



Alberta  
School Councils' Association

## School Council Operating Basics Handouts

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## **Guiding Principles**

- A. School council operating procedures need to be flexible
- B. School councils are unique

## **Excerpts from the School Act and the School Councils Regulation 113/2007**

*Please go to the Alberta School Council Resource Manual pages V-XIII to see the documents*

### **School Act – Section 22**

#### **School Council**

- (5) Subject to the regulations, a school council may make and implement policies in the school that the council considers necessary to carry out its functions.
- (6) A school council may make bylaws governing its meetings and the conduct of its affairs.

### **School Councils Regulation Alberta Regulation 113/2007**

#### **Agenda at establishment meeting**

- 6(1) The persons attending an establishment meeting must
  - (a) decide, subject to section 8, on the size of the school council,
  - (b) decide on the model of governance for the school council,
  - (c) decide, subject to subsection (2), on the term of office of each member of the school council,
  - (d) elect, subject to subsection (2), the initial members of the school council referred to in section 8(1)(d),
  - (e) decide, subject to section 9, on the size of the executive,
  - (f) decide on the term of office of each member of the executive, and
  - (g) elect the initial members of the executive.



- (2) For greater certainty, but without restricting the generality of subsection (1)(a), the persons attending an establishment meeting may decide that for the purposes of section 8(1)(d), the school council may include all parents of students enrolled in the school who wish to be members.

### **Bylaws of school council**

- 17(1)** Each school council may make bylaws respecting the conduct of its business and affairs including, without limitation, bylaws
- (a) respecting the calling of regular, special or annual meetings of the school council;
  - (b) subject to section 6, respecting the election of members of the school council;
  - (c) subject to section 6, respecting the election of members of the executive;
  - (d) respecting the role of the chair and other members of the executive relating to the conduct of the school council's affairs;
  - (e) respecting the number of times the school council must meet each year;
  - (f) respecting the location of school council meetings;
  - (g) respecting the number of school council members that constitutes a quorum at meetings of the school council;
  - (h) respecting a conflict resolution process for internal school council disputes.
- (2) A Bylaw under subsection (1) does not come into force unless it is approved by a majority of
- (a) parents of students enrolled in the school, and
  - (b) parents of children enrolled in an Early Childhood Services program at the school

### **TYPOGRAPHICAL ERROR**

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who vote at a special meeting of the school council called for that purpose.

- (3) The bylaws continue in force from year to year unless
- (a) they are amended at a special meeting of the school council called for that purpose, and
  - (b) the amendment is approved in accordance with subsection (2).



## Operating Procedures Template

**Authority:** School Act and School Councils Regulation 113/2007

**Purpose (Vision):** Support and enhance student achievement and performance.

*Reference: Alberta School Council Resource Manual*

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**Changes:** Changes to bylaws must be passed by the majority of parents who vote at a special meeting of the school council called for that purpose.

*Reference: School Councils Regulation 113/2007*

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**Mission:** Is to advise principal and school board on any matter relating to the school.

*Reference: School Act*

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### Objectives/Functions:

School council may,

1. Decide its operations.
2. Participate in the development of the:
  - mission, vision and philosophy of the school
  - policies of the school and school board
  - annual education plan of the school and school board
  - budget of the school and school board



3. Participate in the opportunities offered by Alberta School Councils' Association for representation at the provincial level.
4. Participate in the discussion of the annual education results report and subsequent strategies.

*Reference: School Act and School Councils Regulation 113/2007*

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**Membership:** Principal, teacher, majority of members are parents, student - if it is a high school.

*Reference: School Councils Regulation 113/2007*

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**Governance:**

Representative: School council consists of parents of students enrolled at the school who were voted, named or nominated to school council as well as the principal, teacher, student (if applicable) and others as decided

**Implications:**

- School council represents the larger school community
- School council is responsible for communicating to the school community
- Often it is class representation and the rep reports back to the parents in their class.
- Only school council can participate in decision making but any parent attending the meeting can participate in the meeting and discussion

**Limitations:**

- May not seem inclusive
- Communication to the school community may not be happening
- May be difficult to have equal representation
- Managing personal information could be challenging for the reps



Strengths:

- Decision are made with school council members that have all of the historical information
- Decisions can be made efficiently
- Roles are clear
- Relationships are developed

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Town Hall: School council consists of all the parents of students enrolled at the school as well as the principal, teacher, student (if applicable) and others as decided

Implications:

- The executive do the work or delegate the work
- School community is responsible for knowing school council business
- Every parent is a member of school council
- Every parent can participate in the decision making

Limitations:

- School council members attending may not be aware of the historical information
- Discussion may be difficult to guide
- Roles and procedures may not be clear
- Decision making may be confusing or difficult
- There is no commitment by the parents to attend the meetings except of the executive

Strengths

- School council is inclusive and accessible
- More parents may be knowledgeable of school council business
- School council may have more parents involved

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Many school councils have taken aspects of each model and created a model that reflects their community and serves their purposes.

*Reference: Alberta School Council Resource Manual*



**Quorum:**

Definition: A gathering of members of an organization large enough to transact business.

Quorum is established when the majority of school council members attending are parents.

Based on School Councils Regulation 113/2007 (8)1 membership requires a school council to include the principal and teacher. Therefore as long as there are 3 parents the school council can function. When members that are not parents are attending the meeting than there must be more parents attending to meet quorum. For example: principal, student, teacher, community member are present than 5 parents must be in attendance at the meeting to establish quorum.

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**Decision Making:** Consensus, Voting

Decisions are made by consensus whenever possible.

School council members can request items to be placed on future agendas if consensus not met to provide school council with more time and information to research and consider other options.

School council members may request a vote if consensus not reached.

Any school council member may abstain from discussion and decision-making.

Does the principal or teacher vote?

Implications: The principal and teacher as employees must follow school board policy and directives from the Superintendent. Their vote may change depending on school district policy. The school council may decide how they will participate in decision-making.

*Reference: Alberta School Council Resource Manual*

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**Policies:**

School council can make policies.  
School council could have policy statements that are reviewed yearly.  
Policies would not be included with the operating procedures.  
This allows policies to be created or amended without changing operating procedures.

Example: Any activity involving school council that will have a meal served must be within the healthy food choices by Canada Food Guide. Activities that have snacks may have 1-2 items not recommended by the Canada Food Guide.

Example: Meeting minutes will be sent electronically and school council members will be asked to read the meeting minutes prior to the school council meeting.

*Reference: School Act*

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**Meetings:**

Regular

Please refer to the Alberta School Council Resource Manual page 2-3 and 58 and the School Councils Regulation 113/2007

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Reporting - one of the purposes of the annual general meeting is to communicate to the school community the activities of the school council

Recruiting - another purpose is to invite parents to join school council

The AGM may be at the time of school year which best suits your school community.  
The first school council meeting of the school year does not have to be the AGM.

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**Vacancies:**

School council can appoint or name any parent with a child enrolled in the school to school council, or the executive.

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**Committees:**

School council can create committees as needed, committees report to chair or a designate.

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**Agenda:**

- Any parent or school staff may ask to place items on the agenda and school council executive will determine if item is appropriate for the agenda
- The agenda will be distributed before the school council meeting
- The agenda will be made available to the school community
- Chair person will always notify the principal of agenda items in advance so the principal will have time to prepare

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**Communication:**

School Council

- Will complete an Annual Report as per School Councils Regulation 113/2007, 14(1)
- Will ensure that meeting minutes are available for 7 years as per School Councils Regulation 113/2007, 14(2), (3)
- Will ensure all parents of students enrolled in the school have access to school council business



Chairperson

- Is the spokesperson for the school council unless delegated
- Will sign all letters the school council is sending to external organizations
- Will be the school council representative with ASCA unless delegated
- Will be the contact with the principal for school council business.

*Reference: Alberta School Council Resource Manual*

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**Positions and Descriptions** Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer (optional)

*Reference: Alberta School Council Resource Manual pages 13-17 and 58*

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**Personal Information and Privacy Act (PIPA):**

School council is subject to the Personal Information and Privacy Act and will act in accordance of this legislation.

The school council vice chairperson could be the PIPA designate.

Personal information may only be used for school and school council business

School council members and people attending school council meeting understand the school council meeting minutes are public information.

*Reference: Alberta School Council Resource Manual including Appendix*

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## **Fundraising:**

Where ever possible fundraising will be done by a fundraising society.

School council may decide to fundraise and may decide how the money raised will be spent.

School council may fundraise and the funds can be given to the society and/or school for accounting purposes.

Funds raised by the school council as much as possible will be used for the purpose designated.

*Reference: Alberta School Council Resource Manual*

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## **Code of Ethics:**

### **All members shall:**

- consider the best interests of all students
- abide by the legislation that governs them
- be guided by the mission statement of the school and school council
- endeavour to be familiar with the school policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them
- practice the highest standards of honesty, accuracy and integrity
- declare any conflict of interest
- encourage a positive atmosphere in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued
- respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council
- not disclose confidential information
- use the appropriate communication channels when questions or concerns arise
- accept accountability for decisions
- accept no payment for school council activities
- not specify the names of people or their opinions participating in discussions at school council meetings when sharing school council information to the school community

*Reference: Alberta School Council Resource Manual*

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