

March 10, 2021

Ms Brandi Rai, President and Ms Wendy Keiver, Executive Director
Alberta School Councils' Association
Suite 207, 11010 - 142 Street NW
Edmonton, AB T5N 2R1

Dear Brandi and Wendy,

Alberta School Councils' Association an essential support for school divisions

At our public meeting on February 9, our Board received a [report](#) summarizing highlights from the 2019-2020 school council annual reports. The information confirmed the great work being done by the councils and the importance of the Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) as well as the tremendous work you do to support councils and school divisions. I want to take this opportunity to thank you.

As you know, school councils are mandatory, as stipulated in the *Education Act*, and have legislated responsibilities. They are also vital bridges between schools and families and communities. Therefore, it is critical that they be provided support to carry out their duties effectively. This is why we believe that the work of ASCA is crucial.

School councils often struggle with identifying the types of activities and work they should be doing in order to truly fulfill their legislated role. When councils understand their purpose and the topics or areas that are open for discussion as well as those that require caution, they can provide valuable feedback for schools and divisions, and any tension and possible dysfunction within school councils and school communities is prevented. With the resources and support provided by ASCA, council work becomes a positive, community building experience that improves communication and school life for families, school administrators and students.

I've seen so many examples of ASCA's support in our Division. For instance, ASCA partnered with our Division this year to host four virtual training sessions on four separate evenings in October. This really helped school councils to get off to a great start. I know many of our schools rely on ASCA's workshops, tools and strategies to increase the effectiveness of their councils. School councils have especially appreciated your support as you walked alongside them through this unprecedented pandemic year. Your timely webinars, Meeting Mondays, and online documents have helped councils keep connected and current. As a Trustee, I'm grateful for ASCA's work to help councils understand the importance of the trustee-council relationship and I know my colleagues on the Board share this perspective. And of course, I must mention the collaboration between ASCA and our Division to develop the new annual reporting tool for councils. We have received such positive feedback about how it demystifies and streamlines this mandatory process.

ASCA has also proven an effective conduit to bring parent voice to larger education issues. Your advocacy training helps councils more clearly articulate their concerns to wider audiences, and your work to gather and amplify parent voices from across the province ensures that vital perspective is heard.

ASCA is a small but mighty organization. It is an organization that deserves robust support and we are glad to offer ours. We believe so strongly in the importance and value of ASCA that we provide all our schools with annual memberships. We have continued this practice even as budgets tighten.

Edmonton Public Schools is grateful for ASCA's work and partnership. On behalf of the Board of Trustees I would like to express our appreciation and that we look forward to working together to support staff, students and families for years to come.

Sincerely,



Trisha Estabrooks
Board Chair

- c. Hon. Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Education
Lorrie Jess, President, ASBA

