

## Alberta School Councils' Association Meeting March 12, 2024

Attended Via Zoom Meeting at 6:30pm to 8:45pm

In attendance: School Council Executive, Principal and Members of the School Community

Resources:

[Alberta School Councils' Association: Home](#)  
[Intro Slides - General: Alberta School Councils' Association](#)

School Council Resource Guide [181387 \(albertaschoolcouncils.ca\)](#)

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### POTENTIAL Action Items?

OPERATING PROCEDURES - we need to create some?

Executive Transition Checklist  
Succession Planning

AGM?

School Council Annual Report

School Council Mission Statement

ALWAYS INDICATE WHAT WE ARE FUNDRAISING FOR!  
BE TRANSPARENT - SO PARENTS SEE THE VALUE

Find Studies on the value to parent engagement (effective)

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SCHOOL COUNCIL IS... (a legislated term... expected to use this terminology)

- A means for parents and community members to work together with the principal and the school community to support and enhance student learning.
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## **School Council Participant Roles**

### **School Council Chair**

It is expected that the School Council Chairperson will be a parent of a student enrolled in the school.

The Chair should be someone who can work collaboratively and knows how to organize programs and people. The Chair should actively encourage others to become involved in meaningful ways.

Typical Chairing duties include:

- Chair all meetings of the School Council;
- Coordinate with the Principal to co-create meeting agendas;
- Communicate with the Principal on a regular basis;
- Decide all matters relating to Rules of Order at the meetings;
- Ensure that School Council Operating Procedures are current and followed;
- Be the official spokesperson of the School Council;
- Ensure there is regular communication with the whole school community,
- Review any communication to the school community prior to distribution and include the Principal in same;
- Stay informed about School Board policy that impacts School Council;
- Comply with the School Councils Regulation by providing the school board with an annual report that summarizes the School Council's activities for the previous school year, including a financial statement relating to money, if any, handled by the School Council, no later than September 30th;
- Have general responsibility for all activities of the School Council;

### **Chair's Relationship with the Principal**

- The Chair's role is key to the success of the School Council. Partnerships work – so use them! One important responsibility is regular and ongoing communication with the school Principal. This relationship of mutual trust and respect must be nurtured, being mindful of common goals for the learning community.

## **Vice-Chair**

On School Councils, the Chair depends on the Vice-Chair to undertake part of the work. The Vice-Chair is typically being groomed to run as Chair in the future.

Typically, the Vice-Chair's duties are to:

- In the event of resignation, incapacity or leave of absence of the Chair, fulfill the Chair's
- responsibilities (while remaining in Vice-Chair position);
- In the absence of the Chair, supervise the affairs and preside at any meetings of the School Council;
- Work with and support the Chair in agenda preparation;
- Ensure the appropriate management, in compliance with PIPA, of any personal information collected on behalf of the School Council;
- Assume responsibility, in consultation with the School Council, for communicating with the fundraising association or other parent groups within the School;
- Promote teamwork and assist the Chair in the smooth running of the meetings;
- Keep informed of relevant School and School Division policies;
- Prepare to run for the position of Chair in the future;
- Assist the Chair and undertake tasks assigned by the Chair.

## **Secretary**

The School Council Secretary typically will:

- Act as a recorder at each meeting and ensure that the minutes are prepared accurately to reflect the directions agreed to at the meeting;
- Keep minutes, correspondence, records and other School Council documents, and ensure that all relevant documents (as per legislation) are available to the public in an accessible location in the School, for a period of 7 years;
- Maintain a dated record of all the members of the School Council who have knowingly provided their contact information (Permission to Contact Form), in compliance with PIPA;
- Distribute, as determined by the School Council, agendas, minutes, notices of meetings and notices of other events;

## **Treasurer (if handling funds, depending on school board policy)**

If the School Council is handling money, through fundraising activities or donations, the Treasurer will:

- Keep accurate records of all financial transactions;
- Ensure that records are available upon request of the School Board or school community;

- Be responsible for the deposits of all monies paid to the School Council in whatever bank, trust company, credit union or treasury branch the School Council may order;
- Present a full, detailed account of receipts and disbursements to the School Council as required by the School Council, and prepare the financial statements for the annual report;
- Supervise the affairs and preside at any meetings of the financial committee.

### **Principal**

The Principal is the instructional leader who manages the day-to-day operations of the school and is a key member on School Council who promotes cooperation between the school and the community. The principal is the ultimate decision-maker in the school. The Principal implements the policies of Alberta Education and the local school board, ensures instruction is consistent with the Programs of Study, ensures the standards of education are met, evaluates the programs, maintains order and discipline within the school, evaluates and supervises teachers and supervises the evaluation and advancement of students.

As a provincially-mandated member of the School Council, the Principal:

- Works in collaboration with the Chair to co-create School Council agendas
- Supports the Chair in running efficient School Council meetings, as per the School Council Rules of Order
- Provides contextual information, as requested by the School Council, on matters relating to the school
- Promotes cooperation between the school and the community it serves
- Seeks input from the School Council, parents and community on major decisions that affect the school
- Establishes, facilitates, communicates and encourages opportunities for School Council, parent and community engagement in school matters
- Encourages and supports the formation and continuous improvement of School Council
- Interprets and shares results of provincial achievement tests and diploma exams
- Shares information about the school community
- Provides information on the programs in the school and the needs of the students
- Refers School Council to the appropriate resource for information on laws, regulations and policies that affect School Council
- Enables the School Council to provide input into the school's education plan.

## **Teacher**

Each School Council must have at least one Teacher Representative, as per the legislation. A Teacher Representative contributes to a successful School Council in the following ways:

- Promotes a collaborative, collegial model of decision making at the school and for the School Council and provides support for the decisions of the School Council
- Shares professional knowledge with School Council members
- Encourages parents and community members to become involved in school activities
- Shares School Council activities and information with other staff, parents and community members
- Follows the code of ethics and professional protocols set out by the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA)
- Represents the teachers' perspective.
- Example: Feature Teacher on the agenda – a different teacher each month gives a brief update/summary of what their class/grade is doing. May want to include a few students as well (bring in new parents to the meetings).

## **Communication Specialist**

The Communication Specialist works under the direct supervision of the School Council and undertakes all responsibilities in consultation and cooperation with the School Council Chair and the School Principal. In general, the Communication Specialist applies his/her communications expertise to improve the links between the School Council and the School Community and to advance the goals and profile of the School Council.

The Communication Specialist of the School Council, in consultation with the Chair and the Principal, may:

- Assist the School Council in developing, implementing and evaluating a Communication Policy and Communications Plan.
- Prepare School Council Newsletters and the School Council's section of the School Newsletters.
- Provide information for the School Council section of the School website to inform of the purpose and structure of the School Council, highlight activities and accomplishments of the School Council and to promote parental involvement.
- Ensure that the information in the School Council section of the (School Name) Parent's Handbook is updated annually.
- Develop promotional material for the Annual General Meeting, special events, projects and programs and other School Council materials as directed by the

School Council and in keeping with the School Council Communications Policy and the Communications Plan.

- Collaborate with Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) in obtaining templates and samples for promotional and other School Council materials.
- Assist the Chair and the School Council by proofreading and editing reports, correspondence and other material, to ensure they reflect the School Council in a professional and consistent manner.
- Develop communication strategies which facilitate two-way communication between the School Council and the School Community. (Surveys, discussion groups, social media).
- Promote the School and its activities with the public (local media, community newspapers), as requested by the Principal.
- Assess the effectiveness of School Council publications, distribution systems, etc. and recommend improvements.
- Attend School Council meetings regularly.
- Managing social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, website).

### **Parents and others**

Parents of children enrolled in the school form the majority of the members of School Council. The School Council may choose to include "Others" in their membership such as: Elders or Knowledge Keepers, religious leaders (ie. Imam; parish priest), School Resource Officer, School-Home Liaison (social worker), community newspaper columnist.

Parents and other members of the School Council will:

- Share their professional knowledge, expertise and life experience;
  - Encourage feedback and participation from community groups and individuals;
  - Communicate information of interest to the School Council and the school community;
  - Share information from School Council meetings with the community;
  - Have a clear understanding of the School Council's purpose;
  - Attend School Council meetings;
  - Identify possible topics for agendas;
  - Serve as a liaison between the School Council and their organization or area of responsibility.
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## RESPONSIBILITY OF SCHOOL COUNCILS

- Foster, develop, maintain and reflect the culture of the school
- Provide the opportunity to participate in the **advisory role**
- Create the forum for discussion (*we are a liaison to the community*)
- Seek and represent school community views

**Other ideas... create a survey to get opinions of all parents! Comment Box! Be present at all events with a School Council Table.**

**Principal has power of veto - we are advisory**

## SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

- Principal
- Teacher
- Student (if senior high)
- Parents of children enrolled in the school must be the majority
- Others as decided

**School Councils are legislated/required to have at schools in Alberta!**

## “SHALL,” “MUST” AND “MAY” ...IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?

- Shall: (8) – paraphrased as “has the duty to”. (mandatory) “A board shall establish a dispute resolution process...”
- Must: (1) – imposes a legal obligation (mandatory). Required by law. “For each school operated by a board, a school council must be established in accordance with the regulations.”
- May: (4a) – ‘permissive’...something is allowed...or choice “A school council may, at its discretion, **advise** the principal and the board respecting any matter relating to the school.”

## A SCHOOL BOARD **MUST**... (NO “IFS, ANDS OR BUTS”)

- 12(1) ...provide the School Council with an opportunity to provide advice on the development of the school’s
- (a) foundations statements, if any, respecting the school’s vision, principles and beliefs,
- (b) policies,

- (c) annual education plan and annual results report required by the Minister to be reported under section 67 of the Act, and
- (d) budget required to be reported under section 139 of the Act.

**A SCHOOL BOARD MUST ALSO... (AGAIN, NO “IFS, ANDS OR BUTS”)**

- 12(2) ...provide the school council with
- (a) the results for the school from provincial assessments and an interpretation of these results, and
- (b) the same information that the board disseminates to students,

**A SCHOOL BOARD SHALL... (REMEMBER, “SHALL” = “MANDATORY”)**

55(8) Establish a dispute resolution process to address disputes between the principal and the school council with respect to policies proposed or adopted for a school.

**LET’S REFRAME THAT QUESTION**

**What is NOT on the table for discussion?**

- Personal
- Personnel
- Legal

**WHAT MUST A SCHOOL COUNCIL DO? SCHOOL COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT**

- 14(1) The chair of a school council must prepare and provide to the board by September 30 of each year a report
- (a) summarizing the activities of the school council in the previous school year, and
- (b) detailing, in accordance with the policies referred to in section
- 13(2), the receipt, handling and use of any money by the school council in the previous school year.

School Councils Regulation, Alberta Regulation 94/2019

**WHAT ELSE MUST A SCHOOL COUNCIL DO? SCHOOL COUNCIL MINUTES**

- 14(2) A School Council must retain at the school a copy of the minutes for each meeting of the School Council and make them available to the board or the public on request.



- 14(3) School Council must retain the minutes for each meeting of the School Council for at least 7 years.

### **A SCHOOL COUNCIL MAY: (AT ITS DISCRETION...)**

- Advise the Principal and the Board respecting any matter relating to the school
- Perform any duty...delegated to it by the Board... *(e.g., doing a survey and so they ask us to promote it to the parents).*
- Decide operating procedures for itself *(Optional working document that we can have to highlight what we do and how we operate).*
- Carry out activities related to its advisory role
- Handle monies *(typically - in and out the same year)*

### **WHEN SHOULD SCHOOL COUNCILS "LOBBY"?**

- Reduced Speed Limits
- Objection to Marijuana Retail
- Establishments
- Planned Power Lines

### **A SCHOOL COUNCIL MAY: (AT ITS DISCRETION, )**

- Advise the principal and the board respecting any matter relating to the school,  
SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT ROLE
- Perform any duty...delegated to it by the Board...
- Decide operating procedures for itself
- Carry out activities related to its advisory role
- Handle monies

### **ADVISE ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE SCHOOL, SUCH AS....**

- Professional Practice Standards
- Alberta Education Initiatives impact at local, division level voice at provincial level through ASCA
- Respecting Diversity and
- Promoting Inclusion
- Advancing Reconciliation
- Development of School Policies
- Annual Results Reports
- Development of School Budget:

- ABED \$ Division \$ School \$
- Education Plans
- Assurance Framework

## **MINISTRY OF EDUCATION BUSINESS PLAN 2023 - 2026**

### **MINISTRY OUTCOMES:**

- Alberta's students are successful.
- First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students in Alberta are successful.
- Alberta has excellent teachers, school leaders, and school authority leaders.
- Alberta's K-12 education system is well governed and managed.
- Budget 2023 – Education Business Plan 2023-26:  
<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/cea65c12-a239-4bd9-8275-3ab54d84f5b3/resource/d9ea2981-a6a8-4af7-a738->

### **The 5 Assurance FRAMEWORK Areas:**

- Student Growth and Achievement
- Teaching and Leading
- Learning Supports
- Governance
- Local and Societal Context **(Engage with stakeholders, including parents)**

### **SOME WAYS SCHOOL COUNCIL CAN SUPPORT THE ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK:**

- Become familiar with the Assurance Framework and the related school authority planning and reporting requirements
- Review the School Division's education plan and annual education report (posted annually on Division's website by November 30 and May 31, respectively) and those of the School (posted annually on either the school or School Division website)
- Participate in engagement opportunities surrounding the development of School and School Division education plan priorities
- Participate in engagement opportunities respecting results and progress towards meeting the School Division's priorities
- Participate in the development of school education plans, annual education results reports, and budget
- Educate Grade 4, 7 and 10 parents about the Alberta Education Assurance parent survey and encourage them to complete it

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## **GOOD ADVICE LOOKS LIKE...**

- Advise the Principal and the Board respecting matters relating to the School.
- Inquire by “Seeking to Understand”
- What does this look like in our school?
- How does this help to support student success?

**We are ambassadors of the school**

## **HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE**

- Principals have to consider many perspectives when making decisions in the best interest of the students in their school.

## **WHAT CAN SCHOOL COUNCILS DECIDE?**

1. Who will choose the work of School Council? Executive, all members...
2. What work will be done? Advising, educating, communicating, planning...
3. How will the work be done? Committees, surveys, special events, parent sessions...
4. Who will do the work? Everyone, no one... someone?

## **A SCHOOL COUNCIL MAY: CARRY OUT ACTIVITIES RELATED TO ITS ADVISORY ROLE**

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Timely

## **ONE YEAR SCHOOL COUNCIL PLAN - TEMPLATES ONLINE for a SMART CHART EG YEAR END BBQ**

- Use the smart plan to structure the planning
- Create committees for events as it will bring in more of the school community.

## HANDOUT WHAT CAN SCHOOL COUNCILS DO

Some concrete examples for school councils to support the learning objectives of the school.

### **Goal: Build Citizenship Characteristics**

#### **School Council Actions:**

- Promote multicultural activities; presentations from community leaders, families, students highlighting culture, food, dance, customs, clothing, etc.
- Network with schools/school councils with similar demographics and goals.
- Host family activities in the school: reading nights, potluck dinners, parent reception on first day of school (welcome new and/or Kindergarten parents).

### **Goal: Promote Healthy Lifestyles**

#### **School Council Actions:**

- Encourage “Choose always” foods to be used for lunch and snack programs (Hot Lunch, Fun Lunch, etc.)
- Sponsor and promote lunch and afterschool fitness programs (Zumba, Skipping, Hip Hop Dance, sports for fun, etc.)
- Support and encourage intramurals. Provide volunteers, recognition, etc. when possible.
- Host family information sessions on nutrition, mental health, physical health, drug and alcohol abuse awareness, Digital Citizenship, etc.

### **Goal: Enhance Student Achievement**

#### **School Council Actions:**

- Organize a Homework or Study Club utilizing student mentors from neighbouring junior or senior high schools.
- Host parent information sessions on core curriculum expectations (math, science, language arts, social studies)
- Promote an Adult Reader Club inviting adults in the community to come read to/with students.
- Promote an Adult Mentor Club inviting adults in the community to mentor students in any area of learning.
- Support home reading: provide books, book exchanges, recognition of reading milestones, etc.

### **Goal: Support our School Community**

#### **School Council Actions:**

- Organize a clothing donation drive.
  - Contribute to breakfast, lunch and snack programs.
  - Collect extra school supplies for distribution to students in need.
  - Provide or source translation services.
  - Seek additional funding sources and community programs to assist students and families.
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**CONCLUSION**

- School Councils Have a legislated purpose which involves the Principal, Parents, community and the Board
- May make decisions related to how they want to fulfill that purpose

**NEXT STEPS**

1. Implement what you've learned today
  2. Schedule/register for your next ASCA Learning Opportunity
  3. Invite more people (parents, grandparents, teachers, EAs, students, community members) to learn alongside you, and to support your students' learning success
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**School Council Annual Report template**

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting Year: \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL COUNCIL ACTIVITIES:**

Summarize the major activities of the past year. Which goals of the school did each support?

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Summarize the engagement opportunities attended by a representative of your School Council. (ie: Board's Annual Stakeholder Engagement Meeting)

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Summarize the engagement opportunities your school council hosted

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Provide an overview of activities or initiatives planned for the next year.

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Financial Statement (attached): Summarizes the finances handled by the school council, not the registered fund raising association/society, during the past year, if applicable. Yes\_\_\_\_  
N/A

Executive: List the members who held positions as officers in the past year:

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Meeting Dates: List the dates of regular school council meetings:

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Date of AGM:

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School Council Chairperson

Date

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## **SCHOOL COUNCIL FUNDRAISING ASSOCIATION PARTNERSHIP PURPOSE**

### TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

To gain a basic understanding of:

- The main similarities and differences between School Councils and Fundraising Associations.
- Who has the authority to make decisions related to their areas of responsibility.
- How both organizations can work together to benefit students and the school community.

### WHAT IS A "FUNDRAISING ASSOCIATION"?

- School Fundraising Association/Society:
- The Societies Act regulates Societies incorporated in Alberta.
- Societies are formed by five or more people who share a common recreational, cultural, scientific, or charitable interest.
- Incorporation results in legal authority, ability and liability.

### Majority of Differences

- Authority
- Accountability
- Responsibility
- Reporting

## RELATIONSHIPS

- If a School Council has the purpose to advise on matters relating to the school, and a Registered Society has the purpose to raise funds to support and enhance the education of the students at the school, what types of relationships can there be?
- And: Where does the Principal fit into all of this?

## ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIP

- 1. School Council only: limited fundraising; does not participate in extensive fundraising and purchasing, focuses on advising. OR
- 2. School Council and Fundraising Association work closely together: they both fundraise and advise. OR
- 3. School Council and Fundraising Association work independently: School Council advises, Fundraising Association raises money – School and School Council ask Fundraising Association for money to support goals.

## WORKING RELATIONSHIP = PARTNERSHIP FOR SUCCESS

- A School Council and a Fundraising Association work to support & enhance the school environment
- Roles & responsibilities are different
- Relationships should be clearly defined and communicated
- The Principal, by virtue of the Education Act, shall have the power of veto relating to actions directly affecting the school building, staff or students, but not relating to financial expenditures, revenues or investments of the Society.

## CASE STUDIES

- 2 distinct groups with very different and specific roles
- Strong Respectful Relationships

## CONCLUSION

- Fundraising Associations have very different legislative, authoritative and accountability factors than School Councils.
- The Principal is the final decision maker when it comes to actions directly affecting the school building, staff or students.
- Fundraising Associations and School Councils can work together effectively if they understand their roles and authority.



## NEXT STEPS

- 1. Implement what you've learned today
- 2. Schedule/register for your next ASCA Learning Opportunity
- 3. Invite more people (parents, grandparents, teachers, EAs, students, community members) to learn alongside you, and to support your students' learning success