

ASCA Information Sheet

March 2023

School councils are structured groups of parents, principals, teachers, secondary students, and community representatives who work together to effectively support and enhance student learning. They provide a method for members of the school community to consult with and offer advice to the principal and the school board.

Parents play a vital role in student success and can participate in decisions that impact student learning through school council. By contributing knowledge, perspective, and ideas at school council or COSC meetings, parents are actively contributing to school community and school district success.

The Government of Alberta recognizes the value of parents and the community in the education of children, and by law requires school councils in every school operated by a school board in Alberta.

Established school councils:

- focus on what is best for all students in the school
- consider the interests of all school stakeholders
- develop, maintain and reflect the culture of the school
- represent the parent voice in the school community

The purpose of School Council is:

To enhance student learning and participate in school improvement planning.

It's important to remember that **the school council works in partnership with the principal as it serves to provide the “parent perspective”**. **Advise the principal and the board** respecting matters relating to the school.

School Councils are:

- Wanted and Needed (Purpose, Benefits and Value)
- Required by Law (Legislation)
- Accountable (Rights/Responsibilities & Choices)
- Reflective of the School Community

What's in it for parents?

- Gain an understanding of the school and its programs
- Build a relationship with principal, professional and support staff

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- Get involved in school improvement planning
- Advise the principal on school improvement strategies and processes

What's in it for the community?

- Feel connected to the school (students, staff, parents)
- Learn about successes and challenges first hand – not through gossip or rumours
- Contribute positively to the lives of children

What's in it for the principal?

- Get a sense of the thoughts, ideas, and hopes of parents in the broader school community
- A group of aware and engaged parents can be the school's ambassadors, advocates, supporters
- Parents on School Council who are advising on the school's 3-year education plan can support the goals in the plan and encourage other parents to do the same
(Example: enhancing literacy – parents introducing strategies to support literacy – reading at home, asking about homework, bringing in a speaker to inform parents of curriculum, etc.)

What's in it for the school division?

- Gain insight into the parents' ideas, philosophies and values in the district/division
- Can provide information to a district wide collective of School Councils or individual School Councils
- Receive feedback on proposed policies, directions prior to proceeding

What's in it for trustees/superintendent?

- Trustee attending School Council meetings can act as an info conduit – providing information to School Council
- Bring the parental perspective from that school back to the board agenda

What's in it for our students?

- Higher student achievement
- Better student attendance
- Positive student attitudes and behaviors
- Higher student graduation rates