

Date	February 10, 2026
To	Board of Trustees
From	Ron Thompson, Superintendent of Schools
Subject	School Council Annual Report Highlights Summary
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Resource Staff	Cathy MacDonald, Carrie Rosa
Reference	Alberta School Councils Regulation , Section 14 Board Policy AA.BP Stakeholder Relations

ISSUE

Administration is providing a summary of highlights from 2024–25 annual reports submitted to Communications by school councils.

KEY POINTS

- As per Section 55 of the Alberta [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 authorized under the regulations.
- School councils provide a strong communication link between school administration and families.
- A summary of the challenges and successes that school councils shared is included in Attachment I.

BACKGROUND

Alberta Education and Childcare, 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 the Edmonton Public School Board by September 30 of each year.

CURRENT SITUATION

Using a Google form, school councils submit their annual reports. A summary of the information is then presented to the Board of Trustees.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I School Council Annual Report Highlights Summary of Findings

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School Council 2024–25 Annual Report Highlights Summary of Findings

The findings in the 2024–25 school council annual report reflect the activities of 179 school councils and Principal Advisory Committees (PACs) that submitted reports. Note that some schools are unable to establish a school council; when this is the case, principals establish an advisory committee. Advisory committees are not required to submit an annual report, but we welcome any information they can share as well.

Alberta Education and Childcare, through the *Education Act* and 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. The Division continues to use a Google form to simplify the submission process.

As per Section 55 of the Alberta *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 of Education and Childcare, consult with the principal on fiscal matters and perform other functions authorized under the regulations.

The findings from the 2024–25 annual reports indicate that school councils continued to live up to their mandate to act as an advisory group to the principal and school community. Information collected also indicates that councils supported schools through additional activities.

Predominant activities undertaken

School councils are composed mainly of parents of students who attend the school. A school council 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 families. Some school councils also play an important part in liaising between school administration and the school's fundraising association to inform the potential use of any funds raised.

In order of highest to lowest participation rates, the main areas school councils noted they were involved with during the 2024–25 school year are as follows:

- 86 per cent supported special events and initiatives linked to the school plan, including:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ lunch programs ■ cultural lunches and festivals ■ staff appreciation ■ movie nights ■ carnivals ■ sports days ■ coordinating extracurricular clubs, like running, chess, science Olympics, cooking, chess and ukulele ■ surveys ■ outdoor classroom ■ Yearbook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ organizing volunteers ■ newsletters ■ setting up wall displays ■ supported career days and open houses ■ potlucks ■ bingo night ■ Indigenous presentations and celebrations ■ clothing drives ■ concessions ■ Pride Week
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- advised on playground replacement
- legacy mural project
- food bank drives
- helping hampers
- student orientations and career days
- dances
- winter socials
- prayer team
- welcome barbecues
- farewell celebrations

- concerts
- popsicles in the park
- coordinating reading programs and book fairs
- liaising with fundraising society
- seasonal sales, like popcorn, handmade cards, plants and cookie dough
- information sessions for parents, such as online safety, anxiety and depression, and how to be an ally

- **75.4 per cent** supported learning within the school (e.g., provided feedback to the principal, supported cultural awareness, inclusion and anti-racism, and organized sessions on topics like numeracy, literacy and social-emotional needs of students).
- **48.6 per cent** informed/advised the principal on the school's education plan.
- **46.9 per cent** informed/provided input to the principal on the school's results review (several council chairs noted they were able to attend Results Review with the principal).
- **45.8 per cent** informed/advised the principal on the school's budget.
- **40.8 per cent** advocated for the needs of the school community to the city, province and other groups (e.g., advocated for improved traffic safety, for more schools, infrastructure funding for existing schools, Vision Zero and mobility projects, public rallies, etc.).
- **25.1 per cent** worked on joint projects with the community or another school in support of the school plan (e.g., Flying Canoe Volant Festival).
- **20.1 per cent** informed the work of the Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) through an engagement task force or annual general meeting (e.g., attending annual conference and AGM).
- **16.2 per cent** provided input to help inform the work of the Board of Trustees (e.g., inviting Trustees to meetings, providing feedback on new cellphone rules, School Resource Officers and curriculum changes).

Frequency of school council meetings

- **70.9 per cent** met monthly.
- **14.5 per cent** met every other month.
- The remainder met on varying frequencies (e.g., quarterly or every six weeks).

How school councils met

- **48.6 per cent** had a mix of in-person and virtual meetings.
- **38.5 per cent** met in person exclusively.
- **12.8 per cent** met virtually exclusively.

Meeting participation levels

- **63.1 per cent** had the same participation as in the past.
- **20.7 per cent** experienced a decrease in participation.
- **16.2 per cent** saw an increase in participation.

Funds handled

- **83.2 per cent** of respondents indicated their school council did not handle any funds last year as their school's fundraising association handles all funds.
- **16.8 per cent** indicated their school council handled funds last year.
- Some of the funds noted were from the \$500 Alberta School Council Engagement grant from the Government of Alberta that all schools with school councils were eligible to apply for. Funds were also raised through initiatives like pizza lunches, chocolate and book fair sales, money from their fundraising association, bottle drives, parent donations and grants.
- Funds raised went toward a variety of things, including: educational resources (e.g., library books, STEM learning kits); artist in residence; music supplies; sports equipment; sensory room equipment; emergency supplies for families in need (e.g., clothing, shampoo); field trips; guest speakers/presentations; staff appreciation (e.g., lunches); school clubs and some events (e.g., barbecue, fun day or farewell celebrations, literacy and numeracy nights, movie nights).

Successes some school councils experienced

- **Engagement:** Increased participation by providing food at meetings, personal invitations in the schoolyard, and offering child care or student-led babysitting.
- **Accessibility:** Virtual and hybrid meeting options allowed parents with busy schedules or geographic barriers to participate; alternating meeting times (afternoon vs. evening) also improved reach
- **Inclusive outreach:** Successfully involved more English as an Additional Language (EAL) parents by having translators and sharing information in multiple languages.
- **Community support:** Operated a community pantry to support families and successfully raised funds for a new playground, new technology, books and field trips.
- **Program highlights:** Monthly student and staff presentations provided parents with clear insights into school projects and collaborative efforts.
- **Communication growth:** Increased visibility through new social media accounts, upgraded email newsletters, parent surveys, school council drop-in information sessions, and better communication with school administration.
- **Operational strength:** Re-established councils from scratch, developed handbooks/guidelines for future years, participated in ASCA training to clarify the roles of council versus fundraising, and ran more efficient meetings.
- **Event success:** High attendance at family dances, parent information sessions and significant school events (Art Nights, Meet the Teacher) even when meeting attendance was low.

Challenges some school councils faced

- **Participation hurdles:** Chronic low attendance at monthly meetings, "dwindling" interest as the school year progresses and difficulty recruiting parents for executive or board positions.
- **Labour disruptions:** The support staff job action disrupted operations, causing meetings to be cancelled and led to the cancellation of some activities and delay of some initiatives.
- **Technological issues:** Some schools don't have the necessary technical capabilities to smoothly host virtual or hybrid meetings (i.e., poor sound quality, unreliable meeting links).
- **Demographic shifts:** Turnover of experienced parents, which leaves new council members with limited institutional knowledge and difficulty engaging specific cultural groups or families.

- Leadership and governance: Difficulty filling vacancies when executive members stepped down, time-consuming efforts to redo bylaws, and issues with past chairs not setting agendas or attending meetings.
- Administrative: Some schools identified opportunities for building better communication between school leadership, flexibility of meeting times and working collaboratively with principals to share information at meetings.
- Role confusion: Ongoing lack of understanding among the parent body regarding the difference between school council (advisory) and the fundraising society.

Common goals school councils set for following year

- Parental engagement and participation
 - Broadening outreach: Focus on attracting a wider range of perspectives and families from different programs, experiences and backgrounds.
 - Recruitment and succession: Actively recruit new members and better distribute responsibilities to share the executive workload and focus on succession planning for members whose children are transitioning out of the school.
 - Learning opportunities: Increase attendance by offering learning opportunities on topics like mental health, online safety and career pathways.
 - Structure and support: Implement a “class representative” model to facilitate communication between grades and the council, and use ASCA resources and training to improve efficiency.
 - Informal engagement: Host more gatherings such as coffee mornings and informal events to draw in parents who may be hesitant to attend formal meetings.
- Communication and visibility
 - Multi-channel strategy: Use many methods including paper notices, phone calls, social media (Instagram) and school signage to reach families.
 - Transparency: Provide clear reporting on fundraising outcomes so parents know exactly how their contributions are benefiting students.
 - Presence at events: Increase council visibility at major school events (like Meet the Teacher and Welcome Back barbecues).
 - Digital accessibility: Improve mailing list counts and offer hybrid meeting options to accommodate working parents.
- Facility and infrastructure improvements
 - Playground and outdoors: Initiate or continue work on helping to plan playground replacements, sensory room development or land-based learning outdoor classroom.
 - School site safety: Collaborate with the City of Edmonton on traffic management, parking enforcement and improvements to schoolyard safety.
 - Interior enhancements: Help beautify existing spaces (like display boards) and use volunteers to help organize the school library.
- Student programming and community culture
 - Inclusivity and advocacy: Host larger culturally inclusive events (e.g., Diwali, Pride) and work with Trustees to advocate for student safety, anti-racism and social-emotional regulation.
 - Academic support: Provide support for literacy and numeracy interventions and help organize school-wide learning opportunities for all students.

- Established traditions: Continue annual favourites such as the Career Day and the Terry Fox Run.
- School wellness: Advocate for student well-being, including specific initiatives like removing TVs during lunch times.
- Governance and partnerships
 - Administration transition: Build strong working relationships with new principals and administrative staff to ensure seamless.
 - Organizational integration: Explore integrating fundraising groups more closely with the school council and develop comprehensive onboarding tools for new members.
 - External connections: Connect with feeder school councils to assist parents with transitions (e.g., junior high transition) and strengthen partnerships with the surrounding business community.

Alberta School Councils' Engagement Grant

Each year, schools are given the opportunity to have the Division apply for Alberta Education's Alberta School Councils' Engagement grant. This \$500 grant is intended to support school councils in fulfilling their legislated responsibilities in enhancing parent involvement and engagement. The grant is only available to schools with an active school council, as defined under the Alberta School Councils Regulation. Registered Fundraising Societies and PACs (Principal Advisory Committees) that do not meet the criteria of a school council do not qualify for the grant.

For the 2024-25 school year:

- 51.4 per cent of responding schools indicated their school applied for the grant
- 34.1 per cent did not apply for the grant
- 14.5 per cent were unsure if their school applied or not
- 37.4 per cent of schools that applied for the grant used the money

Schools that did receive the grant money indicated several uses including:

- ASCA workshops (e.g., role and purpose of school council, re-writing operating procedures, managing council member relationships).
- Attend ASCA annual conference and AGM.
- Host information sessions, speakers and activities (e.g., cyber safety and healthy boundaries; mental health, wellbeing and emotionally intelligent parenting; kindness week speakers; family literacy, numeracy and paint nights; substance abuse awareness and strategies; Indigenous learnings through performances, Elders sharing knowledge and stories, and tipi building).
- Purchased library books as well as a selection of educational resources for parents on topics related to mental health, autism and ADHD.

For schools that did not end up using the grant money, they noted a few main reasons: timing issues, lack of parent interest or being unsure how to use the grant.