

Administrative Procedure 110

SCHOOL COUNCILS

Background

The School Council is a legislated structure – a forum for parents and community members to participate, in an advisory capacity, in their local, site-based decision-making processes. The Division values and encourages parental and community involvement in its schools. In accordance with the legislation, each school shall have a school council organized and functioning.

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. In each school in the Division, parents and the school community are to be provided with the opportunity to establish and maintain a School Council.

The Division encourages parental, staff, student (where appropriate) and community participation in making decisions that create a stronger learning environment for students served in schools.

Procedures

1. Duties of Principal

- 1.1 Each Principal shall ensure that the incoming School Council executive has a current updated version of the Alberta School Council Resource Manual, and shall review annually with the School Council:
 - 1.1.1 Alberta School Council Resource Manual;
 - 1.1.2 Administrative Procedure 110 School Councils;
 - 1.1.3 School policies (local);
 - 1.1.4 School Council bylaws (local); and
 - 1.1.5 The school's School Advancement Plan and Annual Education Results Report.

2. School Council Membership

- 2.1 A school council must include the following members:
 - 2.1.1 The Principal of the school;
 - 2.1.2 At least one (1) person who is a teacher at the school, elected or appointed by the teachers at the school;
 - 2.1.3 If the school includes a senior high school program, at least one (1) person who is a student enrolled in the high school, elected or appointed by the students enrolled in the high school. In addition, if the school includes a junior high school program, the council may consider including a student representative; and
 - 2.1.4 The majority of the members of a school council shall be parents of students enrolled in the school.
- 2.2 The members of a school council may establish a process to appoint as members of the school council one (1) or more persons who are not parents of students enrolled in the school but who have an interest in the school.
- 2.3 The members of a school council may establish a process to appoint or elect as members of the school council one (1) or more persons who are parents of children enrolled in an Early Childhood Services program at the school.

3. Duty to report to the Board

- 3.1 The Chair of a school council must prepare and provide to the Board by June 15 of each year a report:
 - 3.1.1 Summarizing the activities of the school council in the previous school year, and
 - 3.1.2 Including a financial statement relating to money handled by the school council in the previous school year, if any, and how the funds were used.
- 3.2 A school council must 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.
- 3.3 A school council must retain the minutes for each meeting of the school council for at least seven (7) years.

4. Date for the first meeting of School Council

- 4.1 For any school year, the first meeting of the school council must be held within twenty (20) school days after the start of the school year, or as specified in the bylaws of the school council.

5. School Council Meetings

- 5.1 The school council will meet a minimum of five (5) times during the school year. Suggested models for school councils are:
 - 5.1.1 Representative governance model – when the school council acts like a board of directors to conduct the day-to-day business and reports back to the wider school community two (2) or more times a year.
 - 5.1.2 Assembly/town hall model – most decisions are made at regular, open meetings of the entire school community and the executive members of the school council act only to carry out the wishes of the assembly.
- 5.2 Roles and responsibilities of school council members may be found in section 3 of the Alberta School Council Resource Manual.

6. School Council Conflict Resolution

- 6.1 The following steps are to be followed when conflicts involving School Council members arise:
 - 6.1.1 Attempt to resolve the conflict at the local level.
 - 6.1.2 If the conflict is among School Council members, and the Principal is not directly involved, the Principal shall attempt to have the Council focus on resolving the conflict among them.
 - 6.1.3 If the conflict is between the School Council and the wider community, the principal, in consultation with members of the School Council and members of the community, shall establish a committee to develop recommendations for the resolution of the conflict. The committee shall consist of three or five persons including parents, at least one teacher and/or a member of the administration.
 - 6.1.4 If the conflict is between the School Council and the school staff, proceed to Procedure 6.2.
- 6.2 If a conflict fails to be resolved at the local level, the parties may appeal in writing to the Superintendent for a resolution.
 - 6.2.1 Within ten school days of the official referral, the Superintendent shall render a decision that resolves the conflict, or a decision on a plan for resolving the conflict, including timelines and defined outcomes. The plan may involve appointing a mediator.

7. Suspension of a School Council

- 7.1 If a quorum is not available for a meeting of a school council and the meeting has been re-scheduled on two (2) or more occasions, the Board may suspend the operation of the school council until the following year.
- 7.2 If the operation of a school council is suspended, the Principal may establish an advisory committee to carry out one (1) or more of the duties or functions of the school council until a new school council is established.
- 7.3 If the operation of a school council is suspended, a new school council must be established within forty (40) school days after the start of the next school year.

8. School Council Establishment Meeting

- 8.1 If a school that is required to have a school council has no school council, the school must hold an establishment meeting within forty (40) school days after the start of the school year.
- 8.2 A notice of establishment meeting must be given by the Principal to the following persons:
 - 8.2.1 A parent of each student enrolled in the school;
 - 8.2.2 A parent of each child enrolled in an Early Childhood program at the school;
 - 8.2.3 The school staff; and
 - 8.2.4 Other members of the school community who, in the principal's opinion, are to be given notice.
- 8.3 A notice must:
 - 8.3.1 Describe the purpose of the meeting;
 - 8.3.2 Set out the time, date and location of the meeting; and
 - 8.3.3 Be given at least ten (10) school days before the date of the meeting.

9. Parent Advisory

- 9.1 The Principal may establish an advisory committee if:
 - 9.1.1 There are fewer than five (5) parents in attendance at an establishment meeting; or
 - 9.1.2 If an establishment meeting is not successful in establishing a school council, the Principal may establish an advisory committee for that year to carry out one (1) or more of the duties or functions of a school council.

10. School Council Executive

- 10.1 A school council must have a Chair and any other members of the executive as determined by the persons attending an establishment meeting.
- 10.2 A parent of a student enrolled in the school must be elected Chair of the executive.
- 10.3 A member who is not a parent may be elected Chair of the executive if no parent is willing to be nominated as Chair.
- 10.4 Every member of a school council is eligible to be elected as a member of the executive.

11. The School Council is to annually receive a report from the school which includes the following information:

- 11.1 The results for the school from provincial assessments and any other provincial measures, and the interpretation of those results and measures; and
- 11.2 The school operational budget shall be presented to School Council no later than November 30.


12. Fundraising

- 12.1 Fundraising societies are groups of people who have incorporated under the Societies Act or Part 9 of the Companies Act. Under current legislation, school councils may fundraise but cannot register as fundraising societies. (Section 2, Alberta School Council Resource Manual)
 - 12.1.1 However, members may serve on both school council and fundraising societies.
 - 12.1.2 Meetings may be held one after another, as long as minutes and records are kept separate

13. Donations

- 13.1 The School Council may receive donations on behalf of a board but no School Council shall raise funds or otherwise solicit donations in any manner that would require a gaming license under the *Gaming and Liquor Act*.
- 13.2 The School Council must handle and report all monies it receives, if any, in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Board.

14. Opportunity to attend school council meetings remotely online may be made available.

Reference: Education Act 55, 197, 222, 251 School Councils Regulation 113/2007 (with amendments up to and including Alberta Regulation 163/2018) School Councils Resources Guide (2016) School Councils Handbook (1999) Societies Act	
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References shall be updated as required and do not require additional approval.