

**DATE:** November 1, 2022

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Trustee Hole

**SUBJECT:** Motion to Reinstate Grant Funding to the Alberta School Councils' Association

**REFERENCE:** [Trustees' Handbook](#) – Section 5.2.2 – Notice of Motion  
[Alberta Education Act](#)  
[School Councils Regulation](#)  
[Alberta School Councils' Association](#)

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## ISSUE

Trustee Hole served notice of motion at the October 18, 2022, Board meeting.

## BACKGROUND

School councils play an important role in shaping the work of the Board of Trustees. The legally mandated relationship between the board and school councils makes them unique among stakeholder groups. Section 55(1) of the Education Act stipulates that *“for each school operated by a board, a school council must be established in accordance with the regulations”*.

The *Education Act* and School Council Regulation gives school councils the right to *“advise the principal and the board respecting any matter relating to the school”*. This includes budget, policies, the annual education plan, annual results report and foundation statements such as the Division’s [Strategic Plan](#). In addition to providing valuable input to the Board of Trustees, school councils advocate on behalf of the students, families and staff they serve in order to support and enhance student learning in their schools.

The Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) has been providing training and support to school councils for 93 years. Drastic funding cuts to the association since 2020 have impacted their ability to deliver services that empower school councils with the knowledge, tools and support they need to engage in their legislated role.

## RATIONALE

Public engagement and transparency are key factors in ensuring the Board of Trustees is accountable to the community for the decisions it makes. Through collaborative relationships with school councils, Trustees have the opportunity to hear directly from members of the school community about their needs and expectations of public education, and the impact Board decisions have on school communities.

Because school councils are made up primarily of volunteer parents and guardians, they experience a high rate of turnover and often struggle to engage and recruit new members. Training offered by ASCA through professional development workshops, support services and an annual conference provide volunteers with vital knowledge about their legislated rights, responsibilities and limitations. ASCA also assists school council executives to understand how to increase engagement and better represent the collective voice of their members. ASCA’s work empowers school councils, which improves the input and

feedback they're able to provide the Board of Trustees; this helps to strengthen trusting relationships and stakeholder confidence.

## RELATED FACTS

- Between 2004 and 2020 the Alberta School Councils' Association received provincial grants in the range of \$732,000 to \$650,000 to engage with school councils across the province. In 2020, the grant they received was reduced to \$170,000, and in 2022 their provincial funding amounted to \$15,000 to conduct a survey on pandemic learning loss.
- Prior to these funding cuts, provincial grants made up roughly 85 per cent of ASCA's annual budget; the balance was generated through school council membership fees. Provincial grant funds were used to deliver workshops and support services, while membership fees were used to help school councils engage in provincial advocacy.
- ASCA's pre-2020 funding levels allowed school councils to book multiple free workshops, giving them the opportunity to move beyond foundational learning and empowering them to engage in their legislated role from a more in-depth, collaborative approach.
- In August of 2021, the province announced that it would provide \$500 to each school council through the Alberta School Council Engagement (ASCE) Grant. School councils are required to apply for the grant annually and must return any unused funds.
- School councils may use the ASCE grant to purchase most ASCA workshops, but ASCE grant funds may not be used to purchase an ASCA membership or attend ASCA's annual conference.

## RECOMMENDATION

**That the Edmonton Public School Board of Trustees write to the Minister of Education requesting that the provincial government reinstate grant funding to the Alberta School Councils' Association to be used for the purposes of delivering educational workshops to school councils.**

## OPTIONS

1. Approve the recommendation as presented.
2. Provide feedback and request changes to the recommendations for approval.

## NEXT STEPS

Upon approval of the motion, the Board Chair would write to the Minister of Education requesting that the provincial government reinstate grant funding to the Alberta School Councils' Association to be used for the purposes of delivering educational workshops to school councils.

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