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TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: School Council Annual Report Highlights Summary

ORIGINATOR: Karen Mills, Director, Board and Superintendent Relations

RESOURCE STAFF: Cathy MacDonald, Carrie Rosa

REFERENCE: Section 14, [School Councils Regulation](#), Alberta Education
[AA.BP Stakeholder Relations](#)

ISSUE

Providing a summary of highlights from 2019-2020 school annual reports submitted to Communications.

BACKGROUND

Alberta Education, through the *Education Act* and more specifically Section 14 of the [School Councils Regulation](#), requires all school council chairs to provide an annual report to their Board by September 30 of each year. For the 2019-2020 annual report, the Board requested a Google form be created to simplify the reporting process for school councils and make the data more comparable.

CURRENT SITUATION

Previously, annual reports were provided to Communications through a completed PDF cover sheet and attached report in various formats. With the new Google form, we can more easily review and share content of the annual reports.

KEY POINTS

- 138 school councils filled in the new Google form
- School councils provide key feedback and advice to principals on a number of topics throughout the school year

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I School Council Annual Report Highlights Summary

CR:cm

School Council Annual Report Highlights Summary

Summary of findings

The findings in the 2019-2020 school council annual report reflect the activities of 138 schools who responded. Please note some schools are unable to establish a school council; instead, principals establish an advisory committee and do not necessarily have an annual report like full school councils.

Alberta Education, through the *Education Act* and Section 14 of the [School Councils Regulation](#), requires all Division school council chairs to provide an annual report to Edmonton Public Schools by September 30 of each year. For the 2019-2020 annual report, the Division created a Google form to collect simplify the annual reporting process for school councils.

Previously, school councils provided the annual report information to Communications as a completed PDF cover sheet template and an attached report in a format of their choice. The previous system was daunting for school councils who do not write many reports and made it challenging to provide timely summary reports. With the new Google form, Communications can more easily review, run reports and share content of the annual reports with the Board of Trustees and administration.

As per Section 55 of the [Education Act](#), school councils may advise the principal and Board on school matters, consult with the principal to ensure students have opportunities to meet education standards set by the Minister, consult with the principal on fiscal matters and perform other functions authorised under the regulations.

The findings collected through the 2019-2020 annual report form strongly indicate that school councils are living up to their mandate to act as an advisory group with the principal and school community. Information collected also indicates that councils support schools through additional activities.

Predominant activities undertaken

School councils are composed mainly of parents of students who attend the school. This group of parents functions primarily to provide feedback and advice to the principal on a variety of school functions and decisions. They provide a strong communication link between school administration and school families. Some school councils also play an important part in liaising between school administration and the fundraising association to inform the potential use of any funds raised.

In order of highest to lowest participation rates, here are the main areas school councils noted they were involved with during the 2019-2020 school year.

- **84 per cent** supported teaching and learning within the school (e.g., purchasing levelled literacy books, library resources.)
- **83 per cent** supported special events in support of the school plan (e.g., promoting, volunteering for events such as family literacy night)
- **75 per cent** informed/advised principal on the school's budget (e.g., input into priorities)
- **65 per cent** informed/advised principal on the school's education plan (e.g., priorities)
- **57 per cent** informed/provided input to principal on the school's results review
- **45 per cent** advocated for the needs of the school community to the city, province and other groups (e.g., writing letters to elected officials about provincial decisions)

- **40 per cent** provided input to help inform the work of the Board of Trustees (e.g., participating in town halls and meetings with ward Trustee)
- **24 per cent** worked on joint projects with the community or another school in support of the school plan (e.g., safe environment)
- **20 per cent** informed the work of the Alberta School Councils' Association through an engagement task force or annual general meeting

Additional activities

Some school councils noted they also supported schools in the following ways:

- Promoted volunteerism and recruited volunteers
- Helped with landscape improvements
- Helped survey parents (e.g., feedback and implementation of hot lunch options, survey about reduced budget for coming year)
- Organized appreciation events, family fun nights
- Helped with extracurriculars like gardening and running clubs
- Networked with community leagues
- Organized town hall meetings
- Promoted and supported diversity (e.g., international maps showing where various students come from)
- Helped fundraising committees (e.g., volunteering at events)
- Increased online communication and engagement with parents
- Updated school council bylaws
- Helped facilitate communication between community and school during the transition to online learning due to COVID-19
 - Some councils also helped transition their meetings to an online format

Funds handled

- Four school councils indicated their school council handled some funds last year
- The funds were typically raised through initiatives like gift card sales, baked goods and food sales, and fun days
- Funds raised went towards a variety of things like field trips, arts and crafts supplies, farewell celebrations, family activities (like dances and movies) and hot lunch days

Challenges some school councils faced

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some school councils expressed they didn't meet all the objectives they had set out for the school year
- Hosting meetings was a challenge for some schools when schools switched to online learning last March
 - Anecdotally, school councils have made significant progress in moving council meetings to virtual platforms in the 2020-2021 school year.

Evaluation of new format

Communications will do a follow-up survey to evaluate participants' experience submitting their reports through the Google form this year. Through this evaluation, we will determine if there were any gaps in information and improve the form for the next collection of annual reports.