better all-around academically

- Are more likely to go on to post secondary education
- Have a broader and more inclusive understanding of gender roles and their own personal capacities as girls and women
- Feel free to be themselves, as they are not as self-conscious or worried about how they are being perceived by male students
- Are able to experience and demonstrate leadership opportunities and capacity

At the Calgary Girls' School, we are committed to the following Girls' Bill of Rights:

- Girls have the right to be themselves and to resist gender stereotypes
- Girls have the right to express themselves with originality and enthusiasm
- Girls have the right to take risks, to strive freely, and to take pride in success
- Girls have the right to accept and appreciate their bodies
- Girls have the right to have confidence in themselves and to be safe in the world
- Girls have the right to prepare for interesting work and economic independence.

## **2. Vision, Mission and Beliefs**

### **Vision**

Our vision is to be a centre of excellence enabling girls and young women to become confident and innovative leaders in a complex and global world.

### **Mission**

The girls and young women of CGS are agents of change who develop confidence and a strong sense of self in a safe, collaborative, inquiry-based learning environment.

### **Beliefs**

We believe:

- Girls are entitled to authentic learning experiences that are rich, engaging and inquiry-based.
- Girls achieve their personal best when there is a focus on their needs and their unique ways of learning in dedicated all-girl environments.
- Girls have the right to learn in a safe environment while learning to take risks.
- CGS fosters and celebrates a learning community that promotes leadership.
- Active citizenship and engagement with the larger community can change people's lives and the world in which we live.
- Collaboration is a hallmark of all relationships and processes.
- Opportunities to learn about and engage with successful women in society provide girls with positive role models.

- Teachers are supported in their professional growth and development.
- CGS fosters a learning community that promotes reflective practice that is rooted in a growth mindset.
- Parents are valued partners in the education of their daughters.
- CGS engages in research rooted in innovation and best practices and shares with the greater educational community.

### 3. The Calgary Girls' School Charter Goals

The goals of the Calgary Girls' School, written as measurable outcomes follow:

#### **A. Girls' academic achievement is enhanced in an all-girls learning environment (*academic measures reflect strong results in math, science and humanities*) (*Comparing math/science results with humanities results does not reflect a significant difference*)**

- Percentage of students interested and motivated in their learning – 36%
- Percentage of students intellectually engaged and find learning interesting, enjoyable and relevant – 49%
- Percentage of students trying hard to succeed – 76%
- Percentage of students who feel challenged in their classes – 25%
- Percentage of students who feel confident in their skills – 64%
- Hours per day spent doing moderate physical activity .8 hours
- Hours per day doing intense physical activity – 1 hour
- Number of students who find classroom instruction relevant to their everyday lives 5.2 out of 10
- Number of students who indicate that concepts are taught well, class time is used efficiently and homework and evaluations support course objectives – 6.2 out of 10
- Percentage of girls who meet the acceptable standard in grade 6 Language Arts – 98.1%
- Percentage of girls who meet the acceptable standard in grade 6 Math – 92.3%
- Percentage of girls who meet the acceptable standard in grade 6 Science – 91.3%
- Percentage of girls who meet the acceptable standard in grade 6 Social Studies – 92.4%
- Percentage of girls who meet the acceptable standard in grade 9 Language Arts – 100%
- Percentage of girls who meet the acceptable standard in grade 9 Math – 78.4%
- Percentage of girls who meet the acceptable standard in grade 9 Science – 89.8%
- Percentage of girls who meet the acceptable standard in grade 9 Social Studies – 92%
- Percentage of girls who meet the standard of excellence in grade 6 Language Arts – 44.2%
- Percentage of girls who meet the standard of excellence in grade 6 Math – 19.2%

- Percentage of girls who meet the standard of excellence in grade 6 Science – 33.7%
- Percentage of girls who meet the standard of excellence in grade 6 Social Studies – 43.8%
- Percentage of girls who meet the standard of excellence in grade 9 Language Arts – 49.4%
- Percentage of girls who meet the standard of excellence in grade 9 Math – 14.8%
- Percentage of girls who meet the standard of excellence in grade 9 Science – 25%
- Percentage of girls who meet the standard of excellence in grade 9 Social Studies – 39.8%

#### **B. Girls' social development and awareness are enhanced in all-girls learning environment**

- Percentage of students engaged in school sports -33%
- Percentage of students engaged in school clubs – 73%
- Percentage of students with a positive sense of belonging – 65%
- Percentage of students with positive relationships – 77%
- Average time students spend volunteering - .3 hours per day
- Percentage of students who are regularly truant – 6%
- Percentage of students with moderate to high levels of anxiety – 30%
- Percentage of students with moderate to high levels of depression – 26%
- Percentage of students with a positive self esteem – 65%
- Percentage of girls very satisfied or satisfied with the opportunity to receive a broad program of studies including fine arts, career technology and health and physical education – 86.2%
- Percentage of girls that strongly agree or agree that students are safe at school, are learning the importance of caring for others, are learning respect for others and are treated fairly in school – 83.9%
- Percentage of students in grades 4,5,6 who think that their school is very good or good – 92%
- Percentage of students in grades 7,8,9 who think that their school work is challenging – 71%
- Percentage of students in grades 7,8,9 who think that their school work is interesting – 64%
- Percentage of students in grades 7,8,9 who think that their education is good or very good – 79%
- Percentage of girls who strongly agree or agree that it is easy to get help with school work – 82.9
- Percentage of teachers who strongly agree or agree that students respect each other – 97%

### **C. The school community is supported through team work and collaboration**

- Number of students who feel teachers are responsive to their needs, and encourage independence with a democratic approach – 6 out of 10
- Number of students who feel they have someone at school who consistently provides encouragement and can be turned to for advice – 2.5 out of 10
- Number of students who feel that they have a positive learning climate -6 out of 10
- Percentage of parents who feel involved in decisions about the education at CGS – 75%
- Percentage of parents who feel involved in decisions about their child's school – 47%
- Percentage of parents who are satisfied or very satisfied with the opportunity to be involved in decisions at their child's school – 58%
- Percentage of parents who are very satisfied or satisfied with the opportunity to be involved in the decisions about their child's education – 68%
- Percentage of teachers who strongly agree or agree that students are encouraged to be involved in activities that help the community – 100%

### **D. Staff is supported in pursuing excellence**

- Number of students who feel that staff emphasizes academic skills and hold high expectations for all students to succeed- 6.7 out of 10
- Percentage of staff who utilized merit pay to enhance their professional learning in the current year – 100%
- Percentage of teachers who strongly agree or agree that professional development has been focused on the priorities of the school – 92%
- Percentage of teachers who strongly agree or agree that professional development opportunities made available have effectively addressed individual professional development needs – 89%
- Percentage of teachers who strongly agree or agree that professional development opportunities made available through the school have significantly contributed to individual ongoing professional development – 89%

As noted in the 2012 AERR, attention is being given to those areas where results need strengthening and subsequent AERR results will attest to the efficacy of our efforts.

### **Calgary Girls' School Beliefs In Support of Merit Pay**

We believe that:

- We are only as strong as our weakest member;
- Leadership, scholarship, and service form a foundation for our work together;
- As colleagues and professionals, we are committed to helping ourselves, one another, and the larger school community;

- Meritorious service exists not in the service of competition, but in the service of personal best and community;
- Individual professional growth influences and benefits the community's professional practice;
- The school's organization for instruction reflects the values of leadership, scholarship and service;
- Merit pay is in the work we do, not in what we feel we have to do to earn merit pay;
- The merit pay process is connected to individual growth, within the context of the school community (individual professional growth planning and school three-year planning processes);
- Individual contributions will vary; this is to be expected, as the emphasis is on personal best in recognition of individual circumstances; and
- The merit pay process supports reflective practice; it is seen to be instructive and not destructive.

#### **4. Strategic Goals**

In 2012, the Board of Directors approved the 2012-2020 Strategic Plan. Its goals follow:

- Establish CGS as the school of choice
- Position CGS as a leader in research practice and methodology
- Establish CGS as a leader in innovative educational and environmentally progressive facilities

#### **5. The Operational Period for the Calgary Girls' School**

The Calgary Girls' School Society was granted its first charter to operate the Calgary Girls' School from September 2003 through June 2008 (inclusive) and its second charter in 2007. Our third charter is approved for 2012 to 2027.

#### **6. The Society that is to Operate the School**

The Calgary Girls' School Society operates the school.

#### **7. A Description of the Students for Whom the School is Intended**

A guiding principle of the school is that girls should have equitable access to an all-girls education. Therefore, girls in Grades 4-9 (from all quadrants of the city) including those who have mild/moderate/gifted and ESL needs are welcome to attend the Calgary Girls' School. (Grades 1 – 3 may be offered at a later date.) A major factor in the enrolment of a student is the school's ability to offer an appropriate program to enable the student to meet with success. Decisions about continued enrolment are made on an annual basis.

For Calgary Girls' School students, there is a positive relationship among innovation, academic achievement and time enrolled at the school: girls who attend CGS achieve higher scores on Provincial Achievement Tests. Utilizing innovative teaching practices related to the ways that girls learn best as well as the use of the collaborative model have assisted girls in enhancing their overall academic achievement and social development and awareness.

## **8. The Calgary Girls' School Admission Plan**

Guiding Principles:

- CGS is a public school and all girls have the opportunity to apply for admission within the context of the Charter Schools Regulation.
- Enrollment is guided by the enrolment cap.
- Enrollment must support the organizational plan for instruction at CGS.
- The school must be able to offer an appropriate program that enables the student to have the opportunity to meet with success.
- The CGS admissions plan and process will be open and transparent.

## **9. Curriculum to be Offered in Addition to the Alberta Programs of Study: The Go Girls Curriculum**

While the Calgary Girls' School recognizes the important benefits of segregating girls, it also acknowledges that this is insufficient in and of itself. Interventions designed specifically to strengthen girls' social development, awareness, and academic achievement must be implemented. Within this context, then, the Calgary Girls' School continues to develop and implement curriculum which is particularly focused on providing opportunities for girls. These opportunities will allow girls to:

- Examine, understand and appreciate the contributions and place of women in history, in society today, and into the future.
- Develop the capacity to know/realize their own potential and their own efficacy in the world.
- Develop rigor and depth in the acquisition of knowledge and skills to enable girls to make thoughtful life and career choices.

The Go Girls curriculum is designed to help girls:

- Achieve a competent gender-role identification (successful women)
- Establish an acceptable body image (healthy minds and bodies)
- Develop a positive self-image (positive attitudes and confidence)
- Develop satisfactory peer relationships (making and keeping friends)
- Establish independence through responsible decision-making (rights and responsibilities)
- Understand sexuality (choices and decision-making)

- Learn to obtain help and find access to resources (asking for what you need)
- Plan for the future (career planning)

The school has implemented the Go Girls curriculum across all grades and developed a scope and sequence of skills. (Appendix H Charter Renewal 2012). CGS has developed its own approach to understanding and implementing Go Girls as an inclusive, school-wide curriculum. This approach invites the opening-up of a conversation around Go Girls which includes both overarching concepts as well as specific learning objectives, and has, as its basis, the notion of critical thinking.

## **10. Innovative Teaching Strategies and Methods: The Inquiry-Based Approach to Learning**

The Calgary Girls' School is committed to the notion that humans are driven by inquiry: they have a need to know. As teachers, we are surrounded by curious students who are constantly asking questions. Our ultimate goal is to develop in our girls the knowledge, abilities, attitudes and processes necessary to discover the answers to their questions, to develop other questions and to enter the world of life-long learning. The pedagogical approach that has been selected to achieve this goal may best be called inquiry-based learning. Through the process of inquiry, students construct much of their understanding of the natural and human-designed worlds. Inquiry implies a need or want to know premise.

## **11. The Role of Collaboration at the Calgary Girls' School**

Research on how girls learn is clear about the preference that girls have for learning within a collaborative environment. As well, girls' achievement improves when they are taught in classrooms where positive and rigorous collaboration is the norm, and where they are taught in ways that they learn best. To provide a robust image of this way of working, the philosophy and practice of continuous learning/improvement through collaboration is modeled by all who are members of the Calgary Girls' School learning community.

## **12. Communication of Innovations and Successes**

CGS, in keeping with its obligation to share its innovative approaches and effective practices, invites and welcomes inquiries and visitors to its schools. Additionally, we believe that all schools can benefit from adopting some of the instructional programs and teaching methods that are in place at our school; hence, we are eager to share this teaching and learning information.

### **Audiences**

Key audiences interested in the Calgary Girls' School include:

- Parents of prospective students, Alberta Education, Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation and their officials.

- Teachers and leaders of other public schools and school systems.
- The University of Calgary/Mount Royal University.
- The Calgary community as a whole.

## **Key Messages**

The key messages shared by CGS are drawn from the following:

- Vision, Mission and Beliefs
- The research on how girls learn:
  - Collaborative learning
  - Curriculum which is infused with images of women
  - Mentorship
  - Leadership
  - Mathematics learning
- Go Girls Curriculum
- Monitoring and tracking of student progress
- Collaborative curriculum planning
- Parent volunteer opportunities
- Merit pay program

## **Communication Process**

CGS shares its experience with regard to its innovative practices and effective teaching methods in numerous ways, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The development and distribution of CGS marketing materials
- School website to the school and broader communities
- School contributions to the TAAPCS newsletter and website
- Parent education (including members from the general community)
- Presentations to the University of Calgary, Mount Royal University
- Student teachers on site
- Presentations at conferences and conventions
- Information meetings with families of prospective students
- Media releases and interviews
- Speaking engagements
- School council meetings
- Publication of the Annual Three Year Education Plan and Annual Education Results report
- Leadership and participation in the annual Charter School Conference
- Meetings between CGS senior leaders and Board of Directors members with their charter school peers
- Meetings with government officials and employees

### **13. Roles and Responsibilities of the Charter Board**

The primary role of the Calgary Girls' School Board of Directors is one of governance. The Board is accountable for implementing the role detailed in the School Act which directly applies to public charter schools.

### **14. The Roles and Responsibilities of Parents**

At the Calgary Girls' School, parent involvement is considered important and essential. Parents are the child's primary advocate, and the most knowledgeable individuals about the child's growth, development, and educational history. Positive, regular and on-going communication between the parent and the school is key to student success. Parents are welcome contributors to the school through volunteerism, both inside and outside of the classroom, and through their participation and leadership in school council. Parents, through their volunteer efforts, assist in taking the school into the community and bringing the community into the school.

Parents of students attending the Calgary Girls' School are expected to:

- Support the Calgary Girls' School philosophy, goals, programs, and staff, and assist in any way possible.
- Contribute volunteer hours, as possible.
- Consider involvement and participation in school committees and on School Council.
- Make timely payment of school fees.
- Advocate for, and encourage the success of CGS and students who attend, both within the school and the community at large.
- Meet with teachers and/or members of the administrative team, as requested, for the purpose of supporting their daughter's success in school.
- Ensure the approved uniform is worn to school at all times.
- Attend student-led conferences or make alternative arrangements.
- Update immunizations as may be necessary, and comply with directions from the Health Authorities in the event of the outbreak of a communicable disease. Notify the Calgary Girls' School if their daughter has a communicable disease.
- Ensure regular and timely attendance at school.
- Inform the school in regard to absenteeism of their daughter, both short and long term.
- Work cooperatively with the teacher to ensure timely completion of homework assignments and to sign the student agenda.
- Provide the Administration of the school with positive feedback on any issue that would contribute to a safe and productive learning environment.
- Participate, with their daughter, in providing feedback to teachers regarding teacher performance and the awarding of merit pay.

## **15. The By-laws of the Association of the Charter Board**

The by-laws of the Calgary Girls School Society are available on the website (Appendix 2 Charter Renewal 2012).

## **16. The Projected Student Enrolment, Grade Distribution, and School Building Requirements**

A. The projected student enrolment 600 students in Grades 4-9, for the foreseeable future.

B. Grade configuration and enrolments will be as follows:

- Grade 4      75 students
- Grade 5      105 students
- Grade 6      105 students
- Grade 7      105 students
- Grade 8      105 students
- Grade 9      105 students

C. During the third term, the Calgary Girls' School may require accommodations for up to 2000 students in Grades 1-9 who will attend the school from across the four quadrants of the city.

## **17. Charter Amendment Process**

The administration of the Calgary Girls' School is charged with the responsibility of ensuring alignment between the ongoing practice of the school and the commitments made within the charter document. In particular, it is expected that changes in regard to mission, vision, beliefs, curriculum offered, organization for instruction, pedagogical approaches, and curriculum delivery will be detailed in recommended charter amendments.

The School Council will participate in the charter amendment process. School Council and other parents will work with the school's Administration in ways that support the creation of amendments deemed to be necessary and in the best interests of girls and the school.

Recommendations for amendment will be presented to the Board of Directors of the Calgary Girls' School for support, advice, and approval. Following approval of the amendments by the Board of Directors, the said amendments will be presented to the Minister of Education for consideration of approval.

## **18. Charter School Dissolution**

If, at any time prior to the expiration date of the Calgary Girls' School Charter, the basic terms prescribed in the charter cannot be fulfilled, or satisfactorily amended, the procedures outlined in

the Charter Schools Regulation regarding charter dissolution will be followed. Specifically, the following will be implemented:

The Calgary Girls' School charter will be dissolved at a special meeting (hereinafter called the "dissolution meeting") of the Calgary Girls' School Board of Directors.

In the Fall of the year where closure is contemplated, The Board of Directors shall discuss and make a determination by the conduct of a vote of all members present at a Dissolution Meeting, whether or not the charter should be extended for an additional term, or dissolved.

If, at the Dissolution Meeting it is determined that the term of the charter should be dissolved, the members present will confirm the effective date of the dissolution of the charter and make preliminary plans for the dissolution process. The Board will ensure that the Minister of Education is notified of its intent by January 31.

Once written approval is obtained from the Minister, the Board of Directors of the Calgary Girls' School shall advise the principal, the teachers, the staff members and the students and their parents, in writing, of the decision to dissolve the charter. In this communication, the details of the reasons for the dissolution, the proposed effective date of the dissolution, and the proposed plan for the dissolution shall be provided.

The dissolution process shall conclude on the effective date of the dissolution, and shall be facilitated by the Board of Directors of the Calgary Girls' School. The Board of Directors will meet all financial and other obligations of the charter school throughout the dissolution process.

### **Dissolution and the Distribution of Assets and Records**

In the event of dissolution of the Calgary Girls' School Society, the Society shall, after paying or making provision for the payment and discharge of all of the liabilities of the Society, distribute its remaining assets as follows:

- Assets acquired through Government of Alberta operating and capital grants will be returned to the appropriate government department.
- Assets acquired through fundraising, donations, and non-government grants will be distributed to one or more recognized charitable organization in Canada and/or educational institutions that are dedicated to the advancement of women and girls.

When the dissolution decision is made, the administration of the Calgary Girls' School will work in close cooperation with students and parents to ensure a smooth transition to a school of choice. Additionally, the school administration will work in close cooperation with local public school boards and private schools (as appropriate) to support this process.

Upon proceeding with the dissolution process, the Calgary Girls' School staff shall provide each registered student with a transfer of records form for their completion and return. On this form, students will provide details of the school to which they wish their records to be transferred. The receiving school shall formally request in writing transfer of records.

The Calgary Girls' School shall remain responsible for the transfer of a student's record. The responsibility for accurate addresses and fully completed transfer information shall remain with the student and her family. The Calgary Girls' School shall not be held responsible for inaccurate information on the transfer form, or the envelope, if requested.

Any student records not transferred to another school by the dissolution date shall be forwarded to the Minister.

Any outstanding financial or school records not attended to by the dissolution date shall be forwarded to the Minister.

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