

Aurora Academic Charter Secondary School

School Council Update - Sept. 4, 2025

Theme for the month: Building a Community

Starting our third year in the building, we have strong processes and are focusing on improving procedures and implementing new ideas.

Our focus in September has been making people feel welcomed and part of the school: parents, students, and staff.

Academics:

- **Supporting struggling students:** lunch tutoring in all core subjects; tutor bank of senior students for hire; individual meetings before the start of school for all students who were in danger of retention last year so they have a plan for this year
- **Supporting higher achievers:** competitions in math, English, science, and social studies; AP classes in Biology and Chemistry; AP support for Psychology; Dual Credit courses in all subjects (can take a full semester of university before graduate high school)
- **University planning:** October 1st Apply-a-thon for grade 12s, High School and Career planning mandatory subject for grade 8 & 9; Campus tours for grade 10-11's; after school university fair Nov 27 for all students and parents g 9-12

Awards:

- **UofA Surgery Summer Camp:** [Education | Department of Surgery](#): 6 students were accepted to program after we were invited personally by the School of Medicine due to our expanding reputation and the success of our dual-credit students.
 - Students have the chance to learn and practice surgical skills in the simulation lab, get tips on preparing for the MCAT, meet surgeons, and attend presentations from distinguished scientists and clinicians at the Department of Surgery.
 - Aurora Student Essay B. won First Place and Garv N. won Second Place in the final challenge: The Surgery Case Competition (60 students participated)
- **Fareed A. and Ms. Wilson - National Summer Leadership Institute in Toronto**
 - Selected for all-expenses paid trip to Toronto Institute: to equip young leaders with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to actively engage with global issues, promote sustainable development, and foster global citizenship. Participants explore global challenges, leadership skills, and strategies for effective engagement.
 - \$500 micro grant for student project

Extracurriculars:

- **After School Teams:**
 - Junior High Boys and Girls Soccer
 - Senior High Boys Volleyball
 - Junior and Senior High Speech and Debate Team
- **Lunch Activities:** Improv Club, Library Club, Music Room, Student Leadership Care Bears, GSA, Soccer Intramurals, tutoring in all core subjects

Special Events:

- 30th Anniversary and Grand Opening Skyrattler - parent ideas? Volunteers?
- Speech Tournament October 23. 4:30-7 pm- volunteers?
- Junior High Regional Debate Finals - volunteers
- Jan 23 Science Fair - all welcome (activities for littles) - Help us find judges 2-6 PM
- June End of Year Carnival for District 4:30-7:30
 - Feedback from last year? Date: Thurs, June 4 (before long weekend? Or Friday, June 12?

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Building Updates:

- **Summer Improvements:** main floor hallways and doors repainted; student den repainted; ceiling tiles replaced; staffroom turned into classroom so that students have windows, bought portable Air Conditioners for all classrooms that have windows - huge improvement
- **Planned Upgrades this year:** roof repairs start Sept 8 (will not impact classes), applying for grant for new lights in gym, hanging banners in gym, replacing basketball brackets and motor, installing lights and AV equipment for stage productions for drama

Volunteering:

- **Start of School:** 35 students and parents helped set up school and hand out locks
- **Student Care Bears:** lunch club that volunteers for student events and with Lions Club
- **Leadership Class:** grade 8 & 9 - students learn about community service and plan an action project, as well as fundraise for it
- **Parent Volunteers Needed:**
 - School Council and District Fundraising Society
 - Speech Tournament October 23. 4:30-7 pm- volunteers?
 - Junior High Regional Debate Finals - volunteers
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Extended Absences:

- Last year, 25 students missed a total of 283 days. Shortest absence: 5 days; Longest absence 32 days. This year already had 5 students request more than 20 days.
 - Serious impact on class - teachers trying to manage multiple students leaving at different times; other students neglected because absent student needs help; correlation between absences and eventual retention in grade
 - Alberta Education now wants reporting about "chronic absenteeism" of 10% or more of year
 - Education Act: Parents must send students under 16 to school
- Spoke to School Council last year about ideas
 - Parents recommended 10 days as appropriate "normal" vacation time
 - Parents recommended more 1:1 time explaining to parents and more communication about not taking long absences more than 10 days
- Tightening up expectations:
 - If 4 days of school in a row - no problem
 - If 5-10 days, speak to Principal who can approve
 - Might not approve if student is struggling
 - If 11+ days, not approved. Expectation is that you are at school
 - If have special circumstances, speak to Principal
 - Principal will notify Superintendent, who can grant Leave of Absence, depending on circumstances, but may not approve if leave is too long or student is struggling
 - 18 days, even with Leave of Absence, reported to School Board and to Alberta Education
 - Board can take action to withdraw students who do not attend school if absent without leave; student could be placed in online learning program until following year or could lose spot at Aurora entirely
 - Alberta Education Attendance Board investigates and may involve Child and Family Services
 - 20% of Grade 10-12 courses = automatically withdrawn from course (same as other high schools)