

SCHOOL COUNCILS

Background

The Division encourages and promotes the establishment of School Councils in its schools in accordance with the Education Act.

The Division encourages the involvement of parents in the affairs of schools and the school system through participation in School Councils to facilitate interaction among parents, educators and students to better serve the Catholic community and support the Division's mission and vision.

Procedures

1. The Principal is responsible for the management and operation of the school as assigned by the Education Act, Board policy and administrative procedures.
2. The School Council must include the Principal and a majority of parents enrolled in the school and may include the following members:
 - 2.1. At least one teacher at the school;
 - 2.2. If the school includes a high school program, at least one student enrolled in the high school, elected or appointed by the students enrolled in the high school;
 - 2.3. Members of the school council may establish a process to appoint as members of the school council one or more persons who are not parents of students enrolled in the school but who have an interest in the school.
3. In addition to purposes stated in statute and regulation, the purposes of the School Council shall be to:
 - 3.1. Offer advice and consultation to the Principal, the Superintendent and the Board about any matter relevant to school operations;
 - 3.2. Encourage greater parent participation in the education of their children;
 - 3.3. Promote parent understanding of the education system and teaching and learning processes;
 - 3.4. Provide parents an organization for expressing their support for education;
 - 3.5. Foster a total Catholic school community;

- 3.6. Work together to ensure the best possible Catholic education for students in the school and the broader school community;
 - 3.7. Enhance communication between the home and the school;
 - 3.8. Provide input from parents in the development of the mission of the school and in the attainment of that mission;
 - 3.9. Receive reports from the Principal on the school program, general policies and organization of the school;
 - 3.10. Receive reports and suggestions from parents and community groups on school-related matters.
4. School Councils are required to adhere to Board policy and Division administrative procedures in all aspects of their operation.
 5. The School Council may make its own bylaws and rules with respect to the operation of the Council.
 6. The School Council shall provide to the Board for information, through the Superintendent, a copy of any bylaws or rules of operation.
 7. The School Council shall provide its annual activity summary report and detailed financial report to the Board on or before June 30.
 8. The School Council shall 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. The School Council must retain the minutes for each meeting of the school council for at least 7 years.
 9. The accounts and financial affairs of the School Council will be subject to audit from time to time by the Secretary-Treasurer or designate.
 10. Principal approved costs associated with the operation of the School Council shall be included in the operational budget of the school.
11. Establishment
 - 11.1. The Principal shall assist with the establishment of a School Council.
 - 11.2. A school council must have a chair and any other members of the executive determined by the persons attending the establishment meeting.
 - 11.3. Where a school is unsuccessful in establishing a School Council, the Principal shall make every effort to establish a parent liaison committee for that year.
 - 11.4. Where a quorum of the School Council is not reached pursuant to the regulations, the operation of the School Council will be suspended until the following school year. The

Principal shall attempt to establish a parent liaison committee for the remainder of that year.

12. Dispute Resolution

Where an irresolvable dispute arises between the School Council and the Principal, or within the School Council, the following will apply:

- 12.1. The dispute resolution process shall be conducted in a timely manner.
- 12.2. Each party to the dispute shall submit the nature of the dispute, in writing to the Superintendent.
- 12.3. The Superintendent or designate shall attempt a resolution.
- 12.4. If the dispute cannot be resolved, the Superintendent will convene a resolution committee. This committee shall include a School Council member from another school, a Principal from another school, and an independent Chair appointed by the Superintendent.
- 12.5. The resolution committee will convene a hearing in an attempt to resolve the dispute. A representative of the School Council, and the Principal or designate, will each be invited to present the nature of the dispute. The Superintendent will outline the process used to resolve the dispute to this point.
- 12.6. The resolution committee will make recommendations regarding the resolution of the dispute.
- 12.7. Costs associated with the activity of the resolution committee will be assessed equally to the school budget and to the School Council.
- 12.8. Where the dispute is still unresolved, the Superintendent will present the issue to the Board for resolution.
- 12.9. The decision of the Board shall be binding on all parties.

13. Finance

- 13.1. Funds acquired by school councils shall follow the procedures described in AP 511 - School Generated Funds and AP 512 - Cash Management.
- 13.2. School councils cannot raise funds or solicit donations in any manner that would require a license under the Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Act.
- 13.3. Any funds raised by school councils shall be remitted to the school for accounting in the Division's records. School councils shall not retain separate bank accounts.
- 13.4. Once accepted, funds will be tracked in separate school project accounts. The Principal shall provide the school council with monthly financial reports of the funds and a council representative may pre-authorize the disbursement of funds.

- 13.5. Councils choosing to administer their funds independently must register a separate legal organization under the Societies Act.

14. Division Support

- 14.1. Elk Island Catholic Schools will pay for the annual membership of each school council in the Alberta School Council Association (ASCA) and encourage school councils to send members to the yearly ASCA conference.
- 14.2. When the School Board or Division Leadership request members of a school council to attend specific meetings or engagement activities outside of their school community, mileage claims may be submitted by attending school members for reimbursement by the school division. Amount of members eligible for mileage shall be determined based on the activity.

15. Catholic Education Parent Advisory Council

- 15.1. Each year a meeting will be held prior to the end of October to establish and organize for the Catholic Education Parent Advisory Council (CEPAC) for the current school year.
- 15.2. At the opening meeting, format and function will be established including proposed dates for three meetings in the school year. Additional meetings can be added based on need.
- 15.3. Meetings may be conducted by use of technology verses face to face.
- 15.4. Engagement and consulting activities may utilize technology and electronic forms of feedback.
- 15.5. The Catholic Education Parent Advisory Council provides the following benefits to School Councils and the School Division:
 - Professional Development
 - Information and Education Evenings
 - Liaison between School Councils and the School Division
 - Engagement with various Partners
 - Consultation

Reference: *Education Act*, SA 2012, c E-0.3, ss. 33, 52, 53, 55, 197, 222, 251
School Councils Regulation, AR 94/2019
Alberta School Council Resource Manual