

SCHOOL COUNCILS

Background

The Division encourages the formation of a School Council for each school to promote meaningful involvement in the education of the students served by the school. The primary role of the School Council is to involve as many parents as possible in the partnership between home, community and school, and to provide guidance in matters relating to the school.

Procedures

1. In accordance with the School Act and Alberta Education Regulations, the Principal shall provide for the organization, operation and reporting of a School Council where the majority of the members of the council shall be parents, elected by other parents of students attending the school during the establishment meeting, or as set by the School Council constitution or by-laws thereafter.

School Council membership at a high school shall include a minimum of nine (9) members while at an elementary, middle or junior high school, School Council membership shall include a minimum of seven (7) members. The total membership must include:

- 1.1 The Principal;
 - 1.2 At least one teacher elected by the teachers at that school;
 - 1.3 At least one student elected by peers, if a high school, and
 - 1.4 At least one member of the community as appointed by the School Council or elected at the establishment meeting or as set by the School Council constitution and/or by-laws.
2. Should there not be enough interest in forming a School Council in any given year, the powers and duties of the council shall revert to the Principal for that year only and the Principal will establish an advisory committee.
 3. Each School Council may adopt a constitution which outlines the council's internal by-laws and methods of operation. The constitution and/or set of by-laws may contain the following:
 - 3.1 A purpose or mission statement of the School Council;
 - 3.2 The operating procedures including the number of meetings per year;
 - 3.3 The number of officers and the process of electing same;
 - 3.4 A designation of the duties of the officers;
 - 3.5 The functions of the School Council;
 - 3.6 The location and conduct of the meetings and the manner of presentation of motions;
 - 3.7 Membership; and the number of School Council members that constitutes a quorum at meetings;
 - 3.8 Procedures for amending the constitution and/or bylaws.
 4. The Principal will inform School Council members of proposed policies and administrative procedures and shall provide opportunities for School Council representatives to provide feedback and suggestions either through the Principal or through a presentation to the Policy Committee.

5. Each School Council shall have a written procedural appeal mechanism or a conflict resolution process for resolving disputes among School Council members, between the School Council and the wider community and, between the School Council and the school staff.
6. A School Council may be dissolved in accordance with the School Act.
7. The Principal has the ultimate responsibility for the operation of the school as outlined in the School Act but, at the same time, recognizes School Councils have an important role in:
 - 7.1 Supporting school activities;
 - 7.2 Advising the Principal and staff with respect to matters related to the school such as the school's guiding philosophy, beliefs, goals, budgetary priorities, rules and procedures and the standards of conduct and discipline;
 - 7.3 Providing liaison between the school and the community and determining the methods of communicating with the public;
 - 7.4 Consulting with the Principal so that the Principal may ensure that students in the school have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister;
 - 7.5 Consulting with the Principal to determine how the results for school achievement tests and diploma examinations will be reported to parents and the public;
 - 7.6 Performing any function or duty required under the Regulations of Alberta Education and;
 - 7.7 Performing any function or duty delegated by the Board.
8. Should conflict arise within the operation of the School Council, either the School Council Chair or the Principal may file a formal Review Request (Form 110-2) with the Superintendent. The written request will outline the decision or concern of the School Council or the Principal and include a copy of the minutes of the School Council meeting.

Within fifteen (15) working days of receiving the Review Request, the Superintendent shall attempt to resolve the matter in a way that is acceptable to both parties. If the Superintendent is unable to achieve a mutually satisfactory solution, he/she shall recommend in writing the actions to be taken in regards to the complaint. The Superintendent's decision shall be binding on both parties and non-appealable.

9. The School Council shall report annually to the Superintendent (Form 110-1) as per School Council Regulations as follows:

The School Council Chair must annually prepare and provide to the Superintendent a report:

- 9.1 Setting out the activities of the School Council in the year;
- 9.2 Including a financial statement relating to money handled by the School Council in the year, if any, and
- 9.3 Including a copy of the minutes for each meeting of the School Council held in the year.

Reference: Section 20, 22, 60, 61, School Act
 School Councils Regulation 171/98
 School Councils Policy 1.8.3
 School Councils Resources Manual (1995)
 School Councils Handbook (1999)