

School Councils in Alberta

School councils are collective associations of parents, teachers, secondary students, principals, staff and community representative(s) who work together to effectively support and enhance student learning. They provide one means for members of the school community to provide advice and consult with the principal and to advise the board or the charter board.

School councils were created in 1995 and established under the *School Act*. School councils are mandatory for all schools in the public education system, including charter schools. Through school councils, Albertans assume an advisory role in local education matters that range from academic programs to school policies and budgeting.

Alberta Education's *School-based Decision-making Policy*, updated January 2003, affirms the requirement for principals to "work with parents, teachers and members of the community to establish a school-based decision-making process to develop school policies and budgets as well as to establish the scope of the school program and extracurricular activities."

In 1998, the Minister's Forums on School Councils M.L.A. Working Group examined how well school councils were fulfilling their mandate. The final report from this forum provided recommendations on how to enhance the role of school councils. Subsequent to this report, Alberta's Commission on Learning identified the important contributions of school councils and made recommendations for improvements.

Alberta Education supported the reports' recommendations relating to school councils and is working collaboratively with a multi-stakeholder group that includes Alberta Home and School Councils' Association, Alberta School Boards Association, College of Alberta School Superintendents, Alberta Teachers' Association, Association of School Business Officials of Alberta and the Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia to implement them.

The Government of Alberta recognizes the right and responsibility of parents and the community to be involved in the education of their children. Parents, community members and school staff, through the vehicle of school councils, have a means of involvement in decisions that impact student learning.