

This year marks the halfway point of our current 5 year charter term, therefore, as part of the extra accountability for charter schools, Alberta Education is conducting a midterm evaluation. This thorough assessment of our success in implementing our charter provides feedback regarding any requirements that will need to be addressed in preparation for the renewal process in our fifth year. Thank you to the Superintendent and Principal for their work on the initial submission, as well as to all of the parents, staff and students who submitted supportive comments. The evaluators will be in the school on March 8-9; we expect to hear their feedback by the end of June.

In accordance with our bylaws, the VSF **Annual General Meeting** will be held on **Wed., March 23, 2016 @ 7pm in the Viking Room** at the school. Parents/guardians of children in our school are automatically members of the VSF. Interested community supporters can become members by signing a *Declaration of Understanding*, which will be available at the AGM. Please contact any of the board members, if you would like more information about membership. As always, the AGM involves the election of directors: Tracy Campbell and Nancy Westad are finishing their regular and interim (respectively) terms and have agreed to let their names stand for another three years. Thank you to both Tracy and Nancy for being willing to volunteer their time to the board's work. We appreciate their participation. We regret to announce that Evan Penner will be resigning from his position effective March 15, so the board is seeking a candidate to fill the remaining 2 years of his term. We would like to thank Evan for his contribution to the board during his time with us.

Our charter expresses the priority of having a majority of parents/guardians as directors, so ideally we will seek a parent/guardian of a child in the school, for the interim vacancy. That said, if a parent/guardian is not available, a community member will be recruited. For any of these positions, interested individuals who are: 18 years of age or older, a parent/guardian of a child attending the VCS or a community member who is supportive of the mission of the VCS, are able to let their names stand for election to a 3 year term as a charter board director. Staff currently employed by the VCS may not be a director. For more information, potential nominees can find our charter and bylaws on our website ([www.valhallacommunityschool.ca](http://www.valhallacommunityschool.ca)), or copies can be picked up at the office. In addition, The VSF *Director Nomination Profile Agreement* is also posted and needs to be signed by anyone entering his or her name as a nominee and returned to the school office by March 7 at 4 p.m. The names of the nominees will then be announced to our membership via the school newsletter and the school website.

Provincially, it has been noted that charter schools are not well understood; therefore, The Alberta Association of Public Charter Schools ([www.taapcs.ca](http://www.taapcs.ca)) has decided to contract the services of a communications consultant to help spread the charter school message. With that in mind, we would like to engage our stakeholders in becoming spokespersons for charter public schools in general, and our charter in particular. At the October TAAPCS meeting, Ember Reichgott Junge spoke to us about the Charter Public School movement in the United States, and encouraged us to have a 2 minute story of our school, as well as some key charter public school messages, which we could easily share with people. To that end, here is a quick version of our story:

In 2008, the Valhalla School Foundation was granted our charter, grounded in whole group direct instruction, incorporating mandatory second language and student leadership development. This created the *opportunity* for students to have the *freedom to choose a research informed* Charter Public School education in rural northern Alberta for the first time.

In April, 2008, the district public school division had moved to close the K-6 school in this community, which had an enrolment of less than 40 students. In a remarkably short period of time, our charter was granted and in September

2008, the Valhalla Community School opened its doors to all interested students. By our fourth year, we had reached our full K-9 grade capacity, and have been maintaining our enrolment near our charter cap of 110 students, since that time.

Our charter public school experience has been filled with incredible learning, growth and development for all those involved. Our dedicated staff is continually advancing in the ability to carry out our vision of equipping our students with both knowledge and skills that will enable them to make positive contributions at their future places of employment as well as in the communities or groups with which they choose to associate.

In this work, one of our greatest strengths is the continued support enjoyed by the VSF. The excellent parent involvement, together with tremendous community support, provide both a team of volunteers, as well as financial resources, which help make our school a special place. Our board is committed to the *efficient, accountable use of the tax dollars* entrusted to us, so that we have the resources available to meet our goals of producing students who are excellent communicators and preparing students for community involvement and leadership. We are grateful to be a part of the only provincial education system that allows *equality for every child* by providing charter public school choice.

Our next regular charter board meeting will be Feb. 18, 6-9 p.m. in the Valhalla Room. Interested individuals are welcome to attend. Our meetings are open, with occasional items of a nature that require us to move in camera. At those times, guests are simply excused for the duration of the discussion and then welcomed back when that subject is finished.

We look forward to seeing you at our public speaking event on Feb. 5!  
Jolene Kochendorfer

Charter Board of Directors: Jolene Kochendorfer (Chair), Judy Hauger (Vice-Chair), Tracy Campbell, Brenda Kjemhus, Evan Penner, Brandie Skaksen, Nancy Westad