

Do School Councils have a say in school, district and provincial policy? Absolutely!

School Councils can advise on K-12 education and learning successes of kids at the local and provincial levels of the system

1. Local Advising on district policy(ies) and Administrative Procedures

School Council is a great opportunity for parents to engage in discussions with Principals, Trustees, school staff and each other about knowing what protocols, processes and policies are in place to so kids know they are welcome and safe and they are confident in their learning environment.

Board/school policies that are related to recent developments in the K-12 education system may range from field trip policies through to sexual orientation and gender policies, school fees and transportation, healthy school environments and use of technology.

The policies a Board refers to and requires its staff to comply with are accessible through the district website, usually linked to a tab for the information about the Board of Trustees and their work.

Generally speaking, districts have regularly scheduled policy review dates in place.

If any of your district or school policies are being reviewed your school council may request to provide input to the policy or input on the proposed revisions, or often, school councils or Councils of School Councils (CoSC's) will be approached by their districts and invited to provide input to policies up for review or on proposed policy revisions.

As a school council executive you may choose to:

- Have the item on a meeting agenda and after input and discussion from parents, work together to submit a single response or;
- Act as the communication conduit between the parents in the school community and the district by inviting parents to submit their individual feedback to your council and your council can forward responses as received to the district;
- Make parents in your school community aware of the opportunity to provide input and let them submit on their own if they wish;
- Co-ordinate an all school community night with trustees from your school board to discuss the issue.

POTENTIAL QUESTIONS for parents to bring to **school council meetings** regarding a district policy in development or under review:

- What information/documents will/did the district use in their development of this policy?
- Are we able to access the same information/documents to review them for ourselves?
- How can we provide input to the district's policy development process on any policy through the school council or Council of School Councils?
- Will the school council or district office organize a school wide opportunity for parents to consider draft policy?

POTENTIAL QUESTIONS for school council representatives to bring to **district contacts** regarding the development or review of district policy.

- What information/documents will the district be using in their development of this policy?
- Will someone from the district come out to a school council sponsored discussion on the complexities of this policy development?
- Will school councils or representatives from Councils of School Council have an opportunity to provide input to the draft
- Will the policy respect the current infrastructure of our schools?
- How will this policy affect the day to day routines for students at school?

Advising ASCA on *provincial* initiatives

ASCA seeks and strongly supports opportunities to connect parents through school councils directly to Alberta Education invitations for input. ASCA may do this by providing:

- links to surveys hosted by Alberta Education;
- topic specific informational webinars hosted by ASCA eg Competency Indicators in Curriculum. Archived webinars are also housed on the site if you wish to listen to them at a later date;
- invitations to school councils to share their thoughts on specific initiative implementation in their districts.

Available Input opportunities will be communicated to school council through

- The regularly distributed enews which goes to all school council chairs for whom we have a current email address as well as to all schools
- The webinar calendar through the website

Please contact the office at parents@albertaschoolcouncils.ca and indicate you wish to be added to our email list.

In addition to providing local level and district support and information for school councils, The Alberta School Councils' Association is invited to work closely at the provincial level to provide advice to Alberta Education on numerous K-12 education projects and initiatives. ASCA advice is based on member advocacy positions that are communicated to the Board of Directors annually at the provincial Annual General Meeting, as well as through the province-wide School Council Engagement Task Force.

To submit your council's wish to participate on the **School Council Engagement Task Force** please follow this link: <http://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/about/the-parent-voice/school-council-engagement>

To find information on what ASCA is saying at the provincial level visit: <http://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/about/the-parent-voice/advocacy>

Here your council can find annual advocacy updates on representation ASCA has provided on behalf of its member school councils as well as the Advocacy Policy Manual of the ASCA.

If your school council is an ASCA member and you need to develop an advocacy policy position on an issue, your school council is able to adopt the ASCA position if it is appropriate to your circumstance.

To access information about the K-12 education system visit www.education.alberta.ca or connect to Alberta Education through our website.