



# Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms

June 8, 2017

Board of Trustees  
Battle River School Division  
5402 – 48A Avenue  
Camrose AB T4V 0L3

Dear Board Members,

**RE: *Legal obligations of Battle River School Division (“BRSD”) concerning the use of the Bible at Cornerstone Christian Academy (“CCA”)***

We have been retained by the Cornerstone Christian Academy of Camrose (the “Society”)<sup>1</sup> to provide advice concerning the above-captioned issue.

BRSD has stated that “any scripture that could be considered offensive to particular individuals should not be read or studied in school.”<sup>2</sup> This statement was purportedly based on the *School Act* and the *Alberta Human Rights Act*.

The Society provides this letter to BRSD to promote further collaboration based on a correct understanding of the relevant legal obligations and rights, including rights under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

## **Background Information**

In 2009, BRSD and the Society agreed to include CCA as an “alternative program” pursuant to section 21 of the *School Act* RSA 2000 c. S-3 and section 19 of the *Education Act*, S.A. 2012 c. E.-0.3. This legislation expressly provides for the establishment of an alternative program emphasizing a particular religion.

As stated by Alberta Education in its *Alternative School Handbook*, “[a]lternative programs are about doing things differently and they involve working collaboratively within the vision and mission of a particular program.”<sup>3</sup> From the outset, BRSD agreed that CCA would be based upon, and teach from, the Bible, as shown from the following statements from the *Cornerstone Christian Academy School Vision and Purpose Document*<sup>4</sup>, attached as Schedule A to the Master Agreement between BRSD and the Society:

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<sup>1</sup> CCA was originally started and operated by Cornerstone Christian Academy of Camrose, which is referred to in the Master Agreement as the “Society”. CCA refers to the Christian school in Kingman.

<sup>2</sup> Email from Board Chair, Laurie Skori, May 27, 2017 (enclosed).

<sup>3</sup> [https://education.alberta.ca/media/1626689/alternative\\_programs\\_handbook.pdf](https://education.alberta.ca/media/1626689/alternative_programs_handbook.pdf) at p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> References are taken from *School Vision and Purpose Document* attached to the 2010 Master Agreement (enclosed).

**Vision Statement:** Our students will have a good working knowledge of the Bible as a foundation to their education.

\* \* \*

Cornerstone Christian Academy (CCA) offers a program that integrates faith, life and learning. At its foundation is the Christian Bible, the belief that God is central to our humanity, that Jesus Christ is our personal Saviour and Lord, and God's Holy Spirit is present and at work in the world today. The program is interdenominational and embraces students and staff from a variety of backgrounds and heritages.

\* \* \*

CCA seeks to:

- Integrate knowledge of God, the Bible and its relevance into the approved Alberta curriculum. In the classroom, the incidental and purposeful discussion of Christian morals, beliefs and world views are incorporated into each subject
- Assist staff to stay focussed on God's abundance and the task of Christian Education through regular staff Bible study and prayer
- Focus the student's attention on God by starting each day with brief Bible study and prayer
- Provide opportunities for students to grow in their relation to God and one another through involvement in regularly scheduled bible classes, chapel times, spiritual emphasis retreats and field trips.

\* \* \*

### **Student Development**

CCA seeks to be a caring community committed to developing excellence in all areas of student's lives by:

- Encouraging and teaching a passion for prayer, Bible study, and applying Biblical truth in their lives

\* \* \*

### **Cornerstone Christian Academy Statement of Faith**

We believe:

4. The Old and New Testaments, inerrant as originally given were verbally inspired by God and are a complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men. They constitute the divine and only rule of Christian faith and practice.

\* \* \*

**Cornerstone Christian Academy Study Covenant**

According to the Bible, parents are responsible for the training of their children (Deut. 6: 1 -7. Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6: 1-4). Cornerstone Christian Academy serves as partners in providing an excellent education consistent with biblical truth.

\* \* \*

**Covenant Response Form**

\* \* \*

**For grade 7-12 Students**

...

"I understand that Christian teachers are in partnership with my parents. I will strive to obey them also as they seek to train me according to God's Word."

The Master Agreement between the Society and BRSD, most recently reaffirmed in August 2015 (enclosed), commits BRSD to respecting the implementation of the above principles through the Principal of CCA:

**Whereas**

...

The Board recognizes and supports the commitment of the Society in ensuring the availability of a program of studies for students whose parents desire an educational setting which operates in accordance with the religious beliefs, core values, and educational philosophy of Cornerstone Christian Academy of Camrose and the Society;

\* \* \*

1.1. ... The Board will provide a program of studies in an educational setting which operates in accordance with the School Vision and Purpose.

...

1.1.1 The Principal of the CCA Program will work with the school council and the Board to implement and maintain the School Vision and Purpose.

\* \* \*

6.1 The important and legitimate consultative role of the Society, as outlined in Schedule A, Appendix III, in helping ensure that the integrity and intent of the School Vision and Purpose is maintained is recognized and supported by the Board.

...

6.2. The Board will not attempt to change the essential nature of the CCA program, as set out in the agreed upon School Vision and Purpose as outlined in Schedule A.

On April 24, 2017, the Society and BRSD met to discuss a couple proposed changes to the School Vision and Purpose Document. As described by BRSD Board Chair Laurie Skori in an email to the Society Chair Deanna Margel:

The original request from BRSD requested that you remove the word "quality" and the Corinthians scripture citation from your vision document.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to this, our lawyer indicated that any scripture that could be considered offensive to particular individuals should not be read or studied in school.

The above mentioned items are what is required by the CCA Board to be considered in compliance with with [sic] the School Act and Human Rights Legislation as a member of a public school board.

We have had a great working relationship with the school and the CCA board in the past, and want that to continue. In order for that to continue though, CCA must be in compliance and not risk possible violations of legislation.

With respect, the above statements evidence a misapprehension of the relevant legal obligations and rights. The following is provided in the interests of promoting collaborative discussions in operating CCA pursuant to the Master Agreement and the *CCA School Vision and Purpose Document*.

### **Relevant Legal Obligations and Rights**

The supreme law in Canada is our Constitution, including the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Relevant to a religious alternative program, the *Charter* both protects the choices of parents for a religious education and requires that government bodies such as the BRSD be neutral concerning religion.

#### Parental Rights to Choose a Religious Education for the Children

The Supreme Court of Canada recently reaffirmed the right of parents, through entities such as the Society, to choose a religious education provided for their children, quoting Article 18(4) of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* which requires governments to “undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents . . . to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.”<sup>6</sup> Justice Abella noted “the fact that an essential ingredient of the vitality of a religious community is the ability of its

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<sup>5</sup> The Society has decided to remove the word “quality” from the School Vision and Purpose Document to be attached and incorporated into the Master Agreement. The Society has also decided to remove the footnote scripture references from the Statement of Belief (School Vision and Purpose Document, Appendix I) attached and incorporated into the Master Agreement. Note that the Statement of Belief sets out the CCA’s commitment to the entire Bible as “the final authority for Christian faith and life.”

<sup>6</sup> *Loyola High School v. Quebec (Attorney General)*, 2015 SCC 12 [Loyola] at para 65.

members to pass on their beliefs to their children, whether through instruction in the home or participation in communal institutions.” She further stated:

Ultimately, measures which undermine the character of lawful religious institutions and disrupt the vitality of religious communities represent a profound interference with religious freedom.<sup>7</sup>

The parents who have chosen to send their children to CCA and who have formed the Society to guide their children’s education in accordance with their beliefs are exercising their *Charter*-protected rights. The provision for Alternative Programs within the *School Act* and *Education Act* gives statutory recognition to this right.<sup>8</sup>

### Duty of Religious Neutrality

In another recent and relevant decision, the Supreme Court of Canada outlined the state duty of neutrality.<sup>9</sup> BRSD must adhere to this duty in regard to CCA as it is implementing a specific government program under section 19 of the *Education Act* and section 21 of the *School Act*.<sup>10</sup>

The Supreme Court has defined state neutrality as neither favouring nor hindering any particular belief. In practice, the decisions and actions of institutions implementing government programs “must not interfere in religion and beliefs”.<sup>11</sup> Further, state actors cannot be hostile to any particular religious groups or have a preference for any particular religious belief.<sup>12</sup> The duty of neutrality is meant to produce a “neutral public space free from coercion, pressure and judgment on the part of public authorities in matters of spirituality”.<sup>13</sup> However, neutrality does not mean the “homogenization of private players” in the neutral public space. Neutrality is meant to preserve and promote multiculturalism and true diversity, not to force every private entity to conform.<sup>14</sup>

BRSD complies with its duty of religious neutrality by permitting alternative programs responsive to the various choices, including religious choices, of parents and private entities.

What BRSD is not permitted to do is to “interfere in religion and beliefs”, including those taught or expressed at CCA pursuant to the choices of parents and the Society. Expressing which beliefs or Biblical texts can be taught is a direct violation of BRSD’s duty of neutrality, contravening the Supreme Court’s specific admonition against “coercion, pressure and judgment on the part of public authorities in matters of spirituality”.

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<sup>7</sup> *Loyola* at para 67.

<sup>8</sup> See *Alternative Program Handbook* at p. 21: “Alternative programs, as programs of choice, are established to meet the specific educational interests or needs of students and their parents.”

<sup>9</sup> *Mouvement laïque québécois v. Saguenay (City)*, 2015 SCC 16 [*Saguenay*]

<sup>10</sup> *Eldridge v. British Columbia (Attorney General)*, [1997] 3 S.C.R. 624 [*Eldridge*] at para 38; *Godbout c. Longueuil (Ville)*, [1997] 3 S.C.R. 844 [*Godbout*] at para 47.

<sup>11</sup> *Saguenay* at para 72.

<sup>12</sup> *Saguenay* at paras 75, 80.

<sup>13</sup> *Saguenay* at para 74.

<sup>14</sup> *Saguenay* at para 74.

As stated by Justice Abella in *Loyola*:

A secular state does not – and cannot – interfere with the beliefs or practices of a religious group unless they conflict with or harm overriding public interests . . . . The pursuit of secular values means respecting the right to hold and manifest different religious beliefs. A secular state respects religious differences, it does not seek to extinguish them.<sup>15</sup>

Does the *School Act* or the *Alberta Human Rights Act* prohibit the expression of beliefs that “could be considered offensive to particular individuals”?

BRSD has apparently received legal advice from its lawyer that reading or studying “any scripture that could be considered offensive to particular individuals” would violate the *School Act* and the *Alberta Human Rights Act*. With respect, this advice is not accurate.

Initially, it must be noted that the *Charter* rights and obligations discussed above are binding on BRSD, and would trump anything in the *School Act* or the *Alberta Human Rights Act* to the contrary.<sup>16</sup>

Rights under the *Charter* are not absolute but are “subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.”<sup>17</sup> The Supreme Court of Canada has held that offensiveness is not sufficient to justify a restriction on expression.<sup>18</sup>

In fact, neither the *School Act* nor the *Alberta Human Rights Act* prohibit expression that “could be considered offensive to particular individuals”.

In a separate email on May 16, 2017, Laurie Skori cited sections 16.1 and 45.1 of the *School Act* as grounding BRSD’s requirement. Section 16.1 is irrelevant, pertaining to the establishment of a voluntary student organization, including a GSA.

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<sup>15</sup> *Loyola* at para 43.

<sup>16</sup> Constitution Act 1982, section 52(1): “The Constitution of Canada is the supreme law of Canada, and any law that is inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitution is, to the extent of the inconsistency of no force or effect.”

<sup>17</sup> *Charter* section 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Saskatchewan (Human Rights Commission) v. Whatcott*, 2013 SCC 11 at paras 50, 90: “As explained in *Irwin Toy Ltd. v. Quebec (Attorney General)*, [1989] 1 S.C.R. 927, at p. 968, freedom of expression was guaranteed in the *Charter* ‘so as to ensure that everyone can manifest their thoughts, opinions, beliefs, indeed all expressions of the heart and mind, however unpopular, distasteful or contrary to the mainstream’. If the repugnancy or offensiveness of an idea does not exclude it from *Charter* protection under s. 2 (b), it cannot, in itself, be sufficient to justify a limitation on expression under a s. 1 analysis. A blanket prohibition on the communication of repugnant ideas would offend the core of freedom of expression and could not be viewed as a minimal impairment of that right . . . . offensive ideas are not sufficient to ground a justification for infringing on freedom of expression.”

In regard to section 45.1, the Society is committed to maintaining CCA as a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging. The Society is committed to a zero tolerance policy for bullying regardless of a student's personal characteristics.

However, it is incorrect to assert that section 45.1 requires the prohibition of expression that "could be considered offensive to particular individuals". It is one matter to seek to welcome, care for, respect and protect students; it is an entirely different matter altogether to not express any views that a student could consider offensive. Such a prohibition is entirely unrealistic. Nearly anything, and almost everything, could be considered offensive by someone.

In reality, students in every school regularly encounter facts and ideas they may consider offensive, in topics from health class to history class. This is no different than the reality each person experiences on a daily basis.

Ms. Skori also cited section 4 of the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, which prohibits discrimination "because of the race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation of that person or class of persons or of any other person or class of persons." Superficially, one may argue that CCA "discriminates" because it is an alternative program designed to promote a particular religion, Christianity.

However, the *Alberta Human Rights Act* specifically includes a clause that recognizes that the prohibition of "discrimination" is not applicable in all circumstances.<sup>19</sup> Rather, in the context of religious schools, the Supreme Court of Canada has upheld not merely the expression, but the enforcement of religious tenets that apply to personal and intimate matters.<sup>20</sup>

The fact is that public education in Alberta respects diversity. The government of Alberta has specifically provided for the establishment of alternative programs under public school boards. As a result numerous schools operate across Alberta with a particular focus on various religious beliefs, sports, academics, learning philosophies or languages. Each of these schools addresses specific interests and desires that students and parents have.

CCA is a Christian alternative program. The Biblical teachings of Christianity "could be considered offensive to particular individuals" for a variety of reasons. For example, the belief that Jesus is God<sup>21</sup> could be considered offensive to followers of Judaism or Islam. Biblical prohibitions on drunkenness, pornography and sexual promiscuity could likewise be considered offensive by some people.

Alberta Education recognizes that alternative programs will not be appropriate for all students:

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<sup>19</sup> *Alberta Human Rights Act* section 11: "A contravention of this Act shall be deemed not to have occurred if the person who is alleged to have contravened the Act shows that the alleged contravention was reasonable and justifiable in the circumstances."

<sup>20</sup> See *Caldwell et al. v. Stuart et al.*, [1984] 2 SCR 603.

<sup>21</sup> See *Cornerstone Statement of Faith* paras 1 and 2.

Alternative programs, as programs of choice, are established to meet the specific educational interests or needs of students and their parents. In order to support student success, it is critical that students, their parents and the board look for a match between the specific educational interests or needs of the student and the focus of the alternative program. Not all alternative programs are appropriate for every student.<sup>22</sup>

The educational choice provided by alternative programs is not prohibited discrimination. The CCA program is no different.

### **Conclusion**

BRSD must recognize these principles. Its attempt to prohibit the reading or studying of any scripture that “could be considered offensive to particular individuals” is not only unwarranted and unrealistic, it is contrary to the Master Agreement between BRSD and the Society, where BRSD agreed not to “attempt to change the essential nature of the CCA program” set out in the School Vision and Purpose Document.

BRSD has directly violated the warning of the Supreme Court of Canada not to interfere in religion or beliefs. BRSD is legally obligated to respect the parental choices expressed through the Society, concerning the religious education of their children at CCA.

The operation of CCA as an alternative program emphasizing a particular religion requires collaboration between BRSD and the Society, principally because only the Society can determine the religious nature of the program and BRSD is constitutionally prohibited from doing so. A clear understanding of these principles is essential for continued and effective collaboration to serve the students attending CCA.

Sincerely,



Marty Moore, J.D.  
Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms  
Counsel for the Cornerstone Christian Academy of Camrose

Enclosures

cc: Cornerstone Christian Academy of Camrose

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<sup>22</sup> See *Alternative Program Handbook* p. 21.

**MASTER AGREEMENT MADE THE 26<sup>th</sup> DAY OF AUGUST, 2009.**  
Amended this 1<sup>st</sup> day of July, 2015.

BETWEEN

**THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF  
BATTLE RIVER REGIONAL DIVISION #31  
(the "Board")**

and

**CORNERSTONE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY OF CAMROSE  
(THE "SOCIETY")**

**Whereas:**

The Society operated a faith based Christian school called Cornerstone Christian Academy of Camrose at the hamlet of Kingman in the Province of Alberta for kindergarten to grade 12 students;

The Society requested that the Board establish and maintain an alternative program based on Christian values for kindergarten to grade 12 in accordance with school board policy and the *School Act* to be known as Cornerstone Christian Academy Program (hereinafter referred to as the "CCA Program");

The Society ceased to operate Cornerstone Christian Academy of Camrose at the end of the 2008-2009 school year and the Board assumed operations of the CCA Program on August 26, 2009;

The Society acts in a consultative capacity to the Board as described in Appendix III of Schedule "A" hereto, respecting the alternative program to be provided as contemplated by this Agreement;

The Society recognizes and supports the commitment of the Board to provide a system of public education that offers a wide range of educational opportunities for all students with the involvement of parents and the community;

The Board recognizes and supports the commitment of the Society in ensuring the availability of a program of studies for students whose parents desire an educational setting which operates in accordance with the religious beliefs, core values, and educational philosophy of Cornerstone Christian Academy of Camrose and the Society;

The educational tenets of the CCA Program are described and defined in Schedule "A" (hereinafter referred to as "School Vision and Purpose") hereto and form a part of this Agreement and are the basis upon which the alternative

program is offered to the public (Schedule "A" is comprised of the following: School Vision and Purpose, Appendix I Statement of Belief, Appendix II Student Covenant, Appendix III Cornerstone Christian School Advisory Council);

**NOW THEREFORE** in consideration of the premises and of the mutual covenants and conditions herein contained and for other good and valuable consideration (the receipt and sufficiency of which the parties hereto mutually acknowledge) the parties hereto covenant and agree as follows:

### **Alternative Program**

#### **1. Creation**

- 1.1 In accordance with and subject to the terms of this Agreement, the Board shall maintain a kindergarten to grade 12 alternative program of studies, pursuant to Section 21 of the *School Act*, R.S.A. 2000 c. S-3. The Board will provide a program of studies in an educational setting which operates in accordance with the School Vision and Purpose. The program will be under the governance of the Board. All Board Policies and Administrative Procedures will apply to the CCA Program.
  - 1.1.1 The Principal of the CCA Program will work with the school council and the Board to implement and maintain the School Vision and Purpose.
  - 1.1.2 The Society hereby grants to the Board and the Board accepts the right, privilege and nonexclusive license to use the name Cornerstone Christian Academy Program in connection with the operation or promotion of the CCA Program and for no other purposes. The Society represents and warrants that it owns the rights to the name Cornerstone Christian Academy of Camrose.
- 1.2 Enrolment to the CCA Program will be consistent with Board Policies and legal obligations and will be accessible to all resident students, if in the opinion of the Board there are sufficient resources and facilities available to accommodate the student, and to the extent permitted by law subject to sections 1.3 and 1.4 of this Agreement.
- 1.3 While it is not an enrolment requirement that students or their families be of a specific faith background, parents who seek enrolment for their child will be requested to sign an agreement indicating their support for the School vision and Purpose of the CCA Program.
- 1.4 Subject to the *School Act*, non-resident students of the Board are welcome in the CCA program if in the opinion of the Board asked to enroll the student, there are sufficient resources and facilities available to accommodate the student.

## **2. Disclosure of Liabilities and Indemnity**

- 2.1 The Society covenants, represents and warrants as follows and acknowledges that the Board is relying upon such covenants, representations and warranties in connection with the making of this Agreement:
- 2.1.1 There are no actions, suits or proceedings pending or threatened against or affecting the Society at law or in equity, or before or by any federal, provincial, municipal or other governmental department, commission, board, bureau, agency or instrumentality, domestic or foreign which action, suit or proceeding involves the possibility of any judgment against or liability of the Society; the Society is not aware of any existing ground on which any such action, suit or proceeding might be commenced with any reasonable likelihood of success;
  - 2.1.2 The Society has been duly incorporated and organized and is validly subsisting in all respects and in good standing under the laws of the Province of Alberta;
  - 2.1.3 All necessary corporate action and proceedings have been taken by the Society to allow it to enter into this Agreement and the Lease Agreement;
  - 2.1.4 The execution and delivery of this Agreement by the Society and the performance of its obligations thereunder do not conflict with or constitute a breach of the constating documents, by-laws or resolutions of the Society or the provisions of any applicable law, statute, rule or regulation in the Province of Alberta or of Canada that governs the Society's activities;
  - 2.1.5 No approval, authorization, consent, permit or other action by, or filing with, any governmental body or authority of any regulatory agency, body or tribunal having its jurisdiction is required in connection with the execution and delivery by the Society of the Agreement and the performance of its obligations thereunder.
- 2.2 The Society shall indemnify the Board for the full amount paid or payable by the Board in respect of any claims, actions, proceedings, damages and costs (including solicitor's fees on a solicitor-client basis) which may arise or be incurred by the Board as a consequence or in relation to the suspension, termination or severance from employment of any Society staff members arising from matters, incidents or behaviours which occurred within the Cornerstone Christian Academy of Camrose or as a result of student/teacher/staff relationships which occurred prior to August 26, 2009.
- 2.3 In addition to the foregoing, the Society shall indemnify the Board for the full amount paid or payable by the Board in respect of any claims, actions,

proceedings, damages and costs (including solicitor's fees on a solicitor-client basis) which may arise or be incurred by the Board as a consequence or in relation to any misrepresentation or any failure to complete actions required of the Society respecting the covenants, representations and warranties contained in article 3.1.

### **3. Employment of CCA Program Staff**

- 3.1 The Board shall staff the CCA Program in accordance with established Board staffing allocations, subject to the terms of any applicable collective agreements and Board policy, practice and procedures.
- 3.2 All current and future certificated staff of the CCA Program shall support the School Vision and Purpose and demonstrate a continuing commitment to implement and carry out the goals and strategies of the School Vision and Purpose. Each certificated staff member shall be required to provide a written commitment to the School Vision and Purpose and demonstrate a continuing commitment to implement and carry out the vision and mission of the CCA Program.
- 3.3 When required, the appointment of the CCA Program administrators shall be carried out in a manner consistent with Board policy, practice and procedures. The interview team shall consult with those individuals designated by the Society to obtain input into the selection process by assisting with the profiling of overarching knowledge, skills and attitudes required for the position. Consistent with BRSD policy, administrative procedures, and practices, the BRSD interview team will not include society representation. The Board agrees that it will hire a principal committed to the School Vision and Purpose outlined in Schedule "A" hereto.

### **4. Employment of Support Staff**

- 4.1 The Board shall provide support staff at the CCA Program in accordance with established Board practice and procedures. Support staff includes all non-certificated staff members such as librarian, school administrative assistant and educational assistants.

### **5. School Council**

- 5.1 A school council for the CCA Program shall be established in accordance with board policy, practice and procedures and section 22 of the *School Act* and related regulations.

### **6. Program Quality**

- 6.1 The important and legitimate consultative role of the Society, as outlined in Schedule A, Appendix III, in helping ensure that the integrity and intent of the School Vision and Purpose is maintained is recognized and supported by the Board. The Board agrees to consult with the individuals appointed by the Society from time to time to ensure the relevance of the religious content and curriculum provided by through the CCA Program and to ensure that it meets with Alberta Education curriculum.
  - 6.2 The Board will not attempt to change the essential nature of the CCA program, as set out in the agreed upon School Vision and Purpose as outlined in Schedule A. If a change involves material alteration to the fundamental principles of the CCA program, such changes require the mutual consent of both parties unless such change is required by law.
  - 6.3 The Society shall inform the Board in writing, prior to the effective date and thereafter as required from time to time, as to the identity of the Society's representatives, including relevant contact information and area of responsibility, for any purposes as contemplated herein and for the ongoing administration of this Agreement.
- 7. Funding**
- 7.1 Funds received from Alberta Education will be allocated for the CCA Program as determined by the Board which will be on the same basis as for other schools and programs.
  - 7.2 The Board shall collect such fees as may be collected of students or their parents as permitted in accordance with the *School Act* or board policy, practice and procedures to operate the CCA Program.
  - 7.3 Funding received from Alberta Education for transportation grants less applicable administration fee (4%) shall be forwarded to Cornerstone Christian Society of Camrose.
- 8. Buildings**
- 8.1 The Society will continue to own the land, buildings and personal property that it owned at the date of the contract. The Board will lease the building for an agreed upon amount. Details of this Agreement will be specified in a lease agreement, which shall be effective for the same time period as this Agreement.
- 9. Transportation**
- 9.1 Transportation of students attending the CCA Program shall be in accordance with statutory obligations and board policy, practice and procedures.

9.2 The Board will provide the use of a bus for extra-curricular and co-curricular activities on a cost recovery basis consistent with current practices for other Board schools and programs.

## **10. Technology**

10.1 Selection, purchase, installation, maintaining, upgrading and servicing of administrative and instructional technological equipment shall be the exclusive and sole responsibility of the Board using the same procedures and practices that are consistent with other Board operated schools. These procedures include the School administrators working with the Board's Technology Department to determine the school's needs.

## **11. Term, Amendment, Termination, Assignment**

11.1 This Agreement shall be effective from July 1, 2015 until June 30, 2020 unless amended, terminated or extended in accordance with this article.

11.2 No amendment or modification to any of the terms of this Agreement shall be valid unless in writing and signed by both parties.

11.2.1 A waiver of any breach of this Agreement shall not be binding upon either party unless the waiver is in writing and signed by both parties. The waiver shall not affect either party's rights with respect to any future breach.

11.2.2 This Agreement may be terminated at any time by mutual consent. If there is not mutual consent, the party wishing to terminate shall provide 365 days' written notice, provided that such notice is effective on June 30 of the following school year. Both parties agree that decisions and actions surrounding termination will be based on what is in the best interests of students and will be carried out with a focus on student well-being. Both parties will do their best not to terminate the Agreement in mid school year.

11.2.3 The Board may terminate this Agreement without notice if the Society becomes insolvent, is assigned into or petitioned into bankruptcy, voluntarily declares bankruptcy or is struck from the corporate register or otherwise fails to exist as a corporate entity.

11.2.4 Each party shall advise the other of its intention to extend this Agreement beyond the initial term on or before May 1, 2020.

**12. Assignment**

- 12.1 This Agreement may not be assigned by the Society without the prior written consent of the Board.
- 12.2 This Agreement may not be assigned by the Board without the prior written consent of the Society.

**13. General**

- 13.1 Any notices to be given hereunder shall be in writing to the other party and shall be delivered personally or by pre-paid registered mail in any case shall be deemed to be given only when received. The addresses shall be:

For the Board:

c/o Superintendent of Schools  
Battle River Regional Division No. 31  
5402-48A Avenue,  
Camrose, AB T4V 0L3

For the Society:

c/o Board Chair  
Cornerstone Christian Academy of Camrose  
PO Box 99 Kingman, AB T0B 2M0

- 13.2 There are no representations, warranties, agreements or understandings between the two parties hereto other than as expressly contained herein and in the schedules attached hereto, and this Agreement contains all the terms and conditions agreed upon by the parties hereto.
- 13.3 Time shall be of the essence in this Agreement.
- 13.4 This Agreement shall be construed and the relations between the parties determined in accordance with the laws of Alberta and the courts of the Province of Alberta shall have exclusive jurisdiction with respect to all matters relating to or arising out of this Agreement.
- 13.5 This Agreement shall enure to the benefit of and be binding upon the parties hereto and their respective successors and assigns.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF** the parties hereto have executed these presents on the day and year first above written.

**THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF BATTLE RIVER REGIONAL DIVISION NO. 31**

Per: 

Per: 

**CORNERSTONE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY OF CAMROSE**

Per: 

Per: 

# Schedule A – Cornerstone Christian Academy School Vision and Purpose Document

**Vision Statement:** Our students will have a good working knowledge of the Bible as a foundation to their education. They will also experience diversity and variety in courses in order to experience more fully God’s creation. An expression of faith in Jesus Christ will be evident in the overall school atmosphere in order to create a positive learning environment where academic achievement is evidenced by meeting or exceeding provincial achievement test averages. No one is excluded from attending Cornerstone, for financial reasons or otherwise, provided that families agree to abide by school policies.

**Mission Statement:** To equip students spiritually, academically, socially and physically in order to be a positive Christian influence serving society.

Cornerstone Christian Academy (CCA) offers a program that integrates faith, life and learning. At its foundation is the Christian Bible, the belief that God is central to our humanity, that Jesus Christ is our personal Saviour and Lord, and God’s Holy Spirit is present and at work in the world today. The program is interdenominational and embraces students and staff from a variety of backgrounds and heritages. It is our goal to fulfil the greatest commandments:

**“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. Love your neighbour as yourself”**

Matthew 22:37-39 (paraphrased)

As an Alternative Christian Program within Battle River School Division (BRSD) CCA offers quality educational programming utilizing Alberta Education Curriculum taught from a Christian perspective. CCA seeks to:

- Challenge students through Christ-centred education to know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord in order to pursue a life of godly character, personal and academic excellence and service to others
- Integrate knowledge of God, the Bible and its relevance into the approved Alberta curriculum. In the classroom, the incidental and purposeful discussion of Christian morals, beliefs and world views are incorporated into each subject
- Assist staff to stay focussed on God’s abundance and the task of Christian Education through regular staff Bible study and prayer
- Focus the student’s attention on God by starting each day with brief Bible study and prayer
- Provide opportunities for students to grow in their relation to God and one another through involvement in regularly scheduled bible classes, chapel times, spiritual emphasis retreats and field trips.

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## **Student Development**

CCA seeks to be a caring community committed to developing excellence in all areas of student's lives by:

### **Spiritually**

- Seeking to have student's confess Christ as Saviour and Lord and express their faith in a relationship with Jesus Christ
- Encouraging and teaching a passion for prayer, Bible study, and applying Biblical truth in their lives
- Striving to fulfil the Great Commission<sup>1</sup> by imparting an understanding of each Christian's place in the church and community and his or her opportunity for witnessing, evangelism and discipling
- Encouraging the development of self-discipline and responsibility in the student based on respect for, and submission to, God and God-ordained authority
- Respecting denominational and theological differences, while celebrating the unity we have in Christ
- Encouraging each student to actively participate and contribute in a local church and support the work of missions
- Actively engaging in community service activities.

### **Intellectually**

- Promoting high academic standards within the potential of the individual as uniquely created by God and helping each student realize his/her academic potential
- Meeting or exceeding the academic requirements of the Alberta curriculum
- Teaching and encouraging the use of good study habits and helping students to assume responsibility for their own academic progress
- Motivating students to pursue independent study in areas of personal interest
- Integrating Biblical perspectives into all academic and intellectual pursuits
- Promoting the use of critical thinking, creativity, logic, and common sense to effectively make decisions and solve problems
- Developing students understanding and appreciation of God's world, an awareness of our role in the environment and our God-given responsibilities to use and preserve it properly
- Creating an appreciation of the visual and performing arts
- Helping students articulate a reasoned defence of the Christian faith
- Helping students to communicate effectively in both written and oral form
- Developing competency in the use of modern technology
- Ensuring students have the tools necessary to succeed in higher education.

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<sup>1</sup> "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28: 19 & 20

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## **Socially**

- Encouraging students to exhibit appropriate emotional maturity and self-confidence
- Preparing students to be contributing members of society who are aware of their dependence on God and on other people
- Developing proper attitudes toward marriage, family and teaching how to establish God-honouring relationships and homes
- Respecting and honouring students, parents, teachers and others in authority
- Promoting the choice of friends who will encourage student's Christian faith
- Teaching students to assume responsibility for their attitudes, actions and goals
- Promoting good citizenship through the understanding and appreciation of our Christian and Canadian heritage of responsible freedom, human dignity, and acceptance of authority
- Demonstrating a work ethic that honours God
- Teaching students how to communicate effectively.

## **Physically**

- Teaching students to regard their bodies as God's temple and to use their bodies to glorify Him
- Promoting healthy lifestyles
- Teaching and demonstrating a healthy approach to food choices and eating
- Providing opportunities to participate in a variety of physical activities to encourage lifelong physical fitness.

## **Staff**

CCA teachers and administrators are professional, knowledgeable Christian educators holding a valid Alberta Teaching Certificate. They affirm the philosophy of the school and agree to support the Christian objectives contained therein. It is expected that all staff will clearly exhibit their enthusiasm, competence and commitment to personal excellence in education at CCA.

- All staff, teachers, support staff and administration will have a strong Christian testimony and show evidence of a meaningful relationship with Christ
- Staff will demonstrate Christian values in the classroom by living with integrity and will uphold high standards of charity, kindness, courtesy and fairness at all times
- Teachers will strive to challenge students to achieve personal excellence and to integrate the Christian faith in life and learning

## **Schedule A – Cornerstone Christian Academy School Vision and Purpose Document**

- Teachers will be purposeful in their discussion of Christian morals and beliefs and integrate these into the learning of different subjects. Lesson plans will show this integration of faith and learning
- Staff will participate in an annual Christian School Teacher’s Convention.
- Teachers will evaluate student progress using methods appropriate to the goals of CCA and within the framework of the BRSD guidelines
- All staff members are expected to uphold Biblical standards regarding moral and sexual behaviour, marriage and family values. They must avoid the use of coarse, questionable language, avoid the use of ridicule and sarcasm, and not engage in gossip or slander
- All staff members are expected to be leaders and models for our students in both conduct and example. Therefore, they are expected to abstain from the following potentially addictive substances and practices: alcohol, tobacco, non-medical drugs, gambling and pornography.

### **Families**

CCA will seek to support parents of students by:

- Cooperating closely with parents in every phase of the student’s development, especially as it relates to the school program
- Helping parents to understand the school’s purpose and programs
- Aiding families in Christian growth and helping them to develop Christ-centred homes
- Assisting parents in keeping up with the changing culture and its effects on the home and the implications for children
- Encouraging regular attendance and involvement in a local church.

### **Community**

CCA seeks to promote a school culture of acceptance, edification, respect and support for one another. In an environment where each person feels safe and encouraged, students and staff will develop a focus on service to the school community and to the external community.

### **School Community**

- CCA students and staff will develop appropriate, meaningful relationships with one another
- Student participation and interaction is actively supported and valued
- Teachers will be willing and able to counsel students when called for and provide extra academic help as needed
- Students will grow in friendships with one another and will be challenged to develop strong interpersonal communication and positive conflict resolution skills
- Student success will be acknowledged and celebrated

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- Discipline policies will require teachers to impose consequences for inappropriate behaviour that are fair, consistent and immediate
- Conflict resolution will be demonstrated and taught using an effective Biblical model, which encourages open communication, quick settlement and the discretion of the parties involved
- All students will be required to speak and behave in a manner that supports Christian expectations and be taught to respect and care for each other
- Parents and teachers will work together to reinforce Christian values taught at home and school
- Parents, staff and students will pray regularly for one another and for the needs of the school.

**External Community**

- CCA will work in partnership with the local community and encourage students to participate in their local communities
- Students will be challenged to be good citizens
- CCA will provide students with growth opportunities through community service and mission projects
- CCA and the CCA Society will promote Christian education within the community and create opportunities for the public to experience Christian education through events such as an annual open house.

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**APPENDIX I**

**Cornerstone Christian Academy Statement of Faith**

**We believe:**

1. There is one God, who is infinitely perfect, existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. Jesus Christ is true God and true man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary. He died upon the cross, the Just for unjust, as a substitutionary sacrifice, and all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of the Scriptures. He is now at the right hand of the Father as our great High Priest. He will come again to establish His Kingdom of righteousness and peace.
3. The Holy Spirit is a divine person, sent to indwell, guide, teach, empower the believer and convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgement.
4. The Old and New Testaments, inerrant as originally given, were verbally inspired by God and are a complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men. They constitute the divine and only rule of Christian faith and practice.
5. Man was originally created in the image and likeness of God; he fell through disobedience, incurring thereby both physical and spiritual death. All men are born with a sinful nature, are separated from the life of God and can be saved only through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The portion of the impenitent and unbelieving is existence forever in conscious torment; and that of the believer, in everlasting joy and bliss.
6. Salvation has been provided through Jesus Christ for all men; and those who repent and believe in Him are born again of the Holy Spirit, receive the gift of eternal life and become the children of God.
7. It is the will of God that each believer should be filled with the Holy Spirit and be sanctified wholly, being separated from sin and the world and fully dedicated to the will of God, thereby receiving power for holy living and effective service. This is both a crisis and a progressive experience wrought in the life of the believer subsequent to conversion.
8. Provision is made in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ for the healing of the mortal body. Prayer for the sick and anointing with oil are taught in the Scriptures and are privileges for the Church in this present age.
9. The Church consists of all those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, are redeemed through His blood, and are born again of the Holy Spirit. Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church, which has been commissioned by Him to go into all the world as a witness, preaching the Gospel to all nations.
10. The local church is a body of believers in Christ who are joined together for the worship of God, the edification through the Word of God, for prayer, fellowship, the proclamation of the Gospel, and observances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.
11. Christ shall return in the last days for His bride; the body of Christ in order to establish the kingdom of God.

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12. There shall be a bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust; for the former, a resurrection unto life; for the latter, a resurrection unto judgement.

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**APPENDIX II**

**Cornerstone Christian Academy Student Covenant**

According to the Bible, parents are responsible for the training of their children (Deut. 6: 1 -7. Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6: 1-4). Cornerstone Christian Academy serves as partners in providing an excellent education consistent with biblical truth. Harmony between home and school provides the best environment for godly training to take place. We seek to nurture development of the following essential character traits in the lives of our students.

**INTEGRITY: Maintaining a lifestyle that is above reproach.**

A person should be honest, moral and trustworthy in all dealings (Titus 1:8; Job 27:5; Prov. 11:3; 1 Kings 9:4; Ps. 15).

**RESPECT: An attitude that highly esteems those in properly placed authority.**

Parents, teachers, employers, governmental authority and church leaders have been placed in our lives by God. God gave a biblical command to honour them for our own good. (Rom. 13:1-7; Heb. 13:7; 1 Peter 2:13-21; 1 Thess. 5:12-13).

**OBEDIENCE: The outworking of the attitude of respect.**

We are to obey God and all those He has placed over us in our lives. When we obey we show love and respect for God and the authorities He has ordained. Our lives then will be long and fruitful as He has promised (John 14:21; Eph. 6:1-4; Rom. 13: 1-7; Prov. 6:23).

**SELF-DISCIPLINE: The ability to control one's thoughts and actions.**

The goal is to have a life under control --- self disciplined by the Spirit of God (Gal. 5:22-26; Job 5:1 7, Prov. 16:53, 25:28; 1 Tim. 4:7&8).

**GODLY LIVING: A lifestyle that exhibit's the fruit of the Spirit and flees from the acts of our sinful nature.**

Our standards are found in God's Word and our desire must be one with God and His holiness (Gal. 5:16-26; 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Peter 1 :13-16, 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:12-20; Prov. 23:29-35; Phil. 4:4; Rom. 8:6-8).

**WISDOM: Understanding what is true from God's perspective, and doing what is right.**

Wisdom comes from God and our respect for Him. It is developed in our lives by our proper response to correction. If we do not respond to correction with a teachable spirit, the Bible calls us fools and unable to attain wisdom (Prov. 1 :7, 20-33; Prov. 2:1-22; Prov. 4:7).

**RESPONSIBILITY: Being dependable and accountable in all relationships and tasks.**

We are accountable to each other to love, encourage confront comfort and forgive. Furthermore, initiative, intellectual integrity and excellence should be the marks of all tasks we attempt (1 Cor. 13; Matt. 1 8:15-17; Gal. 1-5; Eph. 5:29-32; Eccl. 9:10).

**THANKFULNESS: Developing an attitude of gratefulness.**

We are thankful for everything God brings into our lives. Knowing that God's dealings in our lives are intended for our "good" we will help create an attitude of gratefulness for the things others do for us (Phil 4: 6.7: 1 Thess. 5:1 8, Col. 2:7; Eph. 5:20).

**SERVICE: A spirit of humility in focusing on the needs of others.**

Christ is our example of living a life that is not self-centred but rather seeking ways to serve not rule (Eph. 5:2 1 ; Phil. 2:3- 1 1 ; James 4:6,10).

**ETERNAL VALUES: A focus that is upward.**

The key is to live each day with the realization that only what is done for eternity counts (James 4: 14; Matt. 6:33. Matt. 6:19- 21).

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**Covenant Response Form**  
Cornerstone Christian Academy

**For all Parents**

We are in support of the School Vision and Purpose, objectives, standards of conduct and the principles of this covenant and agree to have our child(ren) taught at CCA according to these principles.

If at any time we can no longer work together in a spirit of unity and under the guidelines of the School Vision and Purpose document, and all reasonable avenues of communication are exhausted, we will withdraw our child(ren) from Cornerstone Christian Academy.

We understand that wilful disobedience by our child(ren) to these principles and the guidelines outlined in the school handbook may result in dismissal from Cornerstone Christian Academy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Father's Signature (or Legal Guardian) \_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mother's Signature (or Legal Guardian) \_\_\_\_\_ Date

**For grade 7-12 Students**

I desire to attend Cornerstone Christian Academy and am willing to be under the authority of my parents in submitting and deferring to their wishes concerning enrolment at Cornerstone Christian Academy.

I understand that Christian teachers are in partnership with my parents. I will strive to obey them also as they seek to train me according to God's Word.

I will seek to live a godly life in and out of school in order that Jesus Christ will be glorified.

I understand that wilful disobedience to these principles and the guidelines outlined in the school handbook may result in my dismissal from Cornerstone Christian Academy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date

**For the school**

The faculty and staff of Cornerstone Christian Academy pledge by God's grace to uphold the principles of this covenant and CCA guidelines as we together train your children.

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**Appendix III**

**Cornerstone Christian Academy Society Council**

The Cornerstone Christian Academy School Advisory Council exists to foundationally support all operational aspects of the Cornerstone Christian Academy Educational Program. The Advisory Council will provide visionary leadership, business management expertise; facilitate effective communication and model enthusiastic co-operation between CCA and the BRSD.

- The CCA Society will promote the mission of the CCA Educational Program
- The CCA Society will encourage parents and other community members to understand and support the mission and values of the CCA Education Program
- Open communication, integrity and co-operation will characterize the CCA Society's relations with the BRSD
- The CCA Society will actively participate in the selection process for the principal of the school
- The CCA Society will provide a sound financial basis to maintain the school buildings and property, and the quality of the program in accordance with its mission.

**Cornerstone Christian School Council**

The Cornerstone Christian School Council will abide by the Battle River School Division Administrative Procedure 110.