

ASCA Member Conversation Exchange Results

2019 Annual Conference

Inclusion and Diversity

ASCA Member Perspectives

This year's ASCA Conference theme is all about school councils "**building bridges**", promoting positive engagement in the school community for student success.

Alberta Education's Business Plan – specifically Outcome 3 – ties in with our theme of building bridges. Outcome 3 states: **Alberta's education system respects diversity and promotes inclusion.** Education plays an important role in the preparation of responsible, caring, and successful citizens. An inclusive education system is established when the system anticipates and values diversity, understands learners' strengths and needs, and reduces barriers to promote a culture of well-being.

School Councils are in an ideal position to **be the bridge** to promote and support inclusivity and diversity in the school community, and to promote a culture of well-being.

1. Conversation 1 – Defining Inclusion and Diversity

Thinking of our theme this year – Building Bridges – and focusing on ABED's Outcome 3 (inclusion and diversity), what activities does your school council currently engage in or support that promote inclusion and diversity?

Health & Wellness

- share health info from AB Health Services in school newsletter
- through our Healthy Hunger Program, we encourage cultural diversity through diverse food choices
- Wellness Night
- healthy snack fridge – open to all
- Breakfast Programs
- Mustard Seed lunches
- meeting dietary restrictions
- food programs – Hot Lunch, Grab 'n Go, breakfast
- Healing Seed – fresh fruit and veggies
- Pancake Breakfast
- Smoothie Day
- animal therapy – dogs in classrooms, horse visits
- sensory room
- after school sports
- gender neutral washrooms
- barrier free/accessible playground
- classroom-based SOGI
- safe classroom place
- playground equipment for wheelchair student

Cultural Events

- host culture specific events for all to attend ie. Bollywood Gala
- Indigenous Culture Days (feasts, Pow Wow, drummers)
- Multicultural Evening
- International Food Fair/Culture Food Day
- Blanket Exercise (include community)
- cultural awareness
 - Rock Your Mocs – wear your moccasins to school
 - student-led sharing on background/immigration to Canada
- French Week Celebration
- Indigenous Culture Week
- Attendance Pow Wow
- United Nations School Cultural Celebration
- Bannock Day
- hoop dancing
- land acknowledgement at sc meetings and concerts

Events/Groups

- participate in the Great Kindness Challenge encouraging all students to do acts of kindness to everyone
- work fair – organized by Jr and Sr High
- Awareness Days – especially ones that affect student body
- 7 Habit School – ie. Leader in Me Program
- take part in programs for community support ie brown bagging, food drives
- Pink and Orange Shirt Day
- Green Shirt Day – organ donation
- Theme Days K-9 – focused on causes and social issues
- Buddy Bench
- Bubbles for Autism
- Between Friends (activities with seniors in the school)
- Friends and Funds (long-term care engagement Gr. 2)
- Moonwalk (Gr. 10-12) – take long-term care out on wheelchairs for ice cream
- military engagement (Remembrance Day is important to us so we have guest speakers)
- Leadership Program
 - Grade 8 – within the classroom
 - SPCA, senior homes
 - engagement in the community
- Welcome Back / New Family BBQ
- Engaged Local Oilmen's
- afternoon tea for elderly in the school
- singing for elderly in care home
- Friendship Program – Lunch Support Program

- House Leagues – financially support, social media support
- emotional/spiritual gatherings
- meetings include student support
- Water Walk, WE Day
- Animal Assisted Community Program that comes into the Elementary School
- River Run
- Special Olympics
- turkey dinner for all students and staff at Christmas – no cost
- Soup Days for all students – no cost
- creating stockings for the elderly in partnership with students
- support GSAs
- “Houses” – (school teams) – ie. grade 8s welcome grade 1s into the “Houses” – Harry Potter inspired

Education/Resources

- Early Learning Mobile Unit (ELMU)
- 4 Schools/1 Book – all kids and teachers read the same book at the same pace and celebrate it together
- diversity of courses
- services for immigrant families - ESL
- Learning Support Team member came to discuss inclusion of all students with any disabilities or learning support requirements (ie. autism, hard of hearing etc.)
- learning sessions – topical ie. healthy eating, robotics/coding
- educating sc members on current topics of interest ie. social understanding of students and parents needs to happen
- teachers educating parents on the complex needs of students at the school ie. wheelchairs, feeding tubes etc.
- Cree language to the studies
- culture sharing (FMNI)
- reading buddies / mentoring buddies
- various language classes
- sc networking – PD sharing
- Altview providing leadership and resources to help form GSA within school
- art school – Indigenous performances
- cultural diverse school – drama, music from a variety of cultural groups
- adapted course content
- grade level groupings for special projects
- ASCA
- Central AB Refugee Effort Centre
- Math Matters Nights
- sc collaborations
- caregiver education series
- WIN Program – Junior High level – anything they need to feel included in the school population
- One World – One Center – Newcomers to Canada

Miscellaneous

- networks meetings with Trustees & Superintendents
- community pride – through volunteering
- Parent Steering Committee – Inclusive learning
- no one plays alone
- small communities – everyone knows everything
- older kids paired with younger
- built the outhouses through Fish 'n Wildlife Association – donated back to seniors
- grads to go to the grade 6s in their cap and gown and chat with them
- COSC meeting monthly
- community leaders working together
- student coaching (peer)
- staff appreciation - take fruit trays or veggie trays to school for Teacher Appreciation Week – 4 days and 1 day we make a hot meal for teachers and also provide supervision so staff can all sit down and enjoy their meal (parents do this with sc)
- volunteering in the school and for field trips
- supporting school decisions
- inclusion of new students – slow integration to catch up to peers
- cost sharing of speakers between schools in district
- host events that donate to community organizations ie. Food Bank
- important to engage local politicians
- attend town council to get info on community issues
- access your regional consortium – invite them to your meetings
- exposing students to other cultures by bringing in presenters
- school newsletter includes community activities
- speakers brought in
- attends community meetings
- rural connection
- sc support board through consultation
- lots of opportunity to strengthen
- alternate meeting times and days to allow for broader range of working/non-working parents
- council membership made up of a variety of ethnic backgrounds
- minimizing isolation
- seclusion room discussion
- all feel welcome – student rep
- community reps take part in sc meetings to share perspectives
- peer support groups (pods) to have lunch and do activities
- bridging parents
- pen pal writing with an indigenous group culminating in a meeting for a picnic
- district board meetings

- urban vs. rural
- religious diversity
- social media awareness talks
- diversity in sc executives
- stakeholder meetings: councils, trustees, board members, admin, parents, etc.

2. Conversation 2 – Promoting Inclusion and Diversity

As the bridge between, and into, the school and community, how and with whom has your school council been able to promote diversity and inclusion?

Health & Wellness

- healthy snacks available for everyone
- child peer helpers for children with disabilities
- Buddy Benches
- Hope Squad – self-esteem (Elementary School), suicide prevention (High School)
- Michael Link – presenter - Residential School survivor spoke about his experience, talked about mental health while playing basketball
- Lunch Program – multicultural meals
- AHS met with teachers to talk with them about how to bring in mental health resources
- Hats On for mental health
- safe & caring atmosphere
- gender support from public – Catholic and vice versa (acceptance)
- guest speaker for ADHD
- bring in Alberta Health Services
- working with community for inclusion – accessibility, learning disability, LGBTQ, behavior, medical challenges
- academic inclusion – equitable achievements
- different groups and sports teams to create a safe place for all students of differing interests
- spectrum sensory room
- safety practice
- Alt View came to speak with parents and students
- when building a playground, make it accessible and inclusive

Cultural Events

- smudge ceremony
- blanket ceremony
- hoop display
- guests from other cultures
- traditional ceremony
- jigging
- elder visits and partnership with Native Friendship Centre
- promoting French Canadian cultural activities
- bringing in speakers and presenters to teach Inuit culture

- elder comes to school – “Capoeira” present and dance
- multi-cultural day – dress up for culture – food for the culture
- explore what cultural/heritage opportunities that are available to the community
- cultural food event – sold tickets and others could attend
- First Nations liaison attends 1-2 times a year
- host info session on FNMI for parents
- read Treaty acknowledgment
- Bollywood evening
- teachers attended cultural workshop and brought teachings back to council
- promoting/financial support for Aboriginal liaison from school – moves out to the school community
- international potluck
- multicultural info sessions from students
- FNMI knowledge keeper
- parent volunteers helped make fry bread with elders
- Cree as an option language
- district has employed an indigenous person to be able to consult on indigenous issues
- multicultural dinner for new-comers
- Carnival Day/French culture celebrations
- Cultural Awareness Committee – different cultural prayers, dances, history
- Ancestry Day – create a timeline of ancestry/history of their family
- Indigenous Fair, dancers
- Cree classes, beading
- Indigenous women made bannock
- French immersion – culture week
- Orange Shirt Day, Pink Shirt Day
- Music Alive – Métis music classes one day with a concert at the end
- June – Indigenous Day – made stew
- Indigenous teaching ie. “Raven”, hoop dancing, drumming

Events/Groups

- seniors lunch (students serve)
- Kindness Challenge
- military appreciation – veterans come
- students bring a traditional food for teacher appreciation
- police force “Wits” Program
- welcome house – Fire Department/Police
- SOGI 123 Spectrum Club
- Leader-in-me Program
- “Stockings for Seniors” initiative – fundraise, fill stockings and deliver them to long-term care and senior’s housing
- “WE Day” opportunities
- Leadership Programs
- FAST Program – community group that engages families with each other in food and games nights

- GSA – classroom liaison – lunch club
- Friendship Society comes in and runs program for 6 weeks (for FNMI students and anyone else that wants to join)
- diversity based celebrations
 - Bubbles Day for Autism
 - Rock your Socks for Down Syndrome
- admin does a lot to bridge gap – Canadian Citizenship Ceremony
- family dances, including all ages
- Welcome BBQ
- Resource Fair of different community members
- career fairs
- Marathon Club within community
- Parent/Community Nights ie. anxiety, safety, literacy
- Sign Language Club

Education/Resources

- service dog education
- SOGI resources
- anti-bullying parent education
- accelerated reading program
- day trips/field trips to incorporate all of the surrounding nature areas
- councils have brought in speakers/presenters at beginning of meetings
- English and 2nd language training

Miscellaneous

- calming rooms
- ASL as option
- School/Community liaisons
- have promoted events
- babysitting provided for AGM
- police liaison
- best practices in informing members of new/current initiatives, terminology and terms
- engage student leadership – attend each other’s meetings
- helped other school groups with inclusive events – promotion, funding
- partnerships with community businesses to support students of varying homes (cultural, financial, etc.)
- fundraisers for charity – ie. student with cancer
- support for families who may be experiencing financial difficulties
- events that bring together community members, build a sense of community
- playground conversations
- task lists of varying capacities to involve many parents on sc
- evaluate as a sc what inclusion means to our council and how to broaden that meaning
- work on building Relationship Committees to build partnerships
- Sign up Genius Websites
- Volunteer Signup.com Website

- from the top – ask if we are inclusive and promote diversity - if not, fix it (how?)
- guest speakers and sc meetings
- communicate out info for Ag. Society/Community Leagues
- hold virtual meetings so more people can participate
- Operating Procedures include community members
- parents translate important info
- make events accessible
- building bridges mentorship amongst parents
- Facebook page
- Facebook Live
- to include a variety of parents to attend meetings
- grade level presentations at meetings
- COSCs
- social media
- support parental inservices
- facilitate junior/senior teachers to visit K-5 school for transition
- support student conferences
- personal invite from admin to join school council
- sc members attend city-wide meetings with speakers from various organizations – set up parent nights with some of these organizations
- cooking nights to bring people out to sc meetings
- English for refugee women partnership
- grandparents come in to talk about cultures
- silent auction and scavenger hunt
- museum comes into school
- offer childcare, varied times for council meetings
- community leaders address the kids on current topics
- translators in 7+ languages represented
- sign language translator
- EA trained in braille to help a student learn to read
- funds allocated for in-need programs ie. GSA, potlucks, FNMI
- community bulletin board of community events, workshops, etc.
- document translation services
- need to engage diversity in school councils themselves
- sc will host non-meeting events with opportunities for inclusion and to promote diversity
- community support working with school councils –parent community (all backgrounds) – bridging that gap
- welcome community members to participate in fundraisers
- attend forums and bring info back to school council and put in newsletter
- bring MLA to join sc

3. Conversation 3 – Bridging Partnerships to Promote Inclusion and Diversity

Looking forward, how would your school council like to support and promote inclusion and diversity using its role as the bridge?

Health & Wellness

- social justice
- bridging the gap between parents and GSAs
- SOGI 123 and students from GSA – talk to sc
- partnership with Sexual Assault Centre to make newsletter item on cyber safety for kids
- buddies with other kids
- Mental Health Week
- education around cannabis and vaping for students and parents
- have brought in presenters from GSA groups to present to sc
- engage families with kids with unique/special needs to ensure that supports are there to support inclusion
- bringing in LGBTQ2S+ speakers to raise awareness and tolerance
- examining shared experiences – boys and girls learning about sexual health issues (everyone learns about periods!)
- more inclusive health/mental health education
- stronger bonds with mental health supports (AHS)
- build an inclusive playground
- Mental Health and Wellness Night
- mindfulness training (grant)

Cultural Events

- culturally diverse Fun Lunch
- cultural instruments
- Cultural Clothing Days
- Indigenous awareness activities (working in classrooms) – Braided Journeys
- cultural sharing (dialects, dress, food)
- elders, pipe ceremonies etc.
- Cultural Days
- Multicultural Night or potluck
- sc Swap Day – culture
- read Treaty 6 acknowledgment at start of meeting
- bring First Nations liaison to meetings
- consider bringing in a Blanket Exercise
- Cultural Week culminating in a Celebration Day and native garb/dress, potluck, highlighting each culture in the school

Events/Groups

- food events, guest speakers
- student clubs
- Diversity Celebration Days

- Dare Program
- Pen Pal Program with colony schools
- Farm Safety Day – partner with colonies
- fellowship with sc and other parents outside of sc meetings ie. Morning coffee/chat
- “Tea” focused on volunteers
- Movie Night for families at school
- renting community center for entire school and making healthy activities available to a variety of families
- field trips to children’s hospital to foster empathy and provide perspective
- going to visit food bank, supporting or fundraising for issues related to poverty locally and globally

Education/Resources

- surveys of language at home
- parent learning
 - new math
 - internet safety
 - Autism and service dogs
- adapting learning to include all learners
- have the family school liaison worker come to speak about services and support
- Education Nights for parents
- curriculum info sessions – before sc meeting which increased attendance with specific speakers ie. City Councilor, priest
- SOGI resources
- FNMI classes
- educators for Cree and ASL
- programs for English as a second language
- liaisons for family (immigrant)
- translators for interviews
- educate people about inclusion, disabilities and diverse needs
- sensitivity training for teachers/staff – round table/workshop
- workshops
- community resources
- Peace Officers (in class visits/dogs)
- Parent resources – skill sets
 - what is your experience?

Miscellaneous

- Student council participation
- open communication
- outside speakers
- volunteering for events
- diversity of parent at SC
- parent representative per class
- translated talks

- identify all groups to offer supports – LD, medically assisted, gifted
- more parent engagement
- combine with other schools
- reach out one-on-one, include everyone
- being creative about identifying heritage and cultures in our community and beyond
- including sc at PD
- Facebook Live meetings
- interacting with special needs kids in their environment
- biggest turnout – Meet the Teacher Night – use to engage parents
- student council rep attend sc – sc rep attend student council
- city-wide student council
- trustees attend sc
- invite school/grade representative (children) to sc meeting to get more parents involved
- presentation at beginning of each meeting with a “hot” topic to get parents to attend
- invite MLA to sc meeting
- connection between city/town councilors and school
- support connection between ESL families and community
- invite parents offering free events to get people there
- cooking with parents
- encourage students to help parents understand
- customize to accommodate needs
- more role models/community leaders to present info on hard topics
- interagency resource meetings
- FCSS presentations to gain community perspectives
- building ownership pride in your school
- using different avenues to engage parents – Facebook, etc.
- mentoring through grade levels
- community involvement with charities
- joint council meetings within division – bring new ideas, share, etc.
- COSC speakers – report back to sc
- sharing costs of speakers between schools and meeting at one location
- personal invitation to council events/showcase cultures to new Canadians (immigrants)
- key/positive messages on the purpose of councils (make them want to come)
- sc supports – Métis feathers in sash at graduation
- stronger collaboration with admin
 - council can initiate
 - open up school plan – how can we reach?