



Office of the Minister

AR91521

JAN 11 2016

Ms. Gloria Zakariassen  
ReThink School Society  
Box 43025  
Red Deer Valley  
Calgary AB T2J 7A7

Dear Ms. Zakariassen:

First and foremost, I want to thank you for your dedication to ensuring a quality education for Alberta students. It is the passion and ideas of others that make me feel so privileged to be serving as Minister of Education.

I hope that we can continue to have an open dialogue on how to improve learning conditions for students with special needs in Calgary and beyond.

In a September 10, 2014 letter, the former Minister of Education imposed conditions on a charter school application for ReThink Charter Academy. Final approval was subject to the satisfaction of certain conditions by November 1, 2015.

My department subsequently received a final application for ReThink Charter Academy. I have had an opportunity to undertake a thorough review of the history of this matter, as well as of the final application.

The process and application requirements for establishing a charter school are identified in the *School Act* and the *Charter Schools Regulation*. Requirements for the establishment of a charter school are provided in Section 32 of the *School Act*. Section 32(c) indicates that a charter school may be established if the program offered is not already offered by the local school boards. Enhanced clarity about this requirement was requested in condition A1 in the September 10, 2014 letter.

It is my opinion that this condition has not been met. I am of the view that there is not a significant difference between the program ReThink Charter Academy proposes to offer and what is already offered by both the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Catholic School District.

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In addition, independent research indicating that the TriOptimal Learning Model has been used successfully to enhance learning for students with learning disabilities was not included.

According to the September 10, 2014 letter, if these conditions were not satisfied, any approval would expire. It is my view that any conditional approval that may have been granted by the September 10, 2014 letter has now expired according to its terms.

For these reasons, I am not satisfied that your application meets the statutory criteria and, therefore, I am not approving your application. As provided in Section 3(14) of the *Charter Schools Regulation*, my decision is final.

I want to assure you that we will work with the local school boards to accommodate the needs of all children, including those with special needs, to provide them a positive educational experience.

If parents have questions about services that are available in their area, please have them contact Alberta Education at 780-427-7219 (toll-free by first dialing 310-0000) to discuss options.

I hope this letter sufficiently outlines the rationale for my decision; however, if you require additional details, please contact Mark Swanson, Executive Director, Field Services, Alberta Education, at 780-427-5378 (toll-free by first dialing 310-0000).

Again, I want to thank you for your interest in Alberta's education system and all the time and effort that went into ReThink Charter Academy's submission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Eggen". The signature is stylized with a large initial "D" and a cursive "Eggen".

David Eggen  
Minister