

Governance Types



Representative

School Council elects or appoints individuals to specific positions (representing a specific class or activity area, etc). Only parents that are designated have a vote. All other attendees are welcome to participate at meetings but are not eligible to vote.

Implications

- School council represents the larger school community.
- School council is responsible for communicating to the school community.
- Often it is class representation and the rep reports back to the parents in their class.
- Only school council can participate in decision making but any parent attending the meeting can participate in the meeting and discussion.

Strengths

- Decisions are made with school council members that have all of the historical information.
- Decisions can be made efficiently.
- Roles are clear, relationships are developed.

Limitations

- May not seem inclusive.
- Communication to the school community may not be happening.
- May be difficult to have equal representation.
- More potential for personal information used for communication purposes not being handled appropriately.



Governance Types

Town Hall

All parents that attend meetings are welcome to participate and vote. An executive committee is elected to manage meetings and coordinate school council business.

Implications

- The executive do the work or delegate the work.
- School community is responsible for knowing school council business.
- Every parent is a member of school council.
- Every parent can participate in the decision making.

Strengths

- School council is inclusive and accessible.
- More parents may be knowledgeable of school council business.
- School council may have more parents involved.

Limitations

- School council members attending may not be aware of the historical information.
- Discussion may be difficult to guide.
- Roles and procedures may not be clear.
- Decision making may be confusing or difficult.
- There may not be a sense of obligation for the parents to attend the meetings.

Combined

Many school councils have taken aspects of each model and created a model that reflects their community and serves their purposes.



School Council Participant Roles

School Council Chair

It is expected that the School Council Chairperson will be a parent of a student attending the school. The Chair should be someone who can work collaboratively and knows how to organize both 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 establish 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;
- Have signing authority, if required, on any financial accounts together with the vice-chair and/or the treasurer;
- 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. 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 some School Councils, the role of Chair is shared, either through the creation of co-Chairing positions or through the Chair's dependence on the Vice-Chair to undertake part of the work.

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;
- 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 Board policies;



School Council Participant Roles

- Prepare to assume the position of Chair in the future;
- Have signing authority, if required, on any financial accounts together with the Chair and/or the treasurer;
- 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, in compliance with PIPA;
- Distribute, as determined by the School Council, agendas, minutes, notices of meetings and notices of other events;

Treasurer

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;
- Have signing authority on any financial accounts together with the Chair and/or Vice-Chair;
- 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 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 prepare 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



School Council Participant Roles

- 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.

Communication Officer

The Communication Officer 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 Officer 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 Officer 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.



School Council Participant Roles

- 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.

Parents and others

Parents of children enrolled at the school form the majority of the members of School Council.

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 objectives;
- Attend School Council meetings;
- Identify possible topics for agendas;
- Serve as a liaison between the School Council and their organization or area of responsibility.



Glossary

- Accountability** An obligation to answer for the execution of one's assigned responsibilities
- Accountability Pillar** A report summarizing the provincial accountability process created to give school boards a consistent way to measure their success and assess progress using a broad spectrum of measures
- Action Plan** Specifies the tasks required to be done, the person required for the task, the target completion date and the anticipated completion date
- Advising** Information offered as an opinion or recommendation about future action or counsel
- Advocacy** Support or argument for a cause or policy
- Alternative Program** A program that emphasizes a particular language, culture, religion or subject-matter or uses a particular teaching philosophy – but not a special education program and not a religious education program provided by a separate school board
- Authorized Resources** Materials that have been approved by the Ministry of Education as appropriate to support the mandated curriculum
- Board, School Board** Elected governing body of a school district, division or jurisdiction; also referred to as a School Authority
- Bylaw** A law or rule governing the internal affairs of an organization
- Charter School** A school operated by a society incorporated under the *Societies Act* or a company registered under Part 9 of the *Companies Act*
- Code of Ethics** A guide to behaviour of a high moral standard
- Community Representative** A member of the community or a representative of a business that has a link with the school
- Consensus** A decision-making process that finds the highest level of agreement amongst a number of participants
- Consultation** A discussion where participants share their individual opinions or perspectives on a topic(s)
- Credit Enrolment Unit** A funding unit used to calculate base instructional funding at the high school level for school authorities
- Curriculum** All the courses of study offered by an educational institution
- Curriculum Handbook for Parents** replaced by the digital resource “**My Child’s Learning**”, provides details of expected outcomes for each grade/course authorized by ABED
- Dual Credit Strategy** A way in which students may earn post secondary credits with high school course credits
- Dual Track School** A school that has one or more alternative programs, in addition to its regular program
- Early Childhood Services Program** An education program provided to a child who, as of September 1, is younger than 6 years of age; pursuant to Section 30 of the *School Act*.
- Education Partners** Provincial level organizations representing stakeholder groups
- Education Plan / Three (3) Year Education Plan** A three-year education plan, updated annually, developed by both the school and school jurisdiction.
- Financial Plan** A revenue and expenditure summary and a description of how resources will be used to address priorities and implement the education plan
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act** Gives individuals a right of access to records that are in the custody or under the control of a school board or charter board, subject to limited and specific exceptions set out in the Act.
- Funding Framework** The guidelines for allocation of funds to school authorities in Alberta (allocated in three blocks: instruction, support and capital)
- Gifted and Talented** Designation of a category of special need student
- Grade Level Achievement** The grade of curriculum a student has mastered
- Governance** The act of establishing and monitoring the long-term direction of an organization through policy



Inclusive Education System A way in which to provide all students with the most appropriate learning environments and opportunities to best achieve their potential; ensuring that each student belongs and receives a quality education no matter their ability, disability, language, cultural background, gender, or age

Individualized Program Plan A precise plan of action designed to address the student's/child's special education needs, based on assessment information that provides the basis for intervention strategies. An **IPP** is mandatory for all students/children identified with special education needs

Knowledge and Employability Program A program of studies for Grade 8 – 12 students incorporating employability skills and knowledge, resulting in a Certificate of High School Achievement rather than a High School Diploma

Legislation A proposed or enacted law or group of laws

Liability Is the responsibility of one person or organization to another, enforceable in law

Lobby Group A group of persons engaged in trying to influence legislators or other public officials in favour of a specific cause

Mandate The legal authorization to act given to a person or organization

Mild, Moderate, Severe Designation of a category of student with special needs

Mission A statement of the organization's educational purpose with a focus on students

Outreach Program A program offered in a stand-alone facility which provides a basic education for students who are unable to attend or benefit from a regular school program

Parental Engagement The act of engaging or condition of being engaged, in education

Program Unit Funding (ECS) A category of funding related to special needs ECS students

Personal Information and Protection Act Protects individual privacy by requiring private sector organizations to obtain consent for the collection, use and disclosure of personal information

Policy A consistent course of action demonstrated through a stream of decision making

Program of Choice A program chosen by parents, such as home education, one with a strong language or cultural focus, or outreach education

Provincial Achievement Test An annual series of tests administered to students in grades 6 and 9 which are intended to assist Alberta Education and school authority personnel in ensuring that high-quality education is provided to all students in the province

Regulations A law, rule, or other order prescribed by authority, especially to regulate conduct.

Results Report / Annual Education Results Report Public documents meant to inform parents and the public of the progress made by their school authority toward achieving the goals and outcomes of their Three-Year Education Plans

School Act A document passed in the Legislature outlining the requirements and expectations of K-12 education.

School Authority Includes school jurisdictions, funded accredited private schools, and private ECS operators

School Community Students enrolled in the school and their parents, children enrolled in an ECS program at the school and their parents, the school staff and other persons who have an interest in the school

School Council A collective association of parents, teachers, secondary students, principals, staff and community representative(s) who work together to effectively support and enhance student learning – mandated under Section 22 of the *School Act*

School Related Matters Undefined by ABED and education partners; specifics may be at the discretion of the School Council and school community

Society Five or more people who share a common recreational, cultural, scientific or charitable interest (a society may not incorporate primarily to carry on a trade or business)

Student Learning Assessment A series of computer-based tests administered at the start of the school year. They will maintain a strong focus on literacy and numeracy, and will also enable students to demonstrate competencies such as creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving.

Trustee In accordance with the *School Act*, a member of a board, as defined as a board of trustees of a district or division



Education Acronyms

AB ED Alberta Education
ACSTA Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association
ACHSC Alberta Coalition for Healthy School Communities
ACYI Alberta Children and Youth Initiative
ADL Alberta Distance Learning
ADLC Alberta Distance Learning Centre
AGM Annual General Meeting
ASBA Alberta School Boards Association
ASCA Alberta School Councils' Association
AERR Annual Education Results Report
ARPDC Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia
ASBOA Association of School Business Officials of Alberta
ASCA Alberta School Councils' Association
ATA The Alberta Teachers' Association
CALM Career and Life Management
CASS College of Alberta School Superintendents
CEU Credit Enrolment Unit
CHSF Canadian Home and School Federation
CPAC Curriculum Policy Advisory Committee
CPF Canadian Parents for French
COATS Council on Alberta Teaching Standards
COSC Council of School Councils
CSA Council on School Administration (*Principals*)
CTS Career and Technology Studies
DIPs Diploma Examinations
ECS Early Childhood Services
ELL English Language Learner/Learning
ERLC Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium
ESL English as a Second Language
FNMI First Nations, Métis, Inuit
FOIP Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
FPFA Fédération des parents francophones de l'Alberta
FSL French as a Second Language
FTE Full-Time Equivalent
GLA Grade Level of Achievement
IPP Individualized Program Plan
K&E or **KEP** Knowledge and Employability Program (formerly Integrated Occupational Programming)
LRC Learning Resources Centre
PATS Provincial Achievement Tests
PD Professional Development
PIPA Personal Information Protection Act
PLC Parent Link Centre or Professional Learning Community
PPCSL Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders
PSBAA Public School Boards Association of Alberta
PUF Program Unit Funding
RAP Registered Apprenticeship Program
SACS Safe and Caring Schools (and Communities)
SALS School Authority Leader Standard (Superintendents)
SHIP Student Health Initiative Program
SLA Student Learning Assessment
SLS School Leadership Standard (Principals)
TQS Teacher Quality Standards



Additional Resources

Alberta School Councils' Association

Provides resources, including school council development and advocacy services for Alberta School Councils. <http://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca>

Phone: 780-454-9867 **Toll Free:** 1-800-661-3470

Alberta Corporate Registries

Provides related to registered societies <http://www.servicealberta.gov.ab.ca/Societies.cfm>

Phone: 310-0000

Alberta Education

Provides information for parents, students and educators as well as contact information for school boards and schools throughout Alberta. <http://education.alberta.ca>

Phone: 780-427-7219 (For toll-free access within Alberta, first dial 310-0000.)

Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission

Provides information to registered societies related to gaming activities and licenses <http://www.aglc.ca/>

Phone: 780-447-8600 **Toll Free:** 1-800-272-8876

Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia

Promotes student learning and achievement, school improvement and parental engagement in education by providing professional development services at the local, regional and provincial levels.

<http://www.arpdc.ab.ca>

Phone: 780-444-2497

Alberta Teachers' Association

Provides additional information for parents. <http://www.teachers.ab.ca/Pages/Home.aspx>

Phone: 1-800-232-7208

Alberta Learning Information Service

Offers career planning, learning and employment resources. <http://alis.alberta.ca/index.html>

Phone: 310-0000

Board Development Program

Provides assistance to not-for-profit boards in the area of governance.

<http://culture.alberta.ca/bdp/default.aspx>

Phone: 780-427-2001 or Dial toll free 310-0000 then the number

LearnAlberta.ca

Provides learning resources for Alberta's Kindergarten to Grade 12 community.

<http://www.learnalberta.ca>



Additional References

A Principal's Guide to Working Effectively with Your School Council, Alberta Learning, 2004; [Limited hard copies available by request through the ASCA office](#)

[Planning resources for School Authorities](#), Alberta Education

[Accountability Pillar](#), Alberta Education

[Alberta School Council Resource Manual](#), Alberta School Councils' Association, 2007

[Alberta School Councils' Association](#)

[Policy and Requirements for School Board Planning and Results Reporting](#), Alberta Education 2016

[Parents' Participation in School Improvement Processes](#), Canadian Education Association 2004

[People for Education](#), Ontario

[Realities, Perspectives and Challenges: A Survey of Alberta School Councils](#), Alberta School Councils' Association, 2008

[Inspired Partnerships](#), Alberta School Councils' Association

[School Act Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000](#), Alberta Education

[School Councils Regulation 113/2007](#), Alberta Education, 2007

