

School Council Resource Manual

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THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

ALBERTA EDUCATION

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Letter from the stakeholders

The change to the Alberta *School Act*, which makes school councils mandatory, is a significant educational milestone. This new requirement formally recognizes the important role partnerships play in maintaining a strong education system. The Alberta Education School Councils Handbook defines the expectations for school councils as follows:

School councils are collective associations of parents, teachers, principals, staff, students and community representatives who seek to work together to promote the well-being and effectiveness of the entire school community and thereby to enhance student learning. A school council is a means to facilitate cooperation among all the concerned participants in the local school.¹

This manual represents the spirit of collaboration in Alberta schools. It is endorsed by all educational stakeholders in the province—associations that represent parents, teachers, administrators and government. We hope this manual will assist school councils as they develop partnerships to enhance educational opportunities for the children within their communities.

Workshops developed to elaborate on the material in this manual are available. Please consult the Resources section for descriptive information about these workshops and how to book them for your school council.

¹ *School Councils Handbook*, Alberta Education, June 1995

How to use this manual

Think of this manual as a tool kit. The tools are there if you need them, but you don't have to use all of them at once. Instead of working through the book cover-to-cover, skim the Table of Contents and look for sections of interest to you and your school council. We suggest starting with the section *Transitions from PAC to School Council* if your school council hasn't already taken this step. Next, you may want to read *The Big Work* section, which details the major thinking your council will have to do before it begins its work, and suggests activities to help school councils do this thinking.

We hope this manual will assist you in charting the course for your school council. It won't have all the answers, but as we work toward building new councils, we will learn from each other's successes and failures. We will provide this new knowledge by replacing outdated material and sending periodical updates to you. In this way, the manual will be a current resource from year to year.

Enjoy your work on school council. It is meant to be rewarding, creative and fun! We would like to ensure it is, so if you need any assistance, please contact

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SECTION A

The issue of community involvement in schools received unprecedented attention in 1994 and 1995 during a year-long public consultation process. This consultation found widely varying opinions on many issues, but agreement on at least one thing—

Educating our young is so important to society, that everyone—government, parents, teachers, students and other community members—must share the responsibility by taking an active role.

To help facilitate the cooperative effort needed to give our children the best education possible, amendments to the 1994 *School Act* provided for the establishment of school councils. These councils are designed to give parents, students, teachers, and other community members meaningful involvement in decisions that affect their schools. In addition, school-based decision making is being implemented throughout the province so decisions will be made as close as possible to those affected by them.

The 1995/96 school year, then, marks the beginning of exciting change—a new partnership formed to build shared visions of what our schools can be and to plan strategically how we'll make those visions realities. Each school council will be different as it evolves to meet local needs. Some councils will be large, some small, but the work of each will be toward the same purpose—to improve student learning.

School Councils, through commitment and creativity, will generate a strong community spirit. Community spirit makes a school more than just a building— it creates a learning environment where students feel the commitment of their fellow students, their principal, their teachers and their parents. This shared commitment will make the common goal a reality—better education.

We've always had parent advisory associations; what has changed?

New school councils bring three major changes:

Membership

While parent associations were for parents only, school councils will include all community members who have a stake in the education of children attending that school. Provincial regulations require that parents comprise the majority of the school council. The rest of council is to include the school principal, at least one teacher, at least one community representative and/or ECS parent, and, in high schools, at least one student. (School Councils Regulation, s.7)

Purpose

Parent associations were designed primarily to support school activities. They did so by raising money, arranging for classroom volunteers and even building playgrounds. The school council may still choose to do all of these things, for each of these activities supports learning. Now, however, school councils may *choose* to become involved in decisions that set direction for the school—establishing a mission statement, a vision statement, guiding principles and objectives. The school council may develop strategies for achieving these objectives. Each school council will determine its own level of involvement, depending on local need. (See page B2.)

School-based decision making

Many decisions affecting the local school used to be made in school board offices. With the implementation of school-based decision making, more of these decisions such as staffing, purchases and programs may be made at the school. The school principal has the primary decision-making responsibility. However, the principal is expected to base decisions on consultation with the school community and is accountable for seeing decisions meet community expectations. School boards are expected to develop local policy on school-based decision making which meets provincial requirements. (See page A3 for more information on school-based decision making.)

With these changes, school councils become partnerships where the entire school community joins to establish and work toward common goals with the single aim of improving student learning. It may sound complicated, but the concept is simple. School councils are designed to give each school child the support and encouragement of the entire community.

The who, what, how and why's of school-based decision making

School-based decision making

Who needs to be involved in school-based decision making?

- Parents, community members, students, teachers, principals, trustees and school board staff

What decisions are made?

Collaboratively, members of the school council help to make major decisions about policies, programs and services and the allocation of funds to support them. Major issues considered and decided upon may include:

- the development of a school mission, vision and goals
- strategies to achieve those goals

How are successful school-based decisions made? Successful school-based decisions:

- include the entire school community in teaching and learning
- focus on students
- combine elements of centralization and decentralization
- are made within clearly understood guidelines
- are achieved through cooperation and mutual respect among decision-makers
- involve ongoing evaluation of results

Why school-based decision making? Successful school-based decision making has the potential for:

- better use of resources
- shared responsibility
- shared accountability
- flexibility in decision making
- enhanced school productivity
- improved morale
- increased student participation
- greater freedom to take risks
- increased tolerance, support and collaboration

A school council is . . .

A collective association of **parents, teachers, principals, staff** and **community representative(s)** who work together to promote the well-being and effectiveness of all stakeholders in the school community and thereby **enhance student learning**.

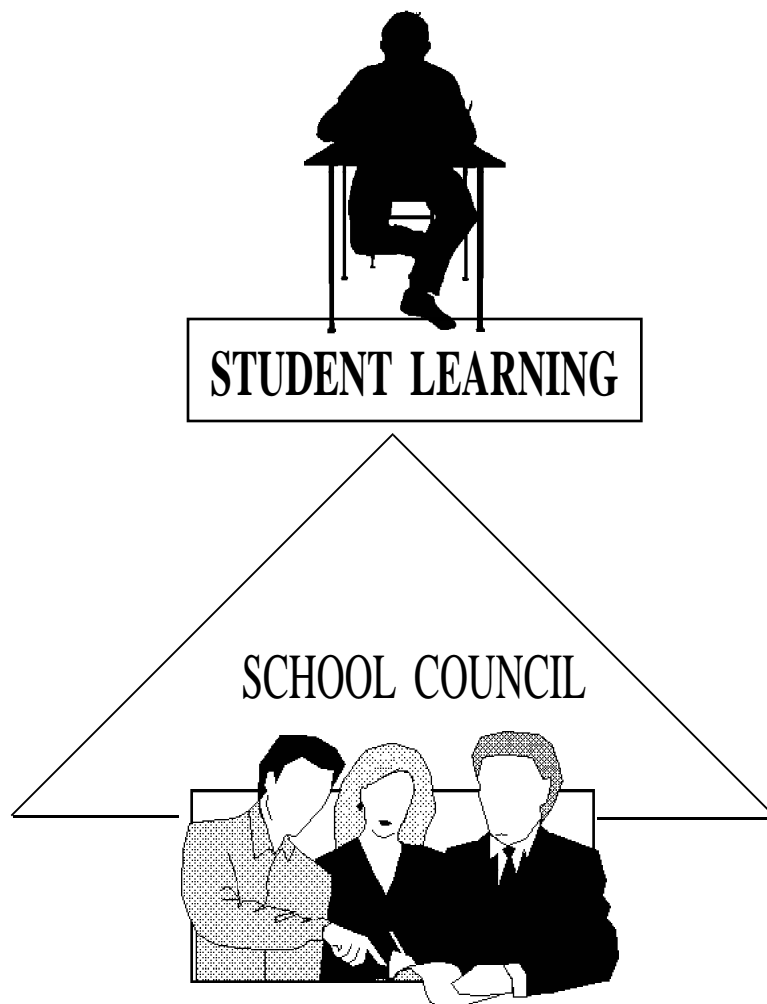
A school council is a means to facilitate collaboration among all education partners in the local school.¹

The challenge of school-based decision making is that every member of the school council needs a greater commitment to the development of the school—and a greater commitment of time.

¹ *School Councils Handbook*, Alberta Education, June 1995

A school council's purpose . . .

The purpose of the school council is to provide the structure through which all stakeholders come together to talk about the education of that community's children.



How do we make school councils work?

School councils will work only if all partners—principal, teachers, staff, parents, community members, students and the board of trustees—are committed to collaboration. Principals are charged with the final responsibility for making decisions that affect the school. However, to ensure those decisions best meet the needs of the school community, the principal should include school councils in a collaborative process. Other members of the school council must uphold their end of the bargain by providing the principal with thoughtful input on the decisions he or she faces. School councils work well when all partners:

1. Commit to partnership
2. Promote open and effective communication
3. Focus on the collective needs of students in the school
4. Encourage full parental involvement and support
5. Work toward increasing responsiveness to the educational needs of the community
6. Recognize that not all school councils will function at the same level of involvement
7. Establish and adhere to conflict resolution mechanisms

1. School councils enable the development of a common vision for the school.

School council members work together to facilitate communication, planning and resource allocation for programs needed to meet the expectations of the school community.

2. School councils respect the roles that others have to play.

- **Teachers** deliver instruction.
- **Principals** are responsible for implementing decisions affecting the school and are accountable for the school's performance.
- **School boards** establish district policy and guidelines.
- **Alberta Education** establishes provincial standards, curriculum and policies.

Definitions

Collaboration

According to “The Concise Oxford Dictionary”, *collaborate* means to *1. work jointly, esp. in a literary or artistic production.*

The term *collaborate*, although often used in the sense of literary or artistic production, works beautifully for the cooperative creative venture of educating our children. Collaboration does not prevent an individual from acting alone. Principals, teachers and other partners have specific responsibilities for which they are accountable. To collaborate means to acknowledge our common goal of providing all children in our community with the best education possible and *to work jointly* toward achieving it.

Consultation

Consultation involves one person meeting with another for the purpose of obtaining an opinion, information or advice. In the case of school councils, each group represented on council is expected to operate in consultation with the others. A main purpose of school councils is to share views and information—a mutual consultation process.

Dialogue

The following definition of *dialogue* describes the nature of discussion that best meets the needs of school councils:

Dialogue is based on the principle that conception and implementation are intimately linked, with a core of common meaning. During the dialogue process people learn how to think together in the sense of occupying a collective sensibility in which the thoughts, emotions and resulting actions belong not to one individual, but to all of them together.¹

¹ *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Environment*, by Peter Senge, Art Kleiner, Charlotte Roberts, Richard Ross, Bryan Smith. Doubleday, July 1994.

Liability and Accountability

Liability

Final decision-making responsibility rests with the school principal. School councils exist to advise and consult the principal and, in that capacity, would have no apparent reason to be sued. Should such an issue arise, however, the *School Act*, s.44 provides school councils with the same protections as were previously afforded parent advisory councils and school volunteers.

(Note: An update on the issue of liability will follow.)

Accountability

All members of a school council are accountable to the school community for the actions of the school council. Councils should provide their school community with regular updates on their activities and plans. An annual report of council activities should be widely distributed. The council should also take steps—meetings, surveys—to establish what the community expects of it.

(Note: An update to this section will follow in February, 1996. A valuable resource on this issue is *Accountability in Education Policy Framework*, Alberta Education, September, 1995.)

Transitions

From PAC to School Council

What do we do first?	B1
Choosing a level of involvement	B2
Choosing a model of governance.....	B3

SECTION B

What do we do first?

1. Read the *School Councils Handbook*, Alberta Education, June 1995, along with the School Councils Regulation, (*see page I3*) the **School Act** and relevant local board policy. q

2. Prepare for an establishment meeting to be held before February 15, 1996. q
 - Consult with the principal and other Parent Advisory Council members
 - Decide when and where to hold the meeting
 - Advertise widely, at least 21 days in advance of the meeting
 - Determine a chair and a process for the meeting
 - Plan an agenda
 - Prepare participants in advance by
 - sending out a letter explaining the process,
 - sending a survey to determine the level of involvement to which members of the school community are willing to commit.

3. Hold the establishment meeting. q
 - Have the assembly approve the agenda.
 - Discuss items such as
 - level of involvement the school council desires (*see page B2.*)
 - models of governance
(*Representative, Assembly or other model, page B3.*)
 - frequency of meetings
 - matters for advice.
 - Decide on, or set up committees to explore
 - types of governance (*see page B3.*)
 - size of council (*see School Councils Regulation page I6*)
 - terms of office.
 - Act to
 - elect parent representatives
 - set the date for the first meeting.

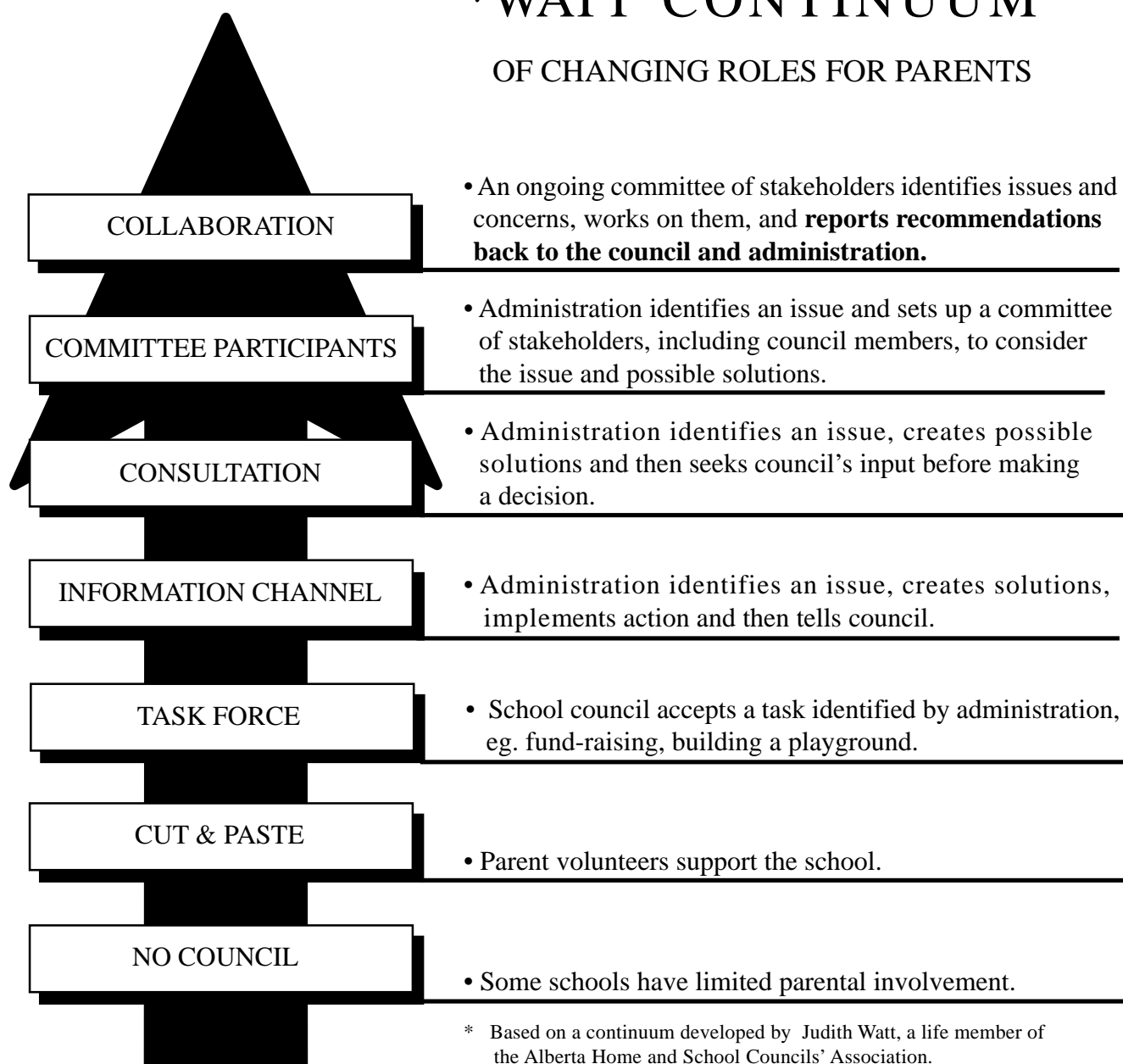
4. Hold the first meeting of the school council by March 1, 1996. q
 - Elect officers (may include an AHSCA representative)
 - Establish process to write bylaws (*see Bylaws Section H.*)
 - Determine decision-making model (*see page D1.*)
 - Begin work on mission statement, vision statement and goals (*see Section D.*)
(Note: this is the “big work” of school councils. It will be ongoing, so start small.)

Levels of involvement: What do we do? What do we want to do?

School councils should start by examining the types of tasks, activities, and decisions in which the previous parent advisory association or council was involved. A chart or checklist can help. Once an inventory is complete, councils can place themselves on the following continuum and discuss whether the current level of involvement meets community expectations. Each school council will determine its own level of involvement. This exercise will give you the opportunity to recognize the significant contribution your PAC has already made to the school community and plan for future growth.

*WATT CONTINUUM

OF CHANGING ROLES FOR PARENTS



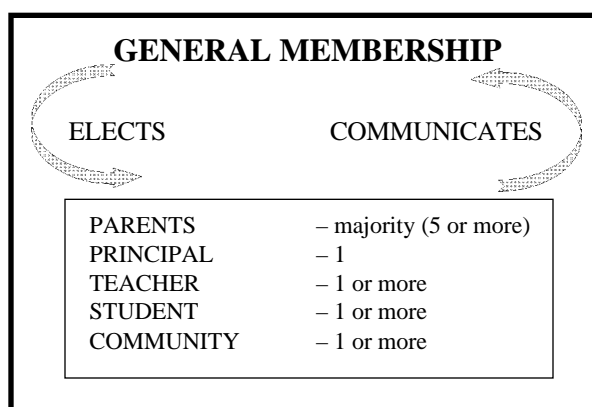
* Based on a continuum developed by Judith Watt, a life member of the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association.

Choosing a model of governance

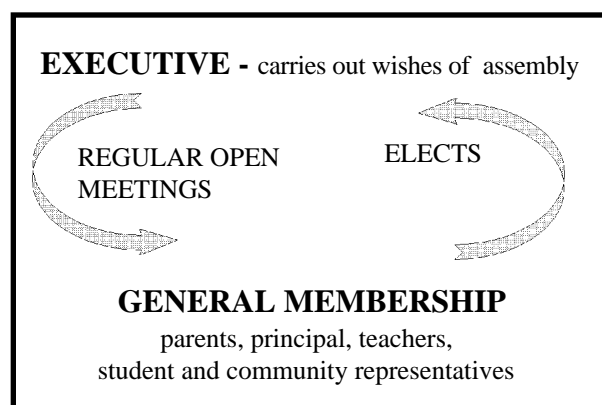
According to the *School Councils Handbook*, Alberta Education, June 1995, the school community may choose any model of governance for its school council. Once established, the council may specify how it will operate and how other members of the school community will be involved in its work. There are two models of governance suggested in the *School Councils Handbook*:

Representative Model

In this model, the school council acts like an elected board of directors which advises and consults with the principal or the school board and reports back to the wider school community two or more times per year. Individual elected members each represent a constituency (parents, students, teachers, the community) and are responsible for representing its views. General membership (the entire school community) should be kept informed by frequent newsletters, flyers, fan-out calls or other means. School council bylaws stipulate the number of general meetings to be held each year, and a process by which general meetings can be called at the request of several members. The advantage of this model of governance is that elected council members assume the biggest time commitment.



Joyce P Eynon



Joyce P Eynon

Assembly Model

The assembly, or town hall model, also involves the election of members to council, but regular meetings are open to the entire school community. This model requires a significant time commitment from the entire school community, rather than just those elected to council. A quorum is specified in the school council bylaws.

Roles A N D Responsibilities

School Councils

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SECTION C

Roles of school council

The school council's mandate is to work toward ensuring the best possible education for all students within that school. The school council provides a *structure* in which parents, principal, teachers, students and community members can talk about education in their community. The school council is also a *vehicle* by which everyone in the school community has a voice in educational issues and individual opinions are encouraged and valued.

Roles: It is the role of the school council to:

- Establish the school council's mission, vision and goals.
The focus of school councils should be on defining the school's mission, vision and goals rather than on day-to-day management of the school, or the professional practices of the principal and teachers.
- Consult with the principal, so he or she may ensure school performance, programs and priorities meet the school community's expectations.
Carrying out this role requires extensive consultation with the school community and collaboration on setting priorities, strategies and performance measures.
- Advise the principal, the school board, Alberta Education, parents and volunteers.
The school council may advise the principal on any matter relating to the school, including strategies to help the school fulfil its mission and vision, and methods of evaluating the school's progress toward its goals. It may similarly wish to advise the school board, Alberta Education or other provincial organizations on broader education issues. The school council can also play a role in advising parents on their roles and responsibilities in the education of their children and in advising volunteers on their roles, responsibilities, rights and the importance of confidentiality.
- Consult with other school councils and provincial organizations.
School councils consult with the principal on issues related to student learning within the school and consult with other school councils and education partners on wider issues.
- Share information with the school community, other school councils and provincial organizations.
School councils have an important role to play in keeping the school community, school boards, other school councils, Alberta Education and provincial organizations informed.

Responsibilities of school council

Responsibilities: It is the responsibility of the school council to:

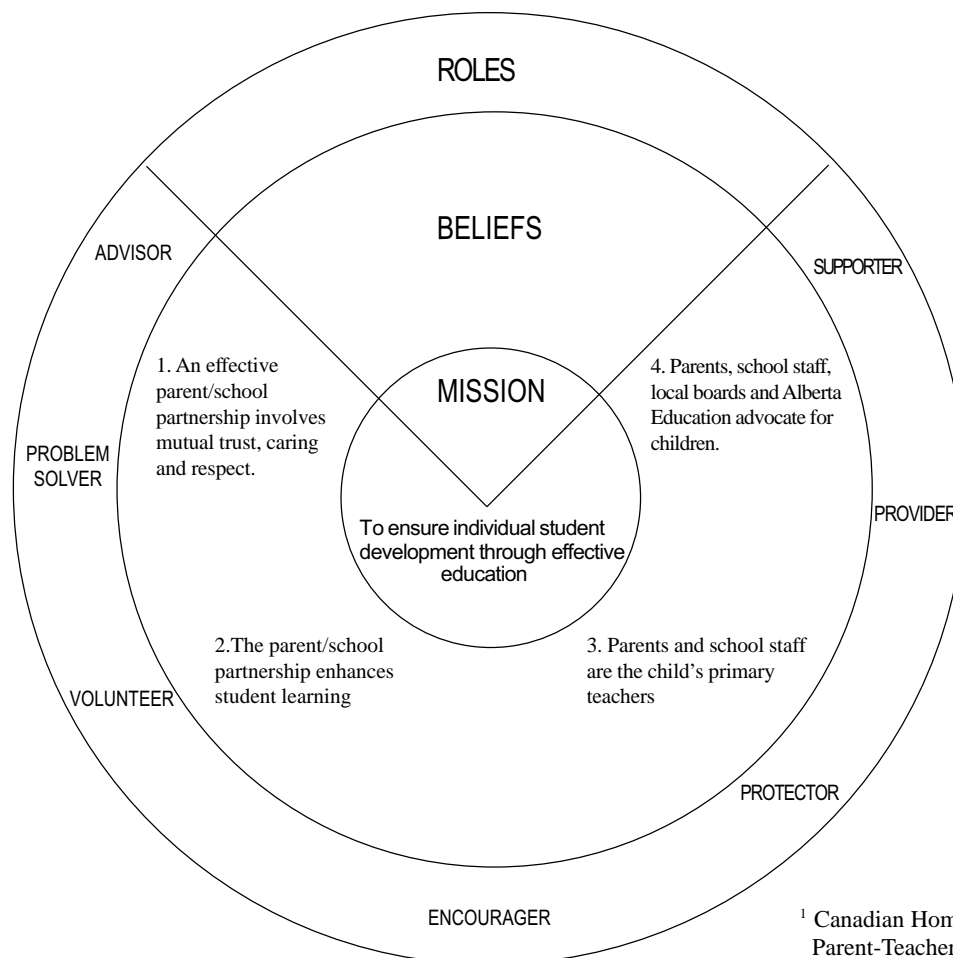
- **Actively seek the views of the school community.**
Continually seeking input from the school community is the only way councils can accurately formulate goals and expectations for the school that will meet community needs.
- **Actively represent the views of the school community and become as influential as possible.**
School councils have a responsibility to make the views of the school community known to the principal, school board, Alberta Education or other education partners, where applicable.
- **Inform the school community.**
School councils must keep the community well informed of the council's roles, functions, projects and decisions (along with the reasons behind them).
- **Involve the school community.**
The school council will need to make a special effort to bring all parents into the education circle to ensure decisions reflect the interests of all children in the school.
- **Encourage all forms of parental involvement and support.**
The school council is only one way for parents to participate in the life of the school. Parent volunteers play an important school role, and parents and school alike benefit from direct parental involvement and support. *(See page E14.)*
- **Work within the policies of the local school board.**
School council members will be guided by the mission statement of their school district and must work within district policies and guidelines.
- **Become well informed.**
School council members must be familiar with school policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them. It is important for school councils to take advantage of sessions designed to increase their understanding of the principles of team work, consensus building, school-based decision making and other issues that affect the work of the school council.
- **Focus on the best interests of all students.**
The school council must ensure all students' needs are expressed, considered and addressed. No individual or group can be allowed to promote its own agenda or self-interest at the expense of others.
- **Maintain high ethical standards.**
The school council must limit discussions to matters of concern to the school community as a whole. The confidential nature of individual student learning and behaviour must be respected. The school council must also handle financial matters in an accountable manner. *(See page C7.)*

Roles on school council

The parent's role

- to advise the principal of your views on any matter relating to the school
- to consult with the principal on any matter relating to the school
- to take advantage of opportunities to express views at regional and provincial meetings on such matters as the nature of schooling, curriculum development, provincial testing programs and the suitability of educational innovations
- to work toward building a positive consensus-building school environment
- to respect other council members
- to respect the decision of the majority
- to encourage parents and other community members to become involved
- to resolve issues in the spirit of the best interest of the whole school

Parents as Partners ¹



¹ Canadian Home and School Parent-Teacher Federation

Roles on school council

The principal's role

General responsibilities

- to implement policies of Alberta Education and the local board of education
- to provide instructional leadership in the school
- to ensure instruction is consistent with the approved courses of study and education program
- to ensure standards of education are met
- to evaluate programs
- to direct the management of the school
- to maintain order and discipline
- to promote cooperation between the school and the community
- to evaluate teachers
- to supervise the evaluation and advancement of students

Responsibilities on school council

- to promote a collaborative, collegial approach to decision making
- to establish a school council
- to be a member of the school council
- to promote the activities and mandate of the council
- to assist the council in its operation
- to promote the collaborative model of decision making

The teacher's role

- to serve as a member of the school council (if chosen to represent teaching staff)
- to provide assistance and ideas for the teacher representatives on the school council
- to support the actions and decisions of the school council
- to ensure a teacher voice is expressed in all decisions which affect teaching and learning
- to promote a collaborative, collegial model of decision making at the school and for the school council
- to encourage parents and the community to become involved in school activities
- to communicate information back to fellow teachers

The community member's role

The community representative on the school council will play a strong role in bringing the community perspective into the school. He or she will assist the school in building partnerships with community members and help build lines of cooperation to enhance student learning.

Roles on school council

The student's role

The student is at the centre of the education system and, in higher grades, has a crucial role to play as a participant on school council. The attitudes and values the student brings to council will help influence decisions made by the principal and the school council, and therefore help determine the direction of the school. The student's role on school council is:

- to help design policies
- to advocate for a strong school council
- to seek student views to share with the school council, and
- to communicate information back to fellow students.

Roles with respect to school council

The trustee/school board's role

- to develop consultative structures so all community stakeholders have opportunities for meaningful input into decisions about education in that community
- to delegate to school councils responsibilities in accordance with the delegation
- to develop mechanisms for reporting to parents and taxpayers on student achievement and the performance of the school system
- to consult with education partners on changes to programs and instructional approaches
- to determine the types of educational programs the community needs and wants and endeavour to provide such programs
- to establish an appeal process or conflict resolution procedure for school councils.

The board of trustees may develop and implement policies respecting school councils.

The superintendent's role

- to play a key role in establishing accountability measures for the jurisdiction
- to uphold the *School Act*, Alberta Education regulations and board policies
- to enact policies regarding the operation of school councils and to play an instrumental role in assisting with their formation and operation
- to work closely with school councils
- to work closely with trustees and school administrators in establishing open and fair conflict resolution procedures for school councils.

Roles with respect to school council

The role of Faculties of Education

The preparation and education of teachers is vitally important in the education of children. Faculties of Education are committed to working in partnership with school communities to enhance their teacher education programs by:

- working with teachers and students in schools to prepare new teachers and to improve teaching and teacher education
- serving as a resource for schools and teachers
- offering professional development courses and graduate programs, and
- working with Alberta Education to develop educational curricula and policy.

The role of business

- to actively participate in strengthening local schools. Possible activities include:
 - sharing the time, talents and expertise of employees with students
 - sharing financial and technical resources with schools
 - participating in job-shadowing projects, and
 - acting as an advocate for local schools and for education in general.

The Alberta Home and School Councils' Association

SUGGESTED CODE OF ETHICS

for school council members

- A member shall be guided by the mission statement of his or her school district.
- A member shall endeavour to be familiar with school policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- A member shall practise the highest standards of honesty, accuracy, integrity and truth.
- A member shall recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
- A member shall encourage a positive atmosphere where individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- A member shall apply democratic principles.
- A member shall consider the best interests of *all* students.
- A member shall respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council.
- A member shall not disclose confidential information.
- A member shall limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
- A member shall use the appropriate communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
- A member shall promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
- A member shall accept accountability for decisions.
- A member shall declare any conflict of interest.
- A member shall accept no payment for school council activities.

Parent rights and responsibilities

Rights

- Parents have the right to be involved in meaningful decisions related to their child's education.
- Parents have the right to be informed on matters affecting the education of their child, such as the school environment, program content, teaching methods, school policies.
- Parents have the right to contribute to decisions about the school's environment, programs and practices.
- Parents have the right to communicate with the school council, teachers, principal and the school board in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Parents have the right to hold the teachers, school administration and the education system accountable for the quality of education in the school.
- Parents have the right to expect that all children will receive the best possible education in a safe and friendly environment.

Responsibilities

- Parents have the responsibility to support the principal, teachers and support staff.
- Parents have the responsibility to work for change where needed and to help the school provide a safe and friendly environment for their child's education.
- Parents have the responsibility to insist on change where necessary.
- Parents have the responsibility to keep informed about and respond to education issues at the school level, board level and provincial level.
- Parents have the responsibility to participate in an informed and democratic way in school decisions.
- Parents have the responsibility to act in a socially responsible manner.
- Parents have the responsibility to accept accountability for their child as a learner and their role in their child's learning.

The BIG Work

Choosing a decision-making model.....	D1
Building consensus.....	D2
Deciding which issues belong with the school council	D3
Deciding on a mission	D5
Developing a mission statement	D6
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SECTION D

Choosing a decision-making model

There are a number of ways school councils can arrive at a decision:

1. The issue can be discussed by the council and then voted on.
2. School council can make a decision after considering the possible reaction of the school community.
3. The school community can be asked for guidance before the decision is made.
4. The school council can actively seek consensus from the school community and decide accordingly.

The model a school council chooses for making decisions may vary depending on the issue. The first two approaches (majority vote) save time and are efficient for simple, straightforward issues. The third and fourth strategies (consensus building) may be valuable on major, more complex issues. In some cases, a school council may combine the methods—seek consensus from the school community and then confirm the decision by a majority vote.

Majority Vote Model

In this model, participants require ample time to become informed on the issue and to discuss it thoroughly. The chair calls the vote once he or she feels discussion is complete. The advantage of this model is that a clear decision is made. The discussion period offers the opportunity for compromise as the motion may be modified at this time. In situations where opinions are so divergent that compromise is impossible, the majority vote may be the preferred model. The down side of this approach is that it can create a win/lose situation where some participants are dissatisfied with the outcome. The positive team-building approach needed for successful school-based decision making may be destroyed by the negative undercurrent created when some participants feel they've "lost."

Consensus Building Model

In this model, each decision maker must agree *to (but not necessarily with all parts of)* the final outcome. Although they may differ on some aspects of the decision, school council members agree the total package best meets everyone's needs and supports it on that basis. If consensus cannot be reached on any part or all of a decision, a vote is taken.

There are advantages to the consensus building model. It:

- ensures all council members have an effective voice
- builds on differing perspectives and values
- allows for flexibility in arriving at solutions
- can build respect for differing values and viewpoints
- can lead to better informed, more creative, balanced and enduring decisions
- ensures the final decision has the support of the entire school council, and
- if unsuccessful, it allows for a decision to be made by voting.

Building consensus

What is consensus?

Consensus is finding the highest level of agreement without dividing participants into factions. It's an important tool, but may not be needed for all decisions.

Why build consensus?

- The process involves everyone and incorporates all ideas.
- It generates commitment to action and to each other.
- It helps teams work together in a positive way to develop mutual trust and understanding.
- It helps identify areas of agreement.
- It facilitates discussion.
- It provides an opportunity to explore how each person feels about an issue—important information when designing an eventual action plan.

Consensus process

- State the problem clearly.
- Brainstorm.
- Discuss each item. Clarify. Don't jump to solutions.
- Categorize, narrow the focus, eliminate items, modify.
- Select final statements. Use consensus voting.

Rules of Consensus Seeking

- No averaging
- No horse-trading
- No majority rule
- No excluding anyone
- **No giving up**

Consensus Voting

- How many are all for it—believe in it so much, they could be leaders on the issue.
- How many are all for it—will lend support.
- How many need to talk about the issue further.
- How many are not sure, but trust the opinion of the group.

The first person to say no to the proposal must give an alternative.

Deciding which issues belong with the school council

Not all education issues are appropriately handled at the school council level. From the range of issues possible, council should decide which they are able to deal with and in what way. The school council constitution and bylaws should reflect these decisions.

Sample exercise

The following list could be written on file cards for participants to categorize in one of five ways:

1. Not the school council's responsibility (by legislation)
2. Not the school council's responsibility (by choice)
3. For information of council only
4. For advice/consultation by council
5. As part of a collaborative decision-making process (council as a partner)

ITEM	CATEGORY 1-5	COMMENTS
1. Achievement test results		
2. Budget and resources		
3. Communication procedures		
4. Confidential issues		
5. Controversial programs (drugs, parenting skills)		
6. Curriculum change		
7. Decisions from Alberta Education and board		
8. Educational and societal data and facts		
9. Extracurricular programs		
10. Field trips		
11. Fundraising		
12. Helping students eg. homework		
13. Student behaviour issues		
14. Locally developed courses		
15. Long-range planning		
16. Maintenance and facilities		
17. Parent-teacher interviews		

Sample exercise continued . . .

ITEM	CATEGORY 1-5	COMMENTS
18. Political activities		
19. Report cards - format, timing		
20. Resource and material selection		
21. School goals		
22. School events - schedule/ calendars		
23. School and staff organization		
24. School year - length, timing		
25. School programs and courses		
26. School philosophy - mission, vision		
27. Hiring staff		
28. Staff competence		
29. Student activity eg. hot lunch		
30. Student handbook		
31. Student placement		
32. Student policy (development) discipline, lates, dress code, attendance		
33. Supervision issue		
34. Teacher evaluation process and policy		
35. Test schedules		
36. Volunteers		
37. Personnel Issues		
38.		
39.		

Please note #'s 27, 28 and 37 belong to Category 1, not the business of the council by legislation.

Deciding on a mission

A mission statement articulates the reason an organization or institution exists. If your school has a mission statement, the school council should develop a closely related school council mission statement. If your school does not have a mission statement, it may be a good first project for the school council. All school councils are established with the aim of enhancing student learning. This purpose should be reflected in the mission statement. The mission statement of each council also should fit with the mission of the local school board.

Sample school mission statements

- *Green School believes in success for all students. The purpose of the school is to provide opportunities for each student to grow in a positive environment which fosters good academic performance and the development of strong citizenship skills.*
- *Yellowdale School will support students' preparation for the 21st century by facilitating their academic, artistic, physical, practical and personal development. It will promote learning in an environment that fosters dignity, respect and success.*

Sample school council mission statements

Greendale School Council

- *To enhance the educational experience at Greendale School through actively supporting staff, students, programs, facility, parents, school events and the School District.*

Other samples

- *The mission of our school council is to foster the well-being and effectiveness of our school community and thereby to enhance student learning.*
- *Our school council's mission is to provide the school with the support needed to give each student the best education possible.*

MISSION
—the reason a school or school council exists

Developing a Mission Statement

Sample exercise



1. Individually, on paper, answer the questions:

- What is our purpose?
- Why do we exist as a council?



2. In pairs, write a joint statement. Then jointly write a statement in groups of four and so on.

3. Continue by expanding the size of the group until consensus has been reached.



Setting a vision

A vision statement is different from a mission statement. Your mission is the reason you, as an organization or institution, exist. Your vision is really your mental image of the ideal school or school council you hope to achieve. Because a vision statement describes the situation you hope to create, it's written in the present tense—as if you'd closed your eyes and said, "I see Goodwill School as a vibrant, welcoming community where every child is actively engaged in learning and in developing the citizenship skills he or she will require to become a contributing member of society."

Every parent can close his or her eyes and imagine an ideal school—one perfect for the needs of his or her child. The challenge for school councils is to combine the visions of many into one that each member of the school community can agree to work toward.



Shared vision is a bonding of common values and commitments. A school council vision statement clearly articulates the future everyone will work toward.

VISION
—what a school council hopes to achieve

Vision is a powerful statement about the future which should be used regularly by all members of the school council as the basis for understanding their work.

Powerful visions are

- simple statements
- easy to picture
- statements which will shape the behaviour and action of the school council
- a challenge
- long term rather than medium or short term
- owned by all members of the school council
- used as a test for high-quality decision making

Some powerful visions include:

We've Got Pride! (Seattle School)

Quality is Job #1 (Ford)

Entertainment Everywhere (Sony)

Shoemakers to the World (Bata Shoes)

Eyewear in About an Hour (Lenscrafters)



Vision without action is called dreaming.

Action without vision is called passing time.

Vision with **action** can change the world.

- Joel Barker, from the video Power of Vision

Vision categories

In the space below, outline your ideal school and school program. Use short statements that describe what your ideal school is like for parents, students and staff.

Organizational Climate

Your basic values, beliefs and expectations about the students, the staff, the nature of the interactions among students and staff, the role of parents and the role of the school

Program Plan

How students and staff are arranged for instruction; how you use electives, requirements, schedules, classes, counselling, advisors, teaming, curriculum integration and support staff to structure the program; the outcome goals desired such as critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and basic knowledge and skills

Classroom Interaction

How you view students and learning in terms of both process and content; includes consideration of student learning styles, self-concept, success, interactions and activities in instruction

Step one: Vision Words

- On each of three post-it notes, write a word which captures your idea of what your school council's vision should be.
- Collect the post-it notes from participants and stick them to a wall or table, clustering them to note similar words and common themes.

Step two: Vision Images

- In the year 2000 we want our school to be thought of as—

Step three: Values to inform the vision

- On three post-it notes, identify three values that are indicative of the work of the school.
- Sort into like-minded values.

Step four: The statement

- Using the information generated in steps one through three, propose a vision statement for the school council. It should be concise.

Step five: Perpetuating the vision

- Keep the vision alive by incorporating it in the school
 - newsletter
 - song/cheer
 - art work
 - celebrations
 - calendar
 - handbook
 - report cards
 - book markers
 - logo/symbol
 - yearbook.

Combining vision with action through strategic planning

Strategic planning is an effective and systematic way to determine the expectations of the school community and to find ways to meet them. It is a continuous process in which missions and visions are formulated, guiding principles are identified, objectives are written, action plans are developed and progress is evaluated. Strategic planning takes both time and commitment, but results in clear benefits.

- Effort and resources are effectively focused on desired results.
- A framework for decision making is established.
- Decisions move consistently toward goals.
- Today's decisions can be viewed in light of future consequences.
- Teamwork and unity of effort are strengthened.
- A framework is provided for initiative, improvement and innovation.
- Leadership, thinking, communication and action skills are developed.
- Time spent on crisis management is minimized.

Three factors are key to the success of any plan: the support of school council; the support of the school community; and regular reviews and updates. **All school council members should support the strategic planning process, but it's especially important that key figures, like the principal, be seen to fully back the process and its result.** If key members of the school council lack this commitment, any plan formulated has little chance of being carried out.

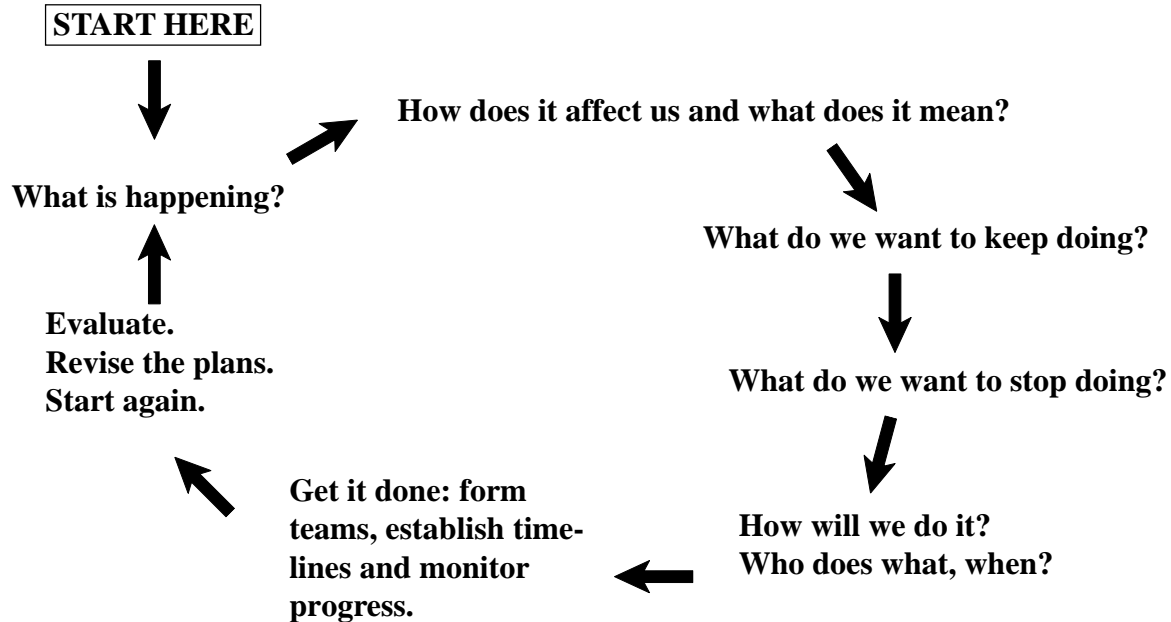
Second, the plan must have credibility within the school community. Individual members of the school community need to be consulted on what the plan should include; should have the opportunity to review each component of the plan as it is developed; and should review and approve the final strategic plan before it is implemented.

Finally, the plan must remain current. The strategic plan should be reviewed quarterly to monitor progress, and during this review, any necessary adjustments to the plan should be made. The plan should be updated annually so it continues to meet the expectations of the school community. This annual update

- represents a commitment to strategic planning
- validates priorities
- strengthens the credibility of the process
- narrows the focus allowing concentrated effort on objectives
- enables the school to budget to its plan, not plan to its budget

Essentially, strategic planning is an information gathering and generating process where the principal and school council, or a subcommittee of the school council, review past, present and future information; envisage the school's future; and develop an overall guiding plan to achieve that future. Strategic planning and evaluating is not an event; it is a way of life in a successful school.

The Strategic Planning Process



1. Environmental Scan

- What do we know about current conditions, existing plans, clients or visions?
- What do we know about future trends?
- What are the perceptions and expectations of our school community?
- What kind of future would we like to see?

2. Information Analysis

- Using our leadership, intuition and judgment, what does the information tell us?
- Do we need more information?

3. Strategic Planning

- What do we want to keep doing?
- What do we want to do differently?

4. Tactical Planning

- How will we get it done?
- Who will do what, when?

5. Implementation

- Doing the work—forming teams, setting timelines and monitoring progress.

6. Renewing the Cycle

- Evaluating projects, revising plans, celebrating success.

Combining vision with action

Nine Step Checklist

1. Describe the current situation in detail
 - Complete the Current Situation worksheet, page D14
 - Complete the SWOT analysis, page D15
 - Identify major issues, page D16
2. Narrow the issues, page D17
3. Write goals, page D18
4. Set goals in order of priority, page D19
and do a force field analysis, page D20
5. Select a goal or goals, page D21
6. Design a plan to fulfil the goal, D22, D23
7. Implement the plan
8. Evaluate the plan—has the goal been met?
9. CELEBRATE

Sample exercise Identify the issues

1. List in rank order the top educational issues in Alberta today.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

2. List in rank order the top issues for your school and school council.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

3. Does the list of issues and/or the rank order change over the longer term (24-36 months)? If so, show your revised list below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

4. Compare lists with the other members of school council. What common issues have been identified?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

5. Choose one or more of the common issues for discussion.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Sample exercise

Narrowing the issues

CURRENT SITUATION	DESIRED SITUATION
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

A process for developing group goals

(Participants are in groups of four or five.)

- 1.** Individually, on five or six post-it notes, write phrases that suggest a goal, purpose, direction or priority.
- 2.** Individually, one at a time and silently, place the post-its on a piece of chart paper. The first person puts his or her notes along the top of the paper to start a column of ideas. The next person reads what is there and adds his or her post-its to the columns started, or makes new ones. Continue this activity until everyone's post-its are in columns.
- 3.** Still individually and silently, read all the post-its on the chart and move them as categories suggest themselves. Everyone should be familiar with all of the ideas.
- 4.** Discuss the columns and the ideas within them. Move the post-its based on agreement of the group.
- 5.** For each column, write at least one goal statement.
- 6.** Compare all the lists. Make one common list.
- 7.** Decide priorities by consensus. Now proceed to the planning stage.

Sample exercise

The goals

Try to keep goals simple and, if possible, identify the goal as achievable within one, two or three years. All goals should be steps toward achieving your ultimate VISION.

GOAL ONE

GOAL TWO

GOAL THREE

GOAL FOUR

GOAL FIVE

- For each goal, brainstorm to develop a number of ways it can be achieved.
- Settle on the most promising strategies for which time, talent and resources are available.



- Finally, complete the Action Planning sheets. Be sure to include the time for reaching the goal, persons responsible for carrying out the strategies and a method of evaluating success.

19 ____ to 19 ____

ACTION PLAN FOR _____

GOAL _____

Page # _____

STRATEGIES	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	EVALUATION

Sample action plan

GOAL 1 Increase positive interaction between parents and school

Objective 1.1	Provide positive extracurricular interaction	Deadline	Responsibility
	Strategy 1.1A Hold muffin morning before exams begin	Nov. 95	Program Committee
	Strategy 1.1B Establish parent/teacher/student fun basketball league	Feb. 96	Ted— Melissa—
Objective 1.2	Increase parent participation in class activities		
	Strategy 1.2A Establish a resource list of parents outlining an area of expertise that may be useful to teachers	Jan. 96	Communication Committee

GOAL 2 Increase positive image of the school in the community

Objective 2.1	Create positive relationship with nonparent taxpayers		
	Strategy 2.1A Invite area residents to the school for “evening classes”—to see how education has changed	April 96	Public Relations Committee and Teacher Involvement Committee
	Strategy 2.1B Network with local business to establish possible contact list for education-business partnerships in the school	June 96	James—
	Strategy 2.1C Inform local media outlets of exciting student achievements with monthly information releases	Jan. 96	Public Relations Committee and Teacher Involvement Committee

Practicalities THE Nuts AND Bolts

Planning and conducting effective meetings	E1
Sample agendas	E2
Chairing the meeting	E4
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Rules of order	E6
Recording minutes	E8
Sample minutes	E9
Organizing and evaluating	E11
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Sample meeting evaluation form	E13
Enhancing parent participation	E14
Saying thanks	E14
Effective meeting strategies	E15
Valuing or decision making	E16

SECTION E

Planning and conducting effective meetings

Before the meeting - notify, inform and involve

The effort expended in notifying members of the school community of the meeting will result in a stronger group whose decisions are more valid in the eyes of the community. Saturate the school community with notices, reminders and incentives to attend.

- advertise in school and community newsletters
- circulate the year's meetings dates at the beginning of the school year
- provide incentives to students to get the notice home
- use a lawn sign
- telephone people—consider a phone fan-out system
- use community events services
- advertise any particularly pertinent or special agenda items
- inform people of the start and finish time of the meeting
- offer baby-sitting if appropriate

Planning an agenda

A carefully planned and organized agenda is the foundation of a successful meeting. A good agenda briefly outlines what you intend to discuss and in what order. Items on the agenda should reflect the concerns and interests of your school community. (*See pages E3 and E4.*) The chair develops the agenda and asks if anyone has items to add at the beginning of the meeting. The chair:

- tailors the agenda to the time available, ensuring each item is allotted sufficient time for discussion
- reviews previous minutes and includes items that need revisiting on the agenda
- includes time for business arising from the minutes
- limits meetings to a maximum of two hours
- distributes the agenda to members seven days before the meeting
- ensures the whole school community is aware of meeting dates and agenda items . (No matter which model of governance is used, input from the school community is essential.)

Consent agenda

A consent agenda is a good way to get some business done quickly. The chair presents a list of items primarily for information and asks that the consent agenda be approved before moving on to the meeting agenda. Items on the consent agenda may include:

- a list of correspondence and how it was handled
- updates of projects and committee work not being discussed at the meeting
- notices and announcements

Anyone wishing to discuss an item on the consent agenda may ask to have it moved to the meeting agenda.

Sample Agenda

_____ School Council Meeting
September 16, 1995, 7:00 p.m.
Library, ABC School

AGENDA

- | | | |
|------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 7:00 - 7:05 p.m. | 1. CALL TO ORDER
- roll call | |
| 7:05 - 7:10 p.m. | 2. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES
- date of previous meeting
- Business arising | For Decision |
| 7:10 - 7:15 p.m. | 3. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES
3.1 Finance
3.2 Technology
- Report on upgrading costs
3.3 Bylaw
- Submit first draft | For Discussion |
| 7:15 - 7:25 p.m. | | For Action |
| 7:25 - 7:45 p.m. | | For Discussion |
| 7:45 - 7:50 | 4. HOME AND SCHOOL COUNCILS' REPRESENTATIVE REPORT | |
| 7:50 - 7:55 p.m. | 5. PRINCIPAL/STAFF REPORT | |
| 7:55 - 8:00 p.m. | 6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS | For Decision
and Action |
| 8:00 - 8:05 p.m. | BREAK | |
| 8:05 - 8:30 p.m. | 7. DEVELOP VISION STATEMENT | For Discussion |
| 8:30 - 8:40 p.m. | 8. NEW BUSINESS
8.1 Revised Discipline Policy
8.2 Possible Formation of Grad Committee | For Referral |
| 8:40 - 8:45 p.m. | 9. MEETING EVALUATIONS | Information |
| 8:45 p.m. | 10. NEXT MEETING DATE AND ADJOURNMENT | |

Sample Agenda

_____ School Council Meeting
February 23, 1996, 7:00 p.m.
To be held in the library

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

(members may request an item be added to the agenda at this time)

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

- Business Arising

REPORTS:

- Communication committee report
- Fundraising committee report
- Principal's report
- Home and School Councils' representative report

OLD BUSINESS: *(usually reports of action on matters previously presented to the group or held over for some reason)*

- Staff wish list
- Review of goals and strategies to be achieved by this date

NEW BUSINESS: *(reports of action on matters currently presented to the group, motions made and resolutions adopted)*

- Teacher appreciation luncheon
- Awards night support
- Possible establishment of education-business partnership committee

MEETING EVALUATION

NEXT MEETING

ADJOURNMENT

Chairing the Meeting

Characteristics of a Good Chairperson

- recognizes the similarities and differences in groups
- emphasizes interests and concerns
- acknowledges and values the different roles people play in group situations
- works towards building trust, respect, empathy and effective communication between council members
- fosters collaboration on all school council issues
- allows for evaluation at the end of the meeting

Responsibilities of the Chairperson

- to determine whether issues will be consultative, advisory or require a school council decision
- to set the climate of the meeting
- to provide the agenda seven days prior to the meeting date
- to ensure the agenda is approved as the first order of business
- to keep the discussion flowing in a collaborative fashion
- to summarize the main points before moving to the next item or before making a decision
- to encourage participation from all members
- to acknowledge that each person's comments contribute to the success of the meeting
- to clarify the results of collaborative discussion and to summarize the actions decided upon
- to be a harmonizer during conflict

Simple Rules for Chairing a Meeting

- the chairperson calls the meeting to order
- the meeting's formality depends on the chairperson, the group's size and the group's preference
- the chairperson recognizes members before they speak
- each item is entitled to full and free debate by individual members—one at a time
- each person desiring to speak should be allowed to speak once before anyone speaks for a second time
- motions should be dealt with according to a parliamentary procedure book (*see E6*)
- the chairperson is responsible for moving the meeting along and ensuring no one monopolizes the floor
- only one subject may be discussed at a time
- if time does not permit full discussion of an item, a motion may be made to table the item for discussion at another meeting
- every member has equal rights

Committee formation and operation

Members of school council can't do everything themselves. It's critical to the success of the school council that tasks be delegated to committees when necessary. These committees need not be made up of regular council members. Parents, teachers and members of the community who are unable to be regular members of council may be willing to serve on short-term committees. Effective committee work helps make school council meetings brief and effective. They also enable the council to accomplish much more.

- Committees are formed after initial school council discussion.
- Items requiring more lengthy discussion or research are assigned to a committee.
- Committees make decisions or recommendations according to the mandate the school council gives them.
- Standing committees operate on an ongoing basis with specified lengths of terms for members.
- Ad hoc committees are formed as necessary and are to work within a specified time period.
- Committee members should
 - be willing to participate both individually and as a team
 - be willing to prepare evaluations and reports as required
 - set priorities early and follow through
 - provide a link between the school, the parents and the community
 - listen to all views and represent the school community's wishes
 - work towards consensus

Committees your school council may wish to consider:

1. **Constitution or Bylaw Committee** to review or prepare the school council constitution and/or bylaws to present to school council for discussion and approval. (Committees also may work toward developing a school council mission statement or vision statement.)
2. **Communications Committee** to plan and carry out communication strategies to improve the links between home and school, between the general community and the school and with local media.
3. **Strategic Planning Committee** to plan how goals will be reached.
4. **Fundraising Committee** to plan and coordinate fundraising campaigns for special projects.
5. **School Spirit Committee** to plan and organize special events and promotions designed to boost school spirit.
6. **Education-Business Partnership Committee** to help establish partnerships which enhance student learning with community businesses.

Rules of Order

Rules of order help people work together effectively. They are a tool, not a weapon, to be selected by each school council according to its need. It's important that the school council follow a set of rules, and especially important that the chair knows the procedure for:

- making a motion
- tabling a motion
- amending a motion
- withdrawing a motion
- notice of motion
- voting
- rejecting a motion
- points of order

The following is a simplified guide to rules of order. Other official rules, such as *Robert's Rules of Order* are readily available. Your local school board or public library also may provide further information.

Simple Rules of Order

1. An individual must be *recognized* by the chair before *obtaining the floor* to make a motion. In plain English, this means the chair of the meeting must say it is your turn, before you can speak to the meeting and formally propose a course of action.
2. Once an individual has the floor, he or she may make a formal proposal, or *motion*, beginning with the statement, "I move . . ."
3. Another individual must *second* the motion, by saying, "I second the motion." This indicates that he or she agrees the proposal should be discussed.
4. Once a motion is made and seconded, the chair *states the question* so everyone is clear on what is being proposed. From this point, until the motion has been voted on, all discussion must focus on the question.
5. After stating the question, the chair asks if the assembly is ready for the question, or ready to vote on the proposal.
6. If no one indicates a desire to speak to the issue, the chair *puts the question* or conducts the vote by asking for those in favour and those opposed. (The vote may be conducted by a show of hands, by standing, or by ballot.)
7. If members of the group wish to discuss the motion, the chair opens debate. Each participant may speak to the question twice, but no one may speak the second time until everyone has had the chance to speak once. Once debate is complete, the chair puts the question.
8. The majority needed to pass the motion should be stated in the school council bylaws (eg. 51%). In case of a tie, the motion is lost.

Amending a motion

Up until the chair states the question, the person making the motion may change it, (although the seconder may withdraw and the changed motion may need another seconder.) Once the chair has stated the question, however, the motion must be formally amended in order to be changed.

- The person making the motion may propose to modify it. The chair will ask if anyone objects. If they do, the question to modify the motion is put to a vote. If the group consents to the modification, debate continues on the motion as amended.
- Another individual can move to amend the motion by stating, “I move to amend the motion by . . .” From here, the process is the same as for any other motion—steps three through eight on the previous page.
- An amendment to the amendment may also be proposed, but a third amendment is out of order.
- After the amendment has been dealt with, discussion returns to the original motion.

Withdrawing a motion

- At any time before a vote, the person making the original motion may ask to withdraw it. The motion to withdraw does not require a seconder. Once the question is withdrawn, it is as if it never existed.
- If the chair has already stated the question and a request to withdraw the motion is made, the chair asks if there is any objection. If there is none, the motion is withdrawn. If someone objects, the request to withdraw the motion is put to a vote.

Tabling a motion

A motion to *table a motion* means to set it aside to discuss at another time so more pressing business can be discussed, or so more information about the issue can be obtained.

- The motion to table takes precedence over the motion being discussed.
- The motion to table requires a seconder.
- There can be no debate on a motion to table.

Motions that are null and void

Any motion that contradicts provincial laws and regulations, local policy or school council bylaws is out of order, even if the motion was voted on and passed by a majority vote.

Recording Minutes

Minutes are usually recorded by the secretary of the school council. The minutes should be consistently recorded in one of three ways:

- 1) Formal minutes—when the meeting is governed by a chair
- 2) Semiformal minutes—when a small group is conducting a relaxed discussion
- 3) Informal minutes—used to record the generalities of a meeting

The secretary may have difficulty participating in the discussion while taking minutes. Using a lap top computer helps keep information easy to read back and saves time on the final draft of the minutes. Making an audio tape of the meeting allows the secretary to record motions verbatim and could clarify a dispute.

Accurate minutes provide school council members with:

- a clear objective summary of what went on at the meeting
- a historical account of the decisions of the group and the rationale behind them
- objective comments, rather than opinions
- highlights, rather than narrative accounts
- motions and resolutions recorded verbatim

Sample Minutes

— SCHOOL COUNCIL
 February 23, 1996 Meeting
 School Library
 Minutes

Action

The regular council meeting was called to order by (Chair) at 7:03 p.m., and a quorum was present.

Chairperson: *(name of person)*

Present: *(It's a good idea to pass around an attendance sheet and have the Chair ask the group at the end of the meeting if they've signed the roll.)*

The agenda was approved *(or "with one change...")*

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as read. *(If they were photocopied and distributed before the meeting date, they can be approved "as circulated" and you don't have to spend time reading them aloud at the meeting.) (If there were errors "were approved with corrections.")*

Business Arising:

Reports:

1. Bylaw Committee report was given by Ellen—. A draft of the bylaws was circulated for consideration and will be discussed and approved, if possible, at the next meeting.
2. Fundraising Committee report was given by William—. He reported that our major fundraiser is over, and our next project will be more school spirit oriented with less cash outlay for prizes. See report attached.
3. Principal's Report - Ann—reported that our new open hall policy is causing a few problems with littering, but teachers are finding the students are settling faster in the mornings.

Sample minutes . . . *continued*

Sample Minutes . . . continued

Old Business:	<u>Action</u>
<p>1. - Evaluation of progress toward goals to date</p> <p>-Gail — noted the after school parent/child reading club and book exchange has been a huge success with an average of 45 parents and children attending each session. It was decided to continue the program for another year and to discuss ways of bringing in more older students at the next meeting.</p> <p>- Bruce —noted we were still behind in establishing a resource list of individuals in the community who are specialists in the field of technology. He noted the time involved contacting parents and businesses was more than expected. It was decided to expand the committee and Michelle—, Natalie — and Brad — agreed to serve on the committee.</p>	
New Business:	
<p>1. Teachers appreciation luncheon.</p> <p>- George— volunteered to head the Appreciation Committee. It was decided we would have a continental breakfast for the teachers instead of a luncheon.</p> <p>MOTION: THAT WE ASK THE _____ SCHOOL FUNDRAISING ASSOCIATION TO RELEASE ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$100) TO THE APPRECIATION COMMITTEE FOR THE TEACHERS APPRECIATION CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST. (Jessica—) <u>CARRIED.</u></p>	
<p>The next meeting will be a special meeting to discuss bylaws on March 2 at 7:00 p.m. in the library. The next regular meeting will be March 23 in the library.</p>	
<p>Meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.</p>	
<p><u>Approved</u> _____ Secretary</p>	<p><u>Approved</u> _____ Chair</p>

Organizing and evaluating

Organizing the meeting room

It is important that the venue you choose for the meeting is set up in a way that encourages participation. It is equally important that the room is well organized with all necessary equipment and supplies so the meeting can proceed with minimal interruptions. *(See page E12 for sample meeting room checklist.)*

After the meeting:

Evaluation and distribution of minutes and action plan

One way to provide an opportunity for the school community to communicate is to encourage participants to evaluate the meeting. A good evaluation form asks specific questions that seek information with which to build more effective meetings. Build time into the latter part of the agenda for participants to complete the evaluation form. Providing this opportunity to participants reinforces the value of their input and allows the chair to alter future meetings if necessary. *(See page E13 for sample evaluation form.)*

Another way to provide the opportunity for the school council to communicate is to distribute the meeting's minutes and the action plan. For a variety of reasons, people may not be able to attend meetings, but they may still be both interested and committed members of the school community. If the school budget can't accommodate sending minutes to each member of the school community, they may be posted on the school council and staff bulletin boards.

Sample Meeting Room Organizer

Checklist

- | | | |
|---------------|---|--------------------------|
| Meeting: | Date: | |
| | Start time: | |
| | End time: | |
| Participants: | Number | |
| | List of Participants attached | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Name tags and holders | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Name cards | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Facilities: | Size of room is appropriate | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Lighting is adequate | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Seating: circle | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | chevron | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | u-shaped | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | classroom | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | round table | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | other | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Extra chair for committee reporter or guest | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Tables for participants to write on | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Pleasant atmosphere, conducive to discussion | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Refreshments: | Tea, coffee, juice | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Equipment: | projector | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | transparencies | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | extra bulbs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | VCR | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | extension cords | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | microphone | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | flip chart(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | markers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | pens | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | paper | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | extra copies of the agenda and previous minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Sample Meeting Evaluation Form

Meeting Evaluation

Date: _____

Please take the time to complete this survey. This is your opportunity to improve future meetings.

Evaluation Scale

1 not at all 2 3 4 5 very much so

(Circle one)

- 1. Was the agenda of this meeting clear to you? 1 2 3 4 5
- 2. Were you encouraged to contribute as much as you wanted? 1 2 3 4 5
- 3. Did the atmosphere allow for free discussion? 1 2 3 4 5
- 4. Was there enough time for discussion? 1 2 3 4 5
- 5. Are you clear on what, if any, decision(s) was reached? 1 2 3 4 5
- 6. Are you clear on the next steps being taken? 1 2 3 4 5
- 7. Are you clear about who is responsible for taking the next steps? 1 2 3 4 5
- 8. Do you think the purpose of this meeting was fulfilled? 1 2 3 4 5

9. What aspects of this meeting were most appealing to you? *(written response)*

10. What aspects of this meeting were least appealing to you?

11. Any comments for the Chair on how the meeting was conducted?

12. Do you have suggestions for improving future meetings?

(You do not need to sign this sheet.)

____ Parent ____ Student ____ Teacher ____ Community member

(Please check appropriate space(s).)

Enhancing Parent Participation

Because parental involvement contributes so much to student success, school councils need to break down any barriers between the home and school and make the school a warm, receptive place for parents. School council members should welcome new parents to meetings and inform them of the variety of ways in which they can be involved. Every parent has something to contribute.

When parents feel their input matters, most are eager to participate. Making school council meetings punctual, productive and efficient will encourage parents to remain involved. The use of committees can help parents contribute in areas that meet their interests and/or expertise.

Offering parents a chance to learn something new, along with a business part of a meeting, helps ensure business items are addressed quickly; that meetings are more interesting; and that a broad group of parents participate. Provide information sessions using guest speakers, panel discussions or debates, videos or films—or even venture out on a field trip.

Keep in mind that parents themselves are a great resource for information.

- Invite a parent who is a marketing professional to talk to your school council about ways to tell the community of the school’s successes.
- Invite a parent who is a builder to provide advice on cost-effective ways to build a new playground.
- Invite a parent who is a counsellor to speak on communication skills.
- Invite a parent who is an artist to design a school council logo.
- Invite a parent who is a lawyer to help develop the school council bylaws.
- Invite a parent who is a nurse to speak on the nutritional needs of children.
- Invite a parent who is a musician to speak on practice techniques that work for kids.

A round of applause: showing your appreciation

Every year more parent and community volunteers are contributing their time and expertise to Alberta schools. School councils have a responsibility to encourage, nurture and reward this type of involvement—to say thanks.

The heartfelt words “*thank you*” are always appreciated. But if you’re looking for more concrete ways to show your appreciation, the Alberta Home and School Councils’ Association (AHSCA), through the Canadian Home and School Parent Teacher Federation (CHSPTF), has many ideas and materials available. The volunteer centre in your community also may be able to suggest ways in which to show your thanks.

Effective meeting strategies

Stimulating discussion

In its advisory role, a school council should have ample opportunity to develop a full range of ideas surrounding an issue. The chair is responsible for facilitating this process. Listed below are a number of techniques that can be used to assist participants in expressing their views:

- Chair initiation**
 - the chair invites a wide range of people to speak
 - all who wish to speak are given the opportunity
 - if necessary, time limits can be put on each speaker

- Pairing**
 - people are randomly paired off to discuss an issue and report back to the group

- Table go round**
 - the chair invites each person to speak to an issue (if they choose)
 - a time limit is placed on speakers

- Absolute quiet**
 - participants have time to think, read or make notes relating to the issue being discussed

Creative problem solving

- Brainstorming** A few ground rules help brainstorming become an effective problem-solving tool.
 - ensure everyone is clear on the issue
 - allow no criticism
 - list every idea
 - encourage quantity, not quality: the more ideas the better
 - modify and combine ideas
 - use visual aids
 - allow participants to choose priorities

- Round table** This process is similar to brainstorming, however, the group is subdivided into small groups of four to six people.
 - use flip charts to record all ideas
 - give each group a time limit
 - record all ideas and report back to the main group

- Brain writing** This is similar to the round table, with more individual participation.
 - each member has index cards and writes down one idea on each card
 - cards are exchanged and new ideas or comments are added
 - a facilitator records ideas

Pro/con analysis: In this process participants focus only on the pros and cons of an issue.

Valuing or decision making—the process of setting priorities

Voting

- After all items have been listed, each member votes on what he or she considers the three or four best ideas.
- Coloured stickers or differently coloured felt markers can be used to rank ideas in order of importance.
- The recorder records or tallies priority items.

Value voting

This method is useful to get feedback when time is limited.

- The chairperson asks people to take a position on the issue (strongly agree through strongly disagree).
- Each category is tallied to arrive at a direction, rather than a decision.

Multi voting

This is a variation of brainstorming which allows the group to narrow down the number of ideas presented.

- After brainstorming, the numbering and combining of items is done as necessary.
- Each member selects one quarter of the items they want to discuss.
- Those ideas that have the least interest are eliminated and the remaining ideas are kept for further discussion.

Communication AND *Resolving* Conflict

Individual communication skills	F1
Communication within councils	F2
Communication within jurisdictions	F3
Communication with other educational organizations.....	F4
When you're in conflict	F5
Taming the monster: resolving conflict.....	F6
Conflict resolution process	F7
Setting a positive climate.....	F8

SECTION F

Collaboration is hard work. A 1991 report, *A Study of the Impact of the School Council Section in the 1988 School Act*, identified improved communication as the most important function of a school council. Unfortunately, it also found that ineffective communication was the most frequently unresolved issue. As communication is a major challenge in all human relationships, it comes as no surprise that well-honed communication skills are essential to an effective school council.

Conflict is also a natural part of human existence, but it is not always negative. A continually like-minded group can become stagnant and resistant to new ideas. Conflict can encourage people to find creative solutions.

Opening the channels of communication:

First, it's important to remember who needs to be included in the educational conversation. Information must flow between members of the council, between council and the community, and between council and the other major educational stakeholders.

Individual communication skills

1. Stop talking—to others and to yourself—and learn to still the voice within: listening is an equal partner in communication, but it can't be done while you are talking.
2. Carefully examine the other person's viewpoint. See if you can effectively summarize the points. You may find more to agree with than you imagine.
3. Look, act and be interested.
4. Observe nonverbal behaviour such as body language to grasp meanings beyond what is being said.
5. Don't interrupt. Sit still *past* your tolerance level. Listen between the lines for implicit meanings as well as for explicit ones.
6. If you must interrupt, speak only affirmatively. Resist the temptation to jump in with an evaluative, critical or disparaging comment while someone is expressing his or her point of view.
7. To ensure understanding, at key points in the conversation, rephrase what the other person has said.
8. When you speak, speak clearly and only to the issue being discussed. If you have several points to make, jot them down ahead of time to help keep you focused.

Communication skills within councils

School councils should be a model for our children of the way in which adults collaborate, solve conflicts and achieve common goals. To best set this example and to best meet the goals of the school council, an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust must prevail. This atmosphere will be fostered by effective communication strategies such as:

1. viewing every parent of a student in the school as a participant.
2. providing an opportunity for every member to participate in school meetings.
(Publicize meetings at least seven days prior to the meeting).
3. making the agenda flexible enough to allow all members to express concerns.
(If parents do not have the opportunity to air concerns, the school council risks alienating members and contributing to the creation of special interest groups).
4. conducting regular membership surveys to determine how well the school council is meeting the needs of the community.
5. planning for regular review of school council policies.
6. linking provincially with other school councils by joining the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association.
7. participating in the area association of school councils to share ideas and concerns.

Meaningful three-way communication within jurisdictions

School councils within a jurisdiction should establish formal communication links with the local school board and with each other. Various areas of the province already have organizations such as Councils of School Councils; Families of School Councils; Associations of School Councils; and Alberta Home and School Area Councils. Whatever structure councils within a jurisdiction decide on, they should meet formally and regularly for three reasons:

1. To communicate with the school board

When local school councils meet, they are able to discuss issues of mutual concern and present a unified voice to the local school board. Local associations of school councils should appoint or elect a representative to attend local school board meetings. This individual is to represent the majority view of the school council. He or she will also convey information from the board back to the school council representatives. In this way, councils receive direct and timely information from the board, and the board is able to consider the school council perspective before making policy. Local associations also should invite a trustee to regularly attend their meetings.

2. To communicate with each other

Each school council is part of a larger school council community. This community should meet to share information, successes and failures. Local associations will allow councils to better understand the needs of the larger school community, to provide support to each other, and to develop strategies to help address the needs of the children within their area.

3. To communicate with school councils province-wide

A representative appointed to the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association can extend this exchange of information to the provincial level.

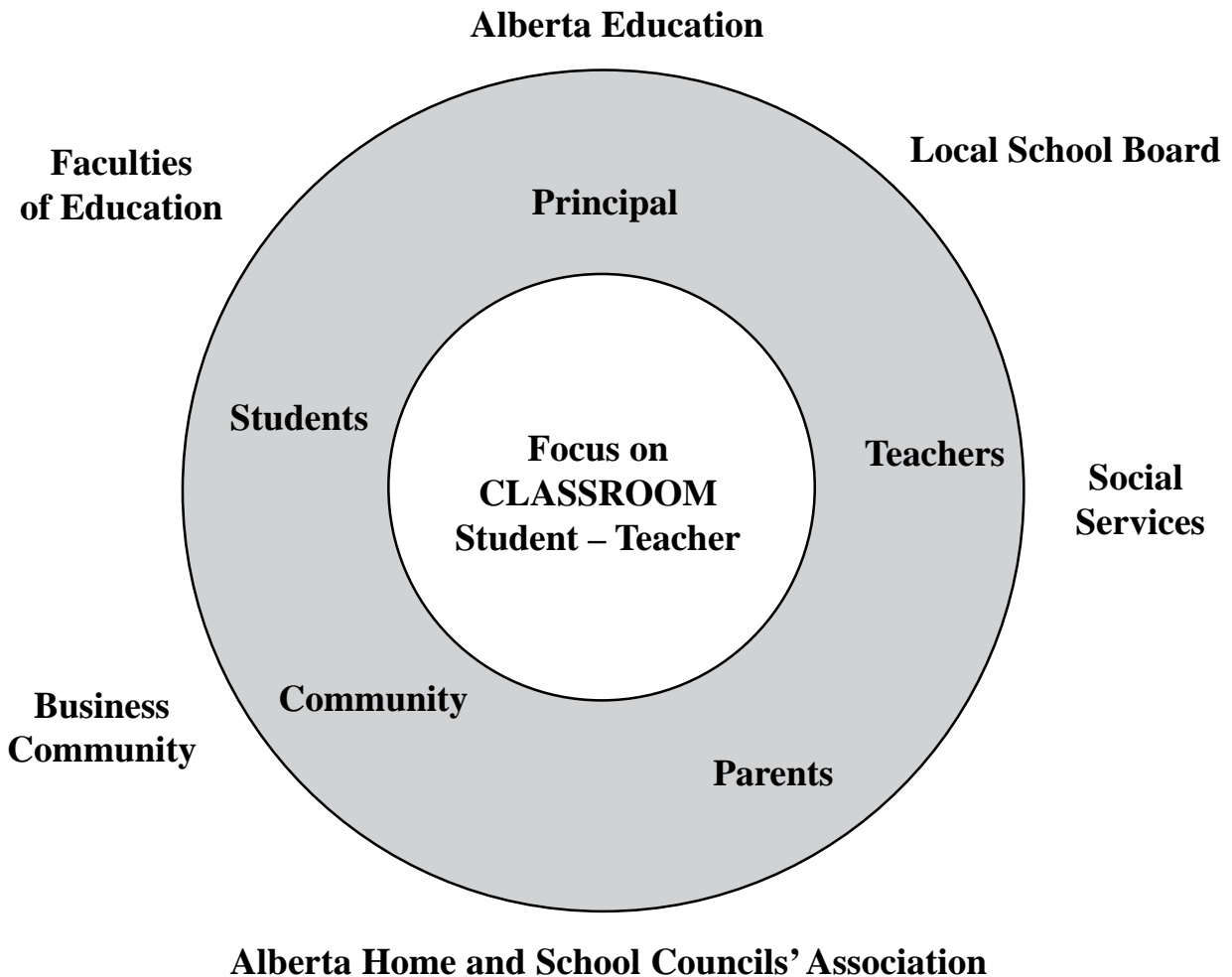
Between school councils and other educational organizations

Communication between educational organizations is vital. Although perspectives vary, there is a genuine willingness to accept differences and build on commonalities. Decisions your council makes will be strengthened by information the following groups can provide:

- Association of School Business Officials of Alberta (ASBOA)
- Alberta Home and School Councils' Association (AHSCA)
- Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA's)
- Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA)
- College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS)
- The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA)
- Alberta Education

COMMUNICATION

Flow Chart



When you're communicating well, but you still don't agree,
you're in conflict—(and that can be a good thing).

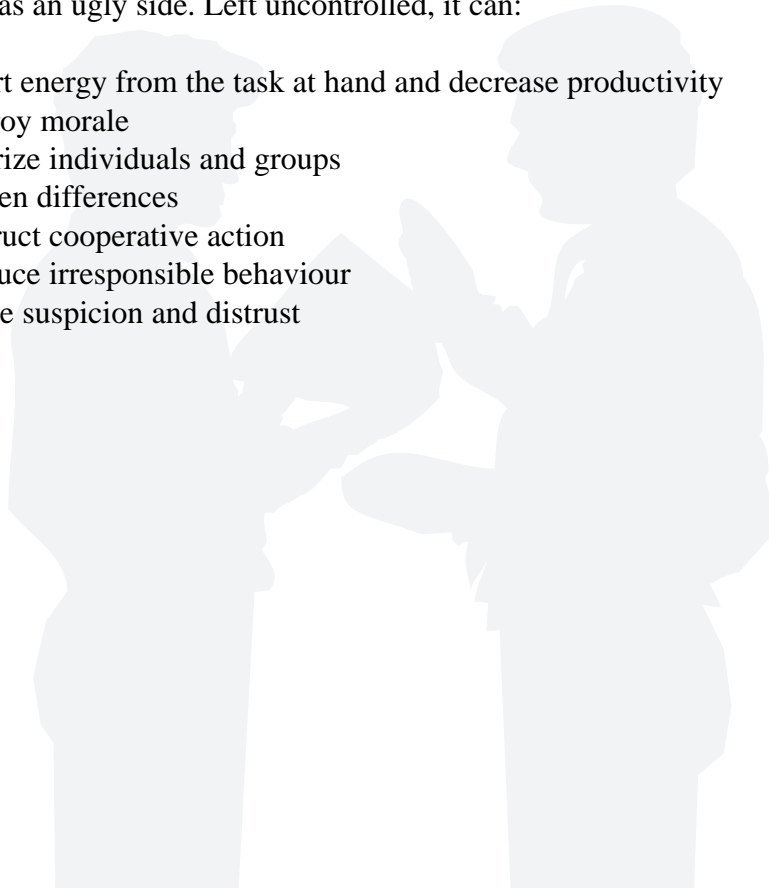
Conflict is a natural part of human existence. While conflict can be devastating if left uncontrolled, in a structured environment, where mutual trust and respect prevail, it can be a positive force.

Conflict has a good side. It can:

- clarify an issue
- open new issues
- increase involvement of members
- encourage growth
- create more spontaneous communication
- strengthen relationships when it's successfully resolved

But conflict also has an ugly side. Left uncontrolled, it can:

- divert energy from the task at hand and decrease productivity
- destroy morale
- polarize individuals and groups
- deepen differences
- obstruct cooperative action
- produce irresponsible behaviour
- create suspicion and distrust



Taming the monster: resolving conflict

1. Identify the source of the conflict

Understanding conflict helps tame it. Groups can begin to seek solutions to conflict only after they've clearly identified the source. Conflict usually occurs because of disagreement on:

- facts
- goals
- methods
- values, beliefs and ethics

2. Identify contributing problems

In seeking solutions to conflicts in any of these four areas, it's important to be aware of the common stumbling blocks:

Communication

Does the discussion involve

- misinformation or a lack of information?
- ill-defined expectations?
- hidden agendas?
- a lack of candour and an absence of trust?

Organizational Structure

Can the defined decision-making process be more effective? (*see E16*)

Resources

Do limited resources such as time or finances prevent seeking a solution to this conflict?

Human factors

Human personality traits such as authoritarianism, rigid viewpoints and low self-esteem can be difficult sources of conflict. They are often impossible to change and can be managed only with diplomacy and tact.

3. Resolve the conflict

Clear, effective decision-making guidelines are important tools in resolving conflict. The *School Act*, s.17 (7.1) requires school boards to establish an appeal process and conflict resolution procedures for use by school councils. These procedures should be a part of your school council bylaws. (*See Sample School Council Bylaws (detailed), H24 Decision-Making Process.*)

Conflict resolution process

Step 1. PLAN AHEAD

- take time for individual planning and reflection
- clarify specific concerns, interests and positions
- identify underlying concerns
- be aware of personal needs
- establish a meeting time and place

Step 2. SET THE STAGE

- set a positive tone
- adopt a problem-solving mode
- acknowledge the other person
- agree to some ground rules

Step 3. TALK IT OUT

- define the problem
- understand issues from different perspectives
- deal with emotions
- identify needs and interests
- discuss assumptions and values

*Be hard
on the problem,
easy
on the person*

Step 4. CREATE SOLUTIONS

- identify a range of options
- determine advantages and disadvantages
- choose solution(s) that are mutually satisfactory

Step 5. PLAN FOR FOLLOW-UP

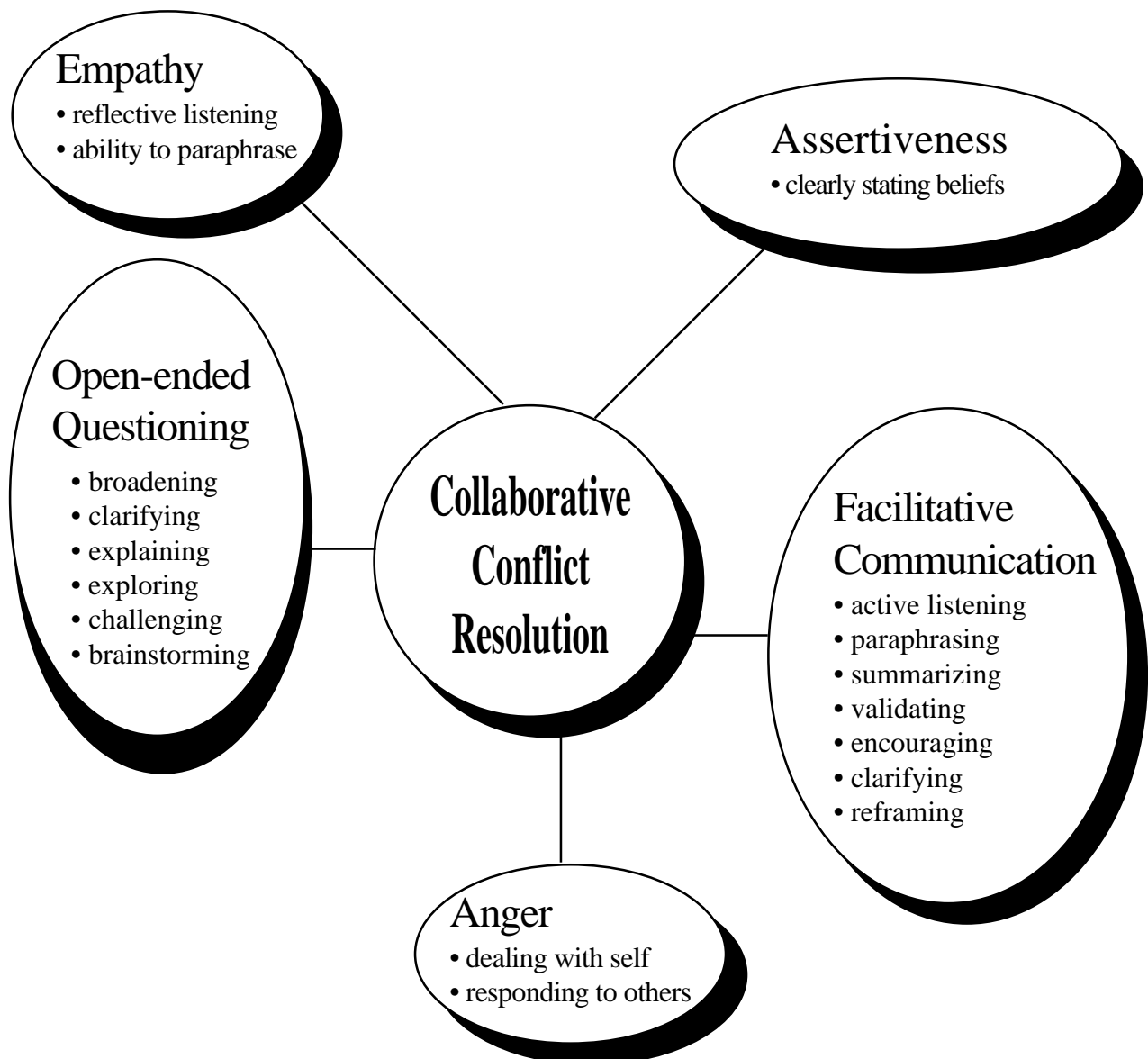
- agree to a future meeting



SETTING A POSITIVE CLIMATE

To resolve conflict you need

- a cooperative attitude
- high stakes
- a positive working relationship
- the ability to engage in joint problem-solving



Finances

Not-for-profit status G1

Not-for-profit status

The regulation for school councils prohibits incorporation, so your new school council cannot have the same legal status as your former parent advisory council. If your PAC was incorporated under the Societies Act or the Companies Act as a not-for-profit society, your new school community must decide if that society will continue to exist, and if so, what its relationship will be to the school council. A school may have both a not-for-profit society and a school council—they may even have the same executive. However, the society must have separate bylaws and separate minutes. The relationship between the two organizations must be outlined in the school council bylaws. The society may be structured as a “Friend of _____ School” or a committee of the school council or retain the original PAC name. It is imperative that the two organizations work cohesively.

Consideration should be made as to how the following items relate to the school and school jurisdiction policies. The board secretary-treasurer can provide information on the following:

- purchase authorization
- budget
- contractual authorization
- banking - separate accounts and authorized signatures
- financial reporting
- financial statement review, appointment of an external auditor and presentation of statement
- incorporation of general accepted accounting principles (GAPP) with revenue and expenditure matching and accrual basis of accounting.

The funds needed to run a school council are minimal. However, there should be a year-end statement of receipts and disbursements which provides a summary of the school council’s financial transactions for the year. The treasurer’s annual report should be made available to the entire school community. The school council must submit an annual report of financial transactions to the school board, Regulation s.12.

All funds raised by the school community are the property of the school community. The decision as to how to spend these funds belongs to the school community as well. There must be full accounting by the treasurer as to all monies raised and the amount and purpose of all expenditures.

Bylaws

Building a school council constitution and bylaws	H1
Sample bylaws (basic)	H9
Sample bylaws (comprehensive)	H15

Building a school council constitution and bylaws

WORKING DRAFT

NAME: _____

MISSION

Our school purpose. *(See Section D5 and D6 for more help.)*

VISION

What our school council hopes to achieve. *(See Section D7 to D10 for more help.)*

OBJECTIVES

Our purpose made more specific. What will be our level of involvement? What will we do?

MEMBERSHIP (Refer to School Councils Regulation, s.7(4))
(The type of governance you choose will determine the size of your council)

A. How large will the council be? _____

B. Will you have grade representatives? _____
Will you have an Alberta Home and School Councils' representative? _____

C. How will these representatives be selected? _____

D. If you use the Town Hall Model, what will constitute the membership? _____

E. If you use the Town Hall Model, what type of executive will be required? _____

OFFICERS

Which officers will your council need?

- Chair
- Vice-chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Others

What responsibilities will the officers assume?

Chair

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Vice-chair

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Secretary _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Officers' duties continued . . .

Treasurer

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

Other

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

VACANCIES: How will they be filled?

COMMITTEES

Will you have them? _____

If so, which committees will you need?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Do you have a not-for-profit society? If so, what will be its relationship to the school council?

MEETINGS

Regular Meetings

How many? _____

When? _____

Where? _____

Special Meetings

How are they called? _____

Quorum (The number of members necessary to hold a meeting. Establishing a quorum is necessary with either model of governance.) _____

VOTING PROCEDURES

How will you make decisions? _____

What is a majority? _____

ANNUAL MEETING

How is the annual meeting called? _____

When will the annual meeting be held? _____

What will be its focus? _____

What positions will be elected at the annual meeting? _____

ANNUAL REPORT

What will the school council report? _____

To whom will the school council report?
(Minimum requirements are outlined in School Councils Regulation, s.12) _____

When will the school council issue an annual report? _____

AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

What is the process for amending the bylaws? _____

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

(*School Act*, s.17 (7.1) requires that boards develop conflict resolution policies)

What process will be used to resolve conflict—

Between council members? _____

Between council and the school board? _____

Sample Constitution (basic)

NAME

1. The name of the school council shall be *The Northview Elementary School Council of Lakeside Alberta*.

MISSION

2. The mission of our school council is to foster the well-being and effectiveness of our school community and to enhance student learning.

VISION

3. [These statements will be inserted as council develops them.]

OBJECTIVES

4. The objectives of the council, in keeping with the *School Act* and the School Councils Regulation, are as follows:
 - (a) To provide advice (input) to the staff and principal on issues of importance such as the school philosophy, mission and vision; school discipline policies; programs and directions; and budget allocations to meet student needs
 - (b) To stimulate continuous improvement in meaningful involvement by all members of the school community
 - (c) To facilitate collaboration among all the concerned participants of the school community
 - (d) To support an approach to schooling in which decisions are made collaboratively and wherever possible at the school and classroom level
 - (e) To facilitate the development of a common vision for our school
 - (f) To facilitate a formal performance evaluation of our school council and to communicate the results of this evaluation to the school board and the school community
 - (g) To keep the school board informed—in cooperation with the principal—of the needs of the school
 - (h) To support the school in its efforts to focus teachers' time and school resources on the essential tasks of teaching and learning
 - (i) To coordinate any fundraising activities in the school
 - (j) To facilitate communication with all educational stakeholders and the community

Sample Constitution (basic)

MEMBERSHIP

5. The membership of the council shall consist of the following:
- (a) seven parents of students enrolled in Northview Elementary School (one of the parents should be a parent of a child in the Early Childhood Program) elected by parents at a meeting called for this purpose
 - (b) the principal of the school
 - (c) two teachers from the school, elected by school staff
 - (d) a community member selected by the council

Option Town Hall Model

MEMBERSHIP

- 5(A). The membership of the Council (at the Town Hall Meeting) shall consist of the following:
- (a) the parents of students enrolled in Northview Elementary School
 - (b) parents
 - (c) the principal of the school
 - (d) teachers of the school
 - (e) members of the community.
- 5(B). For the purpose of voting at the general meeting the majority of voting members must be parents of students enrolled in the school.
- 5(C). The membership of the executive committee shall consist of the following:
- (a) the principal of the school
 - (b) a teacher of the school—elected by staff
 - (c) Four parents of students from the school elected by parents at a meeting called for this purpose.
 - (d) a community member selected by the council.

Sample Constitution (basic)

OFFICERS

6. The officers of the council shall consist of a chair, a vice-chair, a secretary and a treasurer.
 - (a) Every member of the council is eligible to be elected as an officer of the council.
 - (b) The officers will be elected for a one-year term at the first regular meeting of the school council in the school year.
 - (c) The terms of office shall run from Annual Meeting to Annual Meeting.

Option Town Hall Model

OFFICERS

6. The executive committee will elect from its membership the following officers: a chair, a vice-chair, a secretary and a treasurer.
 - (a) Every member of the council is eligible to be elected as an officer of the council.
 - (b) The officers will be elected for a one-year term at the first regular meeting of the school council in the school year.
 - (c) The terms of office shall run from Annual Meeting to Annual Meeting.

DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

7. (a) **THE CHAIR**
The chair shall be responsible for planning the agenda for meetings, facilitating the meetings, acting as spokesperson for the council, and generally supervising the council. The chair shall serve as Alberta Home and Schools Councils' representative and attend area meetings. The chair will present the annual report to the school board.
- (b) **THE VICE-CHAIR**
The vice-chair shall assist the chair with duties as assigned and, in the absence of the chair, assume the duties of the chair.
- (c) **THE SECRETARY**
The secretary shall be responsible for keeping accurate minutes and records of the meetings, taking care of all correspondence and communication, chairing the Communication Committee, and keeping an accurate list of names and addresses of the council members.
- (d) **THE TREASURER**
The treasurer shall be responsible for keeping all financial transactions of the council, chairing the financial committee, presenting an account of the funds to the members and preparing the accounts for auditing.

Option Town Hall Model

DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

- (a) The executive committee will prepare the agenda for the general meetings and circulate minutes of the same.
- (b) The executive committee will carry out the day-to-day operation of the school council.

VACANCIES

8. (a) With the exception of the council position filled by the principal, the school council may appoint qualified persons to fill vacancies until the vacancies can be filled by the appropriate constituents or, in the case of new officers, are elected at the next annual school community general meeting.

COMMITTEES

9. (a) A school council may appoint committees consisting of members and others from the school community with either delegated or advisory responsibilities.
- (b) **FINANCE COMMITTEE**
This committee shall be chaired by the treasurer, shall present the annual budget, shall be responsible for preparing the annual financial report and shall coordinate the fundraising activities of the council.
- (c) **A NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION**
The Parents' Fundraising Association is a body separate from the school council. The school council will ask the Parents' Fundraising Association to raise any funds necessary to achieve school council goals.
- (d) **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**
This committee, chaired by council secretary, is responsible for all communication by the council including notification of meetings and the council's newsletter.

MEETINGS

10. (a) The first meeting of the school council shall be held 14 days after the Annual Meeting.
- (b) The school council shall meet at least seven times during the school year.
- (c) Regular meetings will be held on the second Monday of the month, or as deemed necessary by the executive committee.

- (d) Meetings will take place at the school.
- (e) Special meetings of the school council may be called by the executive or at the written request of 10 parents of the school community.
- (f) The quorum for meetings of the school council shall be set at 50 per cent of the membership.

VOTING PROCEDURES

- 11. (a) Decisions at council meetings will be made by consensus as much as possible. The decision made by consensus must be stated clearly and recorded as such in the minutes of the meeting.
- (b) If a vote is taken, the motion must be moved and seconded and pass by a 51 per cent majority.

ANNUAL MEETING

- 12. (a) The annual meeting of the school council shall be held not later than 30 days after the first instructional day of the school year.
- (b) The meeting will be advertised throughout the school and the community at least 21 days in advance.
- (c) Election for the representatives of the parent community will take place at the annual meeting. All parents of students attending the school are eligible for election.
- (d) All parents of students attending the school are eligible to vote at the annual meeting.
- (e) The business of the annual meeting shall include:
 - the election of representatives
 - any proposed bylaw amendments
 - financial statement of the previous year
 - plans and budget for the upcoming year
 - discussion of any major issue in which all parents should have input such as: changes to the vision or mission statement of the school; new student evaluation or discipline policy; or other major changes in the school program or focus
 - any formal evaluation of the school council.

ANNUAL REPORT

13. (a) In accordance with School Councils Regulation, the school council, through the chair, must prepare and provide the school board with an annual report which includes
- a summary of council's activities for the year
 - a financial statement
 - copies of the minutes of each meeting
- (b) The school council shall make the report available to all concerned members of the school community.

AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

14. (a) The bylaws remain in force from year to year unless amended at the annual meeting.
- (b) The bylaws of the school council may be amended by a two-thirds majority at an annual meeting of the school council.
- (c) Notice of proposed bylaw amendments must be circulated with the notice of meeting at least 21 days in advance of the meeting.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

15. (a) In accordance with s.17 (7.1) *School Act*, 1995, the school council will abide by the conflict resolution procedures outlined by the local school board.

Sample Constitution (comprehensive)

ORGANIZATIONAL DOCUMENTS

The following organizational documents collectively make up the Sample School Council Constitution.

- I. Certificate of Establishment
- II. Statement of Philosophy
 - A. Our Mission
 - B. Our Vision
 - C. Our Guiding Principles
 - D. Our Objectives
- III. Bylaws with optional governance models (Representative or Assembly)

I. CERTIFICATION OF ESTABLISHMENT

SCHOOL _____

ESTABLISHMENT DATE _____

NAME OF SCHOOL COUNCIL _____

The Principal and Chair or Secretary by their signatures certify the establishment of a School Council, formed by way of a properly constituted Establishment Meeting held on the Establishment Date at which:

1. a Chair and Recording Secretary were selected;
2. seven (7) or more Parents were in attendance and a majority of Parents voting:
 - a) decided upon the size of our School Council (*See Schedule A.*)
 - b) decided upon an annual term of office for each Member of the School Council; and
 - c) elected Parents of Students enrolled in our School to become Officers of the School Council.

DATED as of the Establishment Date and certified to be true and correct by our signatures.

Principal

Recording Secretary or Chair
(Strike out inappropriate title)

Print Name

Print Name

SCHEDULE A

**SIZE OF SCHOOL COUNCIL AND
QUALIFICATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP**

CATEGORIES	NUMBER
Principal (Note: mandated by Regulations)	1
Students (if a High School, elected by the Students) (Note: mandated by Regulations, but any School could have one or more Students)	
Community Representatives (Persons with an interest in the School) appointed by the School Council	
Teachers; at least one (1) person who is a Teacher at the School elected by the Teachers at the School (Note #1: The minimum of one is mandated by Regulations) (Note #2: Ideally, more than one (1) Teacher will be elected to serve as a Member of School Council. A possible scenario might be that Teachers would elect representatives from each division, or department or a grade level of the School.)	
Parents elected by Parents at the Establishment Meeting and subsequent Annual School Community General Meetings to serve as Officers; Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer (Note: While some Parent Members must be elected at the Establishment Meeting, the decision to make those Parents the Officers is an example in this Sample School Council Constitution.)	
Parent Classroom Coordinators elected by the Parents of each classroom. (Note #1: Each class for Early Childhood Services Program shall be considered a classroom for the purposes of electing a Parent Classroom Coordinator.) (Note #2: Classroom is defined as the unit of organizational structure in the School such as classroom, homeroom, section or subject.)	Total number is dependent upon the number of classrooms in the school.
TOTAL	
(NOTE: An elementary or junior high school must have a minimum of seven (7) Members and a senior high school must have a minimum of nine (9) Members and in all cases, the majority of School Council Members must be Parents.)	

II. STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

A. THE MISSION:

The mission of our School Council is to foster the well-being and effectiveness of all our School Community and thereby enhance Student learning.

B. THE VISION:

Our School Council will facilitate communication amongst all of the concerned participants of our School Community so that we may work together, as partners, to create an effective learning environment and enable our Students to achieve their potential. All of the members of our School Community and our School Council will strive to uphold the guiding principles when making decisions, or providing advice, with respect to our School.

C. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

The shared principles and values which will guide all activities of our School Council are as follows:

1. We believe that Students are most likely to be successful learners when all the concerned participants of our School Community (Parents, Teachers, the Principal, Staff, Students and interested persons in the community at large) work together, or collaborate, as partners to support, enable, enhance, and promote the effectiveness of our School.
2. We believe that each of these partners has a distinct and different role to play in educating a child, and that the best possible education for the Student cannot be attained unless each of the partners works together to honour, support and facilitate each other's role.
3. We believe that effective partnerships are built on understanding, trust, and mutual respect and that these are best fostered by honest and open communication between all of the concerned participants of our School Community.
4. We believe that the success of our School is dependent upon all of the partners sharing a common vision for our School and working together to define and achieve that common vision.

5. We believe that our School's common vision must:
 - a) be based on current, relevant and meaningful information which is gathered with integrity and understood by all;
 - b) focus on the collective needs of all the Students in our School; and
 - c) address the educational needs unique to the Students in this School, while staying within the parameters of the local and provincial standards and curriculum.
6. We believe that effective communication strategies will be the cornerstone upon which our School Council is built. Therefore, we believe that:
 - a) all concerned participants of our School Community must have the opportunity to provide information to our School Council in a variety of ways, eg. surveys, committee work, attending School Council meetings, communicating with their Parent Classroom Coordinators or any other manner which our School Council deems appropriate;
 - b) all concerned participants of our School Community should be given a reasonable opportunity to respond in a timely fashion depending on the circumstances of the issue at hand;
 - c) no single participant of our School Community shall be compelled to respond, but every participant of our School Community shall be bound by the decision that is made; and
 - d) our School Council must communicate to all concerned participants of our School Community the reasons and justification for any decisions made by our School Council and the principles upon which those decisions were based.
7. We believe that with the reasonable exception of confidential Student records, that all concerned participants of our School Community should have full and open access to all School, District and Alberta Education information on all aspects of public education.
8. While we understand that the School Principal has the authority to determine which, if any, of the decisions made by our School Council will be implemented at our School, we believe that the Principal, as far as is reasonably practicable, should communicate to our School Council and if appropriate, to other concerned participants of our School Community, the reasons and justifications for any decisions made and the principles upon which those decisions were based.
9. We believe it is the responsibility of each member of our School Council to base all of his or her deliberations on the interest of "the common good" of all the Students in our School and act in the best interests of all of the Students in our School.

D. OUR OBJECTIVES:

1. To stimulate meaningful involvement by Parents, Teachers, Principal, Staff, Students, and interested persons from the community at large in our School.
2. To facilitate collaboration among all the concerned participants of our School Community so that they may work together to promote the well-being and effectiveness of all our School Community and thereby enhance Student learning.
3. To facilitate the development of a common vision for our School.
4. To facilitate communication, planning and resource allocation regarding priorities and programs that are needed to meet the expectations of our School Community.
5. To facilitate a formal performance evaluation of our School and our School Council, and to communicate the results of this evaluation to concerned participants of our School Community and the School Board.
6. To coordinate the fundraising activities in our School and operate a fundraising organization as a subcommittee of our School Council, or as an independent organization.

III. BYLAWS OF _____ SCHOOL COUNCIL

ARTICLE 1 - DEFINITIONS

1.01 Definitions

In all Bylaws of the School Council, unless the context otherwise specifies or requires:

- a) *Act* means the *School Act*;
- b) *Annual School Community General Meeting* means the meeting required to be held in accordance with Article 9;
- c) *Certification of Establishment* means the document that certifies the proper establishment of this School Council and confirms the composition and size of the School Council as determined by the Parents at the Establishment Meeting;
- d) *Community Representatives* means the persons appointed as Members who have an interest in the School;
- e) *Constituency* means the group or unit of organizational structure of Parents, Students or Teachers that elected or appointed the Member;
- f) *Decision-Making Process* means the commitment made to the consensus model that is set out in Article 3 of these Bylaws and which uses voting only when a matter of conscience divides the decision makers;
- g) *Members* include the Principal, the Officers, and those persons who have been elected or appointed to fill the School Council positions as outlined in Schedule A to these Bylaws;
- h) *Officers* means the Members that occupy the offices of Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer;
- i) *Parents* means parents, guardians or legal custodians of a student or students registered at the School or a child or children registered in an Early Childhood Services Program at the School;
- j) *Parent Classroom Coordinators* means the Parents elected by the Parents of Students of each unit of organizational structure in the School and includes each class for Early Childhood Services Program as provided for in the Certification of Establishment.
(NOTE: An organizational unit should be consistent with the organization of the School such as classroom, homeroom, section, subject, etc.)

- k) *Principal* means principal as defined in the *School Act* and the School Councils Regulation;
 - l) *Regulations* means the regulations under the *School Act*;
 - m) *Resolution* means a decision made by a School Council through a majority of votes or Sufficient Consensus through the Decision-Making Process;
 - n) *School* means _____ School;
 - o) *School Board* means the School Board of the School District in which the School is located;
 - p) *School Council* means the Members;
 - q) *Special Resolution* means a resolution of the School Council passed at a School Council meeting by a majority of at least 2/3 of the Members present at that meeting;
 - r) *Staff* means persons other than Teachers who are employed at the School;
 - s) *Statement of Philosophy* means a statement adopted by the School Council and Parents and includes a mission, a vision, guiding principles and objectives;
 - t) *Students* means the students enrolled in the School;
 - u) *Sufficient Consensus* means the articulation of a decision as described in Article 3; and
 - v) *Teachers* means those persons who are employed to teach Students at the School.
- 1.02 All other capitalized terms used shall have the same meaning as is set out in the *School Act*, the Regulation or elsewhere in these Bylaws.

ARTICLE 2 - PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

2.01 The School Council may, at its discretion:

- a) advise the Principal and School Board respecting any matter relating to the School;
- b) perform any duty or function delegated to it by the School Board in accordance with the delegation;
- c) consult with the Principal so that the Principal may ensure that the Students in the School have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister;
- d) consult with the Principal so that the Principal may ensure that the fiscal management of the School is in accordance with the requirements of the School Board and the Superintendent;
- e) subject to the Regulations, make and implement policies in the School that the School Council considers necessary to carry out its functions;
- f) coordinate fundraising activities in the School; and
- g) make policies and/or participate in processes for conflict resolution among School Council members, between the School Council and the wider community and between the School Council and the School Staff.

(NOTE: While the Decision-Making Process (Article 3) will address most internal School Council conflict, the specific policy, procedure or process should be consistent with the process or procedure as established by the School Board (Act 17(7.1)).

2.02 The School Council shall seek to attain the Objectives of the School Council as adopted by the Parents and Members. (*See Schedule B attached.*)

ARTICLE 3 - DECISION MAKING PROCESS

3.01 Consensus Building Model

In recognition of a commitment to consensus building, the decisions of the School Council shall be made as follows:

- a) every concerned participant of the School Community shall be given the opportunity and responsibility of initiating and then leading the discussion in the direction of a decision that needs to be made. The responsibility of speaking ensures that all will benefit from the thinking of each other, but accepting the responsibility to speak implies accepting the responsibility to listen;
- b) after real dialogue about a particular issue has taken place and everyone has been given legitimate opportunity to state their case and be listened to, the Chair will bring closure on the decision by articulating the Sufficient Consensus. If a small number of people were not in agreement, such disagreement should not hold up the majority taking action.
- c) the Chair will then ask twice if any person remains opposed to the Sufficient Consensus and any person entitled to participate in the decision may voice his or her opposition as a dissenting person. The dissenting person will be requested by the Chair to give careful thought as to whether the personal stand is one of individual **preference**. If the answer is yes, then that individual is expected to lay the personal preference aside to allow the group to move forward with Sufficient Consensus. If, however, the dissenting person declares the personal stand to be one of a matter of **conscience**, then the Chair shall declare the Sufficient Consensus to be a motion upon which Members shall vote. The Sufficient Consensus shall then be deemed to be a motion under **Robert's Rules of Order** with the usual rights for discussion and amendment and the requirement of a seconder; and,
- d) voting on a motion shall be on the basis of one vote for each Member actually in attendance and the majority of votes shall prevail. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted.

ARTICLE 4 - SCHOOL COUNCIL POWERS AND GOVERNANCE MODEL

- 4.01 Subject to the Act, the Regulation and these Bylaws, the School Council shall have the power to manage the activities of the School Council.
- 4.02 Subject to any restrictions contained in the Act, the Regulation, these Bylaws or conflicts with the Statement of Philosophy, the School Council may delegate to its Officers or committees appointed by the School Council, any of the School Council's powers.
- 4.03 The School Council insofar as is reasonably practicable, shall ensure that all School Council activity is conducted with the involvement of concerned participants from the School Community and shall use the Decision-Making Process to make decisions.
- 4.04 It shall be the duty and responsibility of the School Council to manage School Council activities by following the governance model outlined in Schedule C.

(NOTE: Parents can choose any model of governance that they wish for their School Council. Two examples are shown in Schedule C; a Representative Governance Model and an Assembly Governance Model.)

ARTICLE 5 - MEMBERS

5.01 Duty

It shall be the duty of a Member to act in a manner consistent with the Statement of Philosophy and in the best interests of the School and the Students and according to these Bylaws.

5.02 Number

The School Council shall consist of the number of Members as stipulated in Schedule A.

5.03 Disqualification

A Member is disqualified if that person no longer meets the qualifications of the Act, the Regulations, Certification of Establishment or these Bylaws. (e.g. a Parent who no longer has a Student enrolled in the School or Early Childhood Services Program; a Teacher that is no longer employed at the School, or a Student who is no longer enrolled at the School).

5.04 Term

A Member's term shall commence upon election or appointment and continue until a successor is elected or appointed. While Members may be re-elected, no appointment shall exceed 15 months.

5.05 Withdrawal

A Member may withdraw by notice in writing to the Chair and the Principal and if the withdrawing Member is the Chair, by notice in writing to the Vice-Chair and the Principal.

5.06 Removal

The School Council may by Special Resolution remove any Member providing that the Member has been notified twenty one (21) days in advance and is afforded the opportunity to be heard at the meeting.

5.07 Vacancies

The School Council may appoint qualified persons to fill vacancies in the School Council other than the Principal, until such vacancies have been filled by the appropriate Constituencies, or in the case of Officers, new Officers have been elected at the next Annual School Community General Meeting.

5.08 Meeting by Communications

Members may participate in a meeting of the School Council or a committee of the School Council, or such meeting may be held, by means of telephone or other communication which would permit all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other and the Members participating by those means are deemed to be present at the meeting.

5.09 Place of Meetings

Meetings of the School Council shall ordinarily be held at the School.

5.10 Calling of Meetings

- a) Meetings of the School Council shall be held at the times and places as the Chair or the Vice-Chair may specify;
- b) Upon written request signed by at least 1/4 of the School Council, the Chair must ensure that a meeting of the School Council is held within fourteen (14) days of the request.

5.11 Regular Meetings

The School Council may appoint a day or days in any month or months for regular meetings and even though no further notice shall be required for Members, the School Council shall ensure that concerned participants of the School Community are made aware of these meetings by following the practices described in Article 11 Notices.

5.12 Quorum

The quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the School Council shall be a majority of the number of Members stipulated in Schedule A.

5.13 Meeting Agenda

The agenda for any meeting of the School Council shall be set by the Chair and approved by the Members in attendance at the meeting.

5.14 Records of School Council Meetings

Records containing the minutes of all meetings, resolutions and correspondence of the School Council and of any committee of the School Council shall be maintained and be available to any concerned participant of the School Community who requests them.

5.15 Signed Resolution

A resolution in writing, signed by all the Members entitled to vote, is as valid as if it had been passed at a meeting of the School Council.

5.16 Persons Entitled to be Present at School Council Meetings

All concerned participants of the School Community may be present at the meetings of the School Council.

ARTICLE 6 - COMMITTEES

6.01 A School Council may appoint committees consisting of Members and others from the School Community with either delegated powers or advisory responsibilities.

6.02 Unless determined otherwise by the School Council, there shall be a:

a) Nominating Committee

The nominating committee shall recruit and nominate Officers, Community Representatives and assist Parents with a process to elect Parent Classroom Coordinators and if requested by the Students and Teachers, to assist with their Member selection;

b) Finance Committee

The finance committee shall ordinarily be chaired by the Treasurer, shall present an annual budget to the Annual School Community General Meeting, to the School Council, periodically review the financial aspects of the School Council's activities, be responsible for preparing the annual financial statements, and coordinate the fundraising activities in the School;

c) Strategic Planning Committee

The strategic planning committee shall ordinarily include the Chair, Principal, Parents, Teachers and Students and be responsible for:

- i) conducting processes including a presentation at the Annual School Community General Meeting to enable the Parents and Members, subject to input and comment from the School Community, to affirm or modify the School Council Statement of Philosophy; and,
- ii) conducting processes including the Annual School Community General Meeting to enable the Parents and Members, subject to input and comment from the School Community to affirm, provide input, or comment upon, for consideration by the Principal, the School's mission statement, vision statement, objectives, business plan or similar documents, if any.

ARTICLE 7 - OFFICERS

7.01 The School Council shall have the following Officers as elected by the Parents at the Annual School Community General Meeting:

- (a) Chair;
- (b) Vice-Chair;
- (c) Secretary; and
- (d) Treasurer.

7.02 No person may hold more than one (1) office or position at one time.

7.03 Unless otherwise determined by the School Council, the Officers shall have the following duties:

- a) Chair

The Chair shall:

- i) preside when present at and participate in all meetings of the School Council;
- ii) have general supervision of all activities of the School Council; and,
- iii) be the official spokesperson of the School Council.

- b) Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair shall:

- i) aid the Chair and undertake tasks assigned by the Chair;
- ii) in the absence of the Chair, supervise the affairs and preside at any meetings of the School Council;
- iii) in the event of resignation, incapacity or leave of absence of the Chair, fulfil the Chair's responsibilities; and,
- iv) normally be elected to serve as Chair for the following year.

c) Secretary

The Secretary shall:

- i) cause accurate minutes of all School Council meetings and proceedings to be kept;
- ii) have charge of all the correspondence and official records of the School Council;
- iii) maintain a dated record of all the Members of the School Council and their addresses; and,
- iv) cause notices of School Council meetings and proceedings to be given in accordance with Article 11.

d) Treasurer

The Treasurer shall:

- i) supervise the affairs and preside at any meetings of the financial committee;
- ii) be responsible for the deposits of all monies paid to the School Council in whatever bank, trust company, credit union or treasury branch the School Council may order;
- iii) properly account for funds of the School Council and keep such books as may be directed; and,
- iv) present a full detailed account of receipts and disbursements to the School Council whenever requested, and prepare the financial statements for the annual report.

ARTICLE 8 - CONSTITUENCY ELECTED OR APPOINTED MEMBERS

8.01 Unless determined otherwise by the School Council, the duties of the Members elected or appointed by the Constituencies shall be as follows:

- a) Parent Classroom Coordinators (This would also include any Early Childhood Services Program Class)

The Parent Classroom Coordinators shall actively seek to understand the views of those constituents that elected them and:

- i) communicate the views of the Parents of their classroom/homeroom to the School Council;
- ii) communicate, on a regular and ongoing basis, the activities of the School Council to the Parents of their classroom/homeroom;
- iii) aid the Chair and undertake tasks assigned by the Chair or the School Council; and,
- iv) monitor and assist in any committee so assigned by the School Council.

- b) Teachers

The Teachers shall actively seek to understand the views of those constituents that elected them and:

- i) communicate the views of the Teachers who elected them to the School Council;
- ii) communicate, on a regular and ongoing basis, the activities of the School Council to the Teachers who elected them;
- iii) aid the Chair and the School Council; and,
- iv) monitor and assist in any School Council committee.

c) Students

The Students shall actively seek to understand the views of those constituents that elected them and:

- i) communicate the views of the Students who elected them to the School Council;
- ii) communicate, on a regular and ongoing basis, the activities of the School Council to the Students who elected them;
- iii) aid the Chair and undertake tasks assigned by the Chair or the School Council; and,
- iv) monitor and assist in any committee so assigned by the School Council.

d) Community Representatives

The Community Representatives shall act as liaisons with the wider community.

ARTICLE 9 - ANNUAL SCHOOL COMMUNITY GENERAL MEETING

- 9.01 Every year the School Council shall hold an Annual School Community General Meeting which shall be open to all concerned participants within the School Community. Unless decided otherwise by the School Council, the purpose of the meeting shall be to:
- a) permit the Parents, subject to input and comment from the School Community, to amend, vary or rescind these Bylaws;
 - b) permit the Parents, subject to input and comment from the School Community, to amend the size or composition of the School Council;
 - c) permit the Parents to elect Officers of the School Council which consist of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer;
 - d) receive the report of the outgoing Chair;
 - e) permit the Parents and Members to consider for approval the financial statements for the previous year;
 - f) receive from the Principal a report for the previous year and the plan and budget for the upcoming year;
 - g) receive a report on School fundraising activities for the previous year and a plan for the upcoming year;
 - h) identify if elected or appointed by then, the other Members of the School Council; Teachers, Students, Parent Classroom Coordinators and Community Representatives;
 - i) have the Parents and Members, subject to input and comment from the School Community, affirm or modify the School Council Statement of Philosophy consisting of a mission, a vision, guiding principles and objectives;
 - j) have the Parents and Members, subject to input and comment from the School Community, affirm, provide input, or comment upon, for consideration by the Principal, the School's mission statement, vision statement, objectives, business plan or similar documents, if any; and,
 - k) receive a report on any formal evaluation conducted of the School or the School Council.

ARTICLE 10 - ANNUAL REPORT

- 10.01 The School Council through the Chair must prepare and provide the School Board annually, with an annual report
- a) summarizing the activities of the School Council for the previous year;
 - b) including a financial statement relating to money handled by the School Council for the previous year, if any; and,
 - c) including a copy of the minutes for each meeting of the School Council held for the previous year.
- 10.02 The School Council shall make the annual report available to all concerned participants of the School Community.

ARTICLE 11 - NOTICES

- 11.01 Consistent with the Statement of Philosophy, every opportunity shall be made by the School Council to ensure that each concerned participant of the School Community shall have a reasonable opportunity to express his or her views for consideration and to attend meetings.
- 11.02 Neither the failure to provide a notice to any particular concerned participant of the School Community or to a Member, nor any defect in any notice nor the failure of any particular person to actually receive such notice, shall affect the sufficiency of the notice given to other Members nor the business transacted at such a meeting.
- 11.03 Except for the Annual School Community General Meeting which requires twenty one (21) days notice, it is expected that at least fourteen (14) days prior notice will be given for all meetings and proceedings and that such notice will be given by as many of the following practices as are applicable to the School:
- a) posted at the School;
 - b) posted at the Community League;
 - c) mailed to the home;
 - d) communicated through the phone and message centre;
 - e) communicated through any electronic mail or computer School net system; and,
 - f) included in newsletters.

SCHEDULE A

**SIZE OF SCHOOL COUNCIL AND
QUALIFICATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP**

CATEGORIES	NUMBER
Principal (Note: mandated by Regulations)	1
Students (if a High School, mandated by regulation: elected by Students) (Note: mandated by Regulations, but a student body could elect one or more Students)	
Community Representatives (Persons with an interest in the School) appointed by the School Council	
Teachers; at least one (1) person who is a Teacher at the School elected by the Teachers at the School (Note #1: Mandated by Regulation) (Note #2: Ideally, more than one (1) Teacher will be elected to serve as a Member of School Council. A possible scenario might be that Teachers would elect representatives from each division, or department or grade level of the School.)	
Parents elected by Parents at the Establishment Meeting and subsequent Annual School Community General Meetings to serve as Officers; Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer (Note: While some Parent Members must be elected at the Establishment Meeting, the decision to make those Parents the Officers is an example in this Sample School Council Constitution.)	
Parent Classroom Coordinators elected by the Parents of each classroom. (Note #1: Each class for Early Childhood Services Program shall be considered a classroom for the purpose of electing a Parent Classroom Coordinator.) (Note #2: Classroom is defined as the unit of organizational structure in the School such as classroom, homeroom, section or subject.)	Total number is dependent upon the number of classrooms in the school.
TOTAL	

ARTICLE 12 - GENERAL

12.01 Fiscal Year

The School Council may select an appropriate fiscal year for the financial activities of the School Council.

12.02 Signing Authority

Any two (2) Officers of the School Council are authorized to sign cheques or execute agreements and the School Council may appoint any additional signing authorities.

12.03 Records

Subject to the provisions of the School Act and policy of the School Board, the School Council shall maintain records of its minutes and proceedings available for inspection by concerned participants of the School Community, upon request.

12.04 Effective Date

These Bylaws or amendments to these Bylaws shall come into force when approved by a majority of Parents of Students enrolled in the School who vote at a meeting of the School Council called for that purpose.

(NOTE: As mandated in Regulation 15, Bylaws do not come into force until approved by Parents in accordance with the Regulation.)

These Bylaws are certified to be in force effective the __ day of _____, 199_.

_____ School Council

Chair

Secretary

SCHEDULE B

OBJECTIVES

1. To stimulate continuous improvement in meaningful involvement by Parents, Teachers, Principal, Staff, Students, and interested persons from the community at large in our School.
2. To facilitate collaboration among all the concerned participants of our School Community so that they may work together to promote the well-being and effectiveness of all our School Community and thereby enhance Student learning.
3. To facilitate the development of a common vision for our School.
4. To facilitate communication, planning and resource allocation regarding priorities and programs that are needed to meet the expectations of our School Community.
5. To facilitate a formal performance evaluation of our School and our School Council, and to communicate the results of this evaluation to concerned participants of our School Community and the School Board.
6. To coordinate the fundraising activities in our School and operate such fundraising organizations as independent organizations or sub-committees of our School Council.

SCHEDULE C**REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNANCE MODEL**

In following a representative governance model, each Member has the delegated authority of his or her Constituency to responsibly determine and represent the views of the Constituency and the School Community to the Principal, the School and the School Board. The School Council acts like a Board of Directors to conduct day-to-day business and reports back to the wider School Community two (2) or more times a year.

Consistent with the Statement of Philosophy, each Member will actively seek information from and consult with his or her Constituency and concerned participants of the School Community before expressing a representative position.

When determining a representative position, a member shall act in the best interests of the Students and the School and not merely represent the views of his or her Constituency.

- or -

ASSEMBLY GOVERNANCE MODEL

Before communicating a position, it is expected that the School Council and the Members shall ensure that each concerned participant of the School Community and Constituency shall have a reasonable opportunity, in a timely manner given the circumstances, to express views for consideration by the School Council; usually at regular open meetings of the entire School Community.

The School Council acts only to carry out the wishes of the School Community as articulated at that meeting or through some process that confirms the Sufficient Consensus of the School Community on the issue. The School Council may then communicate a position to the Principal or School Board for their own use when making decisions that affect the education of Students.

This
is
the **Law**

Section 17 of the *School Act* I 1
School Councils Regulation..... I 3

SECTION I

SECTION 17—*SCHOOL ACT*

School Councils

- 17 (1) A school council shall be established in accordance with the regulations for each school operated by a board.
- (2) The majority of the members of a school council shall be parents of students enrolled in the school.
- (3) A board of a separate school district or a division made up only of separate school districts, by resolution, may require that the parents of students enrolled in a school operated by the board who are members of the school council must also be of the same faith as those who established the separate school districts, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic.
- (4) A school council may, at its discretion,
- (a) advise the principal and the board respecting any matter relating to the school,
 - (b) perform any duty or function delegated to it by the board in accordance with the delegation,
 - (c) consult with the principal so that the principal may ensure that students in the school have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister,
 - (d) consult with the principal so that the principal may ensure that the fiscal management of the school is in accordance with the requirements of the board and the superintendent, and
 - (e) do anything it is authorized under the regulations to do.
- (5) Subject to the regulations, a school council may make and implement policies in the school that the council considers necessary to carry out its functions.
- (6) A school council may make bylaws governing its meetings and the conduct of its affairs.
- (7) Subject to the regulations, a board may develop and implement policies respecting school councils.

- (7.1) A board shall establish an appeal process or conflict resolution procedure under which the principal or the school council may apply respecting disputes on policies proposed or adopted for a school.
- (8) The Minister, on the request of the board, may dissolve a school council without notice at any time if the Minister is of the opinion that the school council is not carrying out its responsibilities in accordance with this **Act** and the regulations.
- (9) The Minister may make regulations,
- (a) respecting the election or appointment of the members of a school council and the term or other conditions of election or appointment and the dissolution of a school council,
 - (b) respecting the roles of the principal and the school council of a school and their respective powers, duties and responsibilities,
 - (c) respecting any other matter the Minister considers necessary respecting school councils,
 - (d) exempting a school or a class of schools from the application of this section.

Powers of Boards

- 44 (1) A board must,
- (b) in respect of its operations
 - (i) keep in force a policy or policies of insurance,
 - (ii) with the approval of the Minister, participate in an arrangement under Part 15 of the *Insurance Act*, or,
 - (iii) with the approval of the Minister, participate in an alternative arrangement acceptable to the Minister, for the purpose of indemnifying the board and its employees and school councils in respect of claims for,
 - (iv) damages for death or personal injury,
 - (v) damages to property and,
 - (vi) damages to property owned by the board in respect of which the board has an insurable interest,
 - (a) that the board has agreed to insure, or,
 - (b) for which the board otherwise has or may have assumed liability, in an amount and form prescribed by the Minister.

School Act
SCHOOL COUNCILS REGULATION
Alberta Regulation 124/95
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- Definitions 1 In this Regulation,
- (a) “Act” means the *School Act*;
 - (b) “board” has the meaning given to it in the Act;
 - (c) “parent advisory council” means a group of persons established before the coming into force of this Regulation that provides advice to the principal of a school, but does not include a group that has been established for the sole purpose of raising money for the school;
 - (d) “school community” means
 - (i) students enrolled in the school and their parents,
 - (ii) children enrolled in an Early Childhood Services program at the school and their parents,

- (iii) the school staff, and
- (iv) other persons who have an interest in the school.

Notice of
establishment
meeting

- 2(1) If a school has a parent advisory council, the principal must, after consulting with that council, give notice to the following persons of a meeting to be held for the purpose of establishing a school council for the school:
- (a) a parent of each student enrolled in the school;
 - (b) a parent of each child enrolled in an Early Childhood Services program at the school;
 - (c) the school staff;
 - (d) other members of the school community who, in the principal's opinion, should be given notice.
- (2) If a school has no parent advisory council, the principal must give the notice required under subsection (1) on his/her own initiative.
- (3) The notice must,
- (a) describe the purpose of the meeting, and
 - (b) set out the time, date and location of the meeting.
- (4) The notice must be given at least 21 days before the date of the meeting.
- (5) The notice to persons referred to in subsection (1) (d) only,
- (a) may be posted in 5 or more locations that are accessible to the public in the area around the school, or
 - (b) may be advertised in a publication that is circulated to the general public in the area around the school.

Holding of an establishment meeting

- 3(1) Each school must hold an establishment meeting not later than February 15, 1996.
- (2) If there are fewer than 7 parents in attendance at an establishment meeting or if an establishment meeting is not successful in establishing a school council, the principal may establish an advisory committee for that year.
- (3) If a school is unsuccessful in establishing a school council, a meeting must be held not later than 60 days after the start of the next school year for the purpose of establishing a school council for that school.

Chair and secretary at establishment meeting

- 4(1) If a school has a parent advisory council, the principal must, after consulting with that council, decide who is to act as the chair and who is to act as the secretary at the establishment meeting.
- (2) If a school has no parent advisory council, the principal must make the decisions required under subsection (1) on his/her own initiative.

Agenda at establishment meeting

- 5 The persons attending an establishment meeting must,
 - (a) decide, subject to section 7(4), the size of the school council,
 - (b) decide on the term of office of each member of the school council, and
 - (c) elect the members of the school council referred to in section 7(1)(d).

Right to vote at establishment meeting

- 6 Only persons who attend the establishment meeting and are,
 - (a) parents of students enrolled in the school, or
 - (b) parents of children enrolled in an Early Childhood Services program at the school

are entitled to vote on matters raised at the meeting.

Members of a
school council

- 7(1) Each school council must consist of the following members:
- (a) the principal of the school;
 - (b) at least one person who is a teacher at the school, elected by the teachers at the school;
 - (c) if the school is a senior high school, at least one person who is a student enrolled in the school, elected by the students enrolled in the school;
 - (d) parents of students enrolled in the school, elected by parents who attend the establishment meeting;
 - (e) at least one person appointed in accordance with subsection (2) or elected in accordance with subsection (3).
- (2) The members of a school council referred to in subsection (1)(a), (b), (c) and (d) may establish the process to appoint one or more persons who have an interest in the school as members of the school council.
- (3) Parents who attend the establishment meeting may elect as a member of the school council at least one person who is a parent of a child enrolled in an Early Childhood Services program at the school.
- (4) A school council must consist of:
- (a) a minimum of 7 members if the school is an elementary or junior high school, or
 - (b) a minimum of 9 members if the school is a senior high school.

Faith of
council members

- 8 Unless a resolution has been passed under section 17(3) of the *Act*, the members of a school council may be of any faith.

Remuneration of
council members

- 9 No member of a school council shall receive any remuneration for acting as a member of the council.

Prohibition
against
incorporation

10 No school council shall incorporate under the *Societies Act* or Part 9 of the *Companies Act*.

School council
officers

11(1) Each school council must have a chair and any other officers required by the bylaws of the school council.

(2) Every member of a school council is eligible to be elected as an officer of the school council.

Duty to report
to the board

12 The chair of a school council must prepare and provide to the board annually a report:

- (a) setting out the activities of the school council in the year,
- (b) including a financial statement relating to money handled by the school council in the year, if any, and
- (c) including a copy of the minutes for each meeting of the school council held in the year.

Date for first
meeting of a
school council

13(1) For the 1995/96 school year, the first meeting of the school council must be held on or before March 1, 1996.

(2) For any school year after the 1995/96 year, the first meeting of the council must be held not later than 70 days after the start of the school year or as specified in the bylaws.

Suspension of a
school council

14(1) If a quorum is not available for a meeting of a school council and the meeting has been rescheduled on 2 or more occasions, the board may suspend the operation of the school council until the following year.

(2) If the operation of a school council is suspended, the principal may establish an advisory committee to carry out the duties of the school council until a new school council is established.

(3) A new school council must be established not later than 60 days after the start of the next school year in accordance with sections 2 to 7.

15(1) Each school council may make bylaws:

- (a) respecting the calling of special or other meetings of the school council;
- (b) prescribing other officers, in addition to the chair, required for the school council;
- (c) respecting the role of the chair and other officers of the school council relating to the conduct of the school council's affairs;
- (d) respecting the number of times the school council must meet each year;
- (e) respecting the location of school council meetings;
- (f) respecting the number of school council members that constitutes a quorum at meetings of the school council;
- (g) respecting the election of the officers of the school council;
- (h) respecting a conflict resolution process for internal school council disputes.

(2) A bylaw under subsection (1) does not come into force unless it is approved by a majority of:

- (a) parents of students enrolled in the school, and
- (b) parents of children enrolled in an Early Childhood Services program at the school

who vote at a special meeting of the school council called for that purpose.

(3) The bylaws continue in force from year to year unless:

- (a) they are amended at a special meeting of the school council called for that purpose, and
- (b) the amendment is approved in accordance with subsection (2).

-
- | | | |
|-----------------|----|---|
| Fees prohibited | 16 | No school council shall be charged a fee for the use of the school or school facilities for the purpose of holding a meeting of the school council. |
| Exemptions | 17 | <p>The following are exempt from the application of section 17 of the <i>Act</i> and this Regulation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) a school for resident students of the government as described in section 27(6) of the Act that is provided in an institution approved by the Minister;(b) a school for students that is provided in an institution approved by the Minister. |

Resources

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School Council Workshops

School councils may choose from a series of workshops or request a combination of workshop items that will best suit their needs.

The workshop series is designed to assist School Councils to make the transition from Parent Advisory Council to the new School Council as established in the *School Act* and described in the Regulations.

These workshops are open to parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, trustees, students and community members.

Workshop One: *Getting Started*

This workshop will be useful for school communities who wish to discuss the provisions of the *School Act* and School Councils Regulations. Participants will compare their existing council structures with those proposed in the legislation and begin to plan for the changes. The main focus will be the preparation for the establishment meeting which must take place before February 15 including: discussion of a model of governance, process for determining levels of involvement, promotion of the meeting and planning for the agenda.

Workshop Two: *Making it Work*

This workshop is designed for new School Councils after their establishment meeting. Wherever possible, councils from groups of schools are encouraged to hold a combined workshop. There are a variety of tasks that the council might wish to tackle, but the most pressing one will likely be the writing of a constitution and a set of bylaws. Participants will have the opportunity to examine a variety of models and then working with the *School Councils Resource Manual* will write a constitution and bylaws to meet their specific circumstances and needs. Other possible tasks at this workshop, or a later one include: writing mission and vision statements, setting goals and purposes and deciding upon levels of involvement. This workshop will be tailored to meet the specific needs of the councils. It is possible to combine parts of workshops one and two.

Workshop Three: *Developing Protocols*

This workshop establishes a process for joint parent-teacher preparation of protocols to deal with issues in school management. It will help to deal with issues before they become problems, provide opportunity for involvement and input by a significant number of participants and reduce potential conflict situations. The workshop makes use of case studies, small group work and presentations.

Workshop Four: *Necessary Skills*

This workshop will provide an opportunity to work on a set of skills that will facilitate the smooth operation of the School Council. Participants will learn about and practice such skills as: (1) conflict resolution, (2) team building, (3) effective communication, (4) public relations and, (5) effective meeting techniques. Workshop organizers should select from this list in making the request.

General Information

- The workshops could be 2 to 3 hours in the evening or longer sessions on Saturday.
- Workshop teams of parents and teachers will present the workshops.
- Groups of School Councils are encouraged to plan joint workshops.
- School jurisdictions may wish to plan and offer the workshops as a system-wide program.
- School Councils are responsible for booking the facility and providing any refreshments.
- When requesting a workshop, please be specific about time, place, number and specific topics or issues.

The Program is sponsored by the following groups. For further information you may call:

—The Alberta Home and School Councils' Association – 454-9867 - Mary Anne Balsillie

—The Alberta Teachers' Association – 453-2411

—The Council on School Administration – 485-2223 - Terry Storch or 328-4723 - Carol Steen

—Alberta School Boards Association – 482-7311

—College of Alberta School Superintendents – 482-7311

To Book a Workshop, contact:

Noreen A O'Haire

Executive Assistant

Professional Development

11010 142 Street NW

Edmonton T5N 2R1

telephone 453-2411 or 1-800-232-7208 (elsewhere in Alberta), fax 455-6481

In Southern Alberta:

Louise Beerman, Executive Director

Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium

c/o Faculty of Education

University of Lethbridge

4401 University Drive S

Lethbridge T1K 3M4

telephone 381-5580, fax 329-2252

Alberta Home and School Councils' Association

AHSCA was formed in Alberta in 1929. It is a voluntary support organization for parents and school councils across the province. "Home and School" is the provincially and federally recognized voice of parents in education. The Association believes that when parents are knowledgeable about their children's education, and work with school councils, teachers, school boards and the department of education to bring about positive change, quality of life at the school improves.

- AHSCA encourages school councils to participate as members of the Association so their voice can be heard at all levels of the education decision-making ladder.
- AHSCA provides information to parents and school councils in the form of literature and inservices (in some areas of the province).
- AHSCA solicits input from members on issues of provincial policy development.
- AHSCA offers members the chance to network with other school councils and parents across the country and province.
- AHSCA communicates with the other stakeholders on behalf of parents and school councils on a regular basis.

Hours of Operation: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, September to June
 Contact: Mary Anne Balsillie, Executive Director
 Telephone: (780) 454-9867 / Toll Free 1-800-661-3470
 Fax: (780) 455-0167
 Address: 12310 105 Avenue NW, Suite 102, Edmonton, AB T5N 0Y4

Regional Directors:

Grande Prairie	Red Deer
Fort McMurray	Calgary City
Edmonton City	Calgary Rural
Edmonton Rural	Lethbridge

Mariette Rainville
 Directrice générale
 Fédération des parents
 francophones de l'Alberta
 pièce 205, 8925 - 82 Avenue
 Edmonton AB T6C 0Z2
 Téléphone: (780) 468-6934
 Telecopieur: (780) 469-4799

Alberta Community Development

Community development officers, working out of ten regional offices throughout the province, can assist school councils in a variety of ways including:

- community issue identification
- community priority development
- strategic planning
- developing/enhancing community cooperation and coordination
- conflict management/resolution
- alternative methods of fundraising
- training and advice sessions on organizational governance, leadership development and volunteer development.

In addition, the **Board Development Program** offers hands-on workshops, delivered by a core of 67 trained volunteer instructors, to not-for-profit organizations wishing to enhance their effectiveness at the board level. It can provide a board with techniques to evaluate its structures, to revitalize its committees and to implement a board plan.

Community Development Field Services Regional Offices

Manager
Southern Region
406 Administration Building
909 - Third Avenue North Bag 3014
Lethbridge, Alberta T1J 4C7
Phone: (403) 381-5231

Manager
Northern Region
3rd Floor, Provincial Building
5025 - 49 Avenue, Box 318
St. Paul, Alberta T0A 3A4
Phone: (780) 645-6353

Manager
Central Region
Box 266, Provincial Building
213 - 1 Street
Cochrane, Alberta T0L 0W0
Phone: (403) 932-2970

Coordinator
Board Development Program
610 - 10405 Jasper Avenue,
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4R7
Phone: (780) 427-2001

Manager
Yellowhead Region
Provincial Building
4709 - 44 Avenue
Stony Plain, Alberta T7Z 1N4
Phone: (780) 963-2281

Volunteer Centres of Calgary and Edmonton

The Volunteer Centres of Calgary and Edmonton are able to assist school councils in both cities by providing consultation services, customized training and resources in the following areas:

- Council/Board Development
 - models of governance
 - recruitment
 - roles and responsibilities
 - strategic planning–vision, mission, action planning
 - bylaws–drafting, revising
- Council chair and principal relationship
- Communication–internal/external
- Managing Meetings
- Committee Development
- Volunteer Management
 - recruitment, retention and recognition
 - liability and insurance issues
 - volunteer-staff relationships
 - developing volunteer diversity

For more information or assistance call

The Volunteer Centre of Calgary Management Assistance Program

Phone: (403) 265-5633

Fax: (403) 265-8981

Address: Suite 610, 940 - 6 Avenue S.W., Calgary, AB T2V 0R1

The Volunteer Centre of Edmonton Consultation and Training Services

Phone: (780) 482-6431

Fax: (780) 488-6334

Address: Suite 902 11456 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5K 0M1

Reference materials

Books and articles

Alberta Communications Network, **ACN Today** is fax-on-demand news release retrieval system. Telephone: 422-4650. Alberta Public Affairs Bureau.

Beyond the Glitterspeak, Creating Genuine Collaboration in our Schools, Gareth and Karen Morgan, Ontario Teachers' Federation, 1992.

Board Development: Drafting and Revising Bylaws for Not-for-Profit Organizations in Alberta, A Guidebook, Alberta Community Development.

Building the Right Structure, Ensuring School Councils Work Effectively. *K-12 Canada: Promoting Parents as Partners in Education*. Odynski, Lynn. March 1995, p.p. II-7.7

Consensus Building, Joanne Goss, 1994.

Effective School Councils. *K-12 Canada: Promoting Parents as Partners in Education*. Eynon, Joyce P. May 1995, p.p. II-9.4 - II-9.5.

Extending the Learning Community Involving Parents and Families in Schools, S.S.T.A. Research Centre Report #94-09, Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, Regina, SK November 1994.

Family and School Partnerships, A Task Force Report, Alberta School Boards Association, 1992.

The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook, Peter Senge, 1994, Doubleday.

Getting to Yes, Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In, Roger Fischer and William Ury, Bruce Patton editor, Second Edition by Fischer, Ury and Patton, Penguin Books 1991.

Renewing America's Schools: A Guide for School-Based Action, Glickman, Carl D., 1993.

Guidelines for Establishing Regional Consortia, Alberta Education, 1995.

Guidelines for Implementing more visible partnerships in schools, by Esmaeralda Thornhill in *Multicultural Education - Programmes and Methods*, ed. Ronald Samuda and Shiu Kong, Intercultural Social Sciences.

Help! School Starts in September, Joan Craven, Detselig Enterprises Ltd., Calgary, AB, 1993.

How to Get the Most Out of Meetings, Cindy Lakin Morley, 1994. Learn how to lead an effective meeting. Learn how to develop an agenda, open the meeting, encourage useful participation, and deal with disruptive behaviour. A handy planning guide provides a quick reference to help keep meetings on track.

On Making Schools a Better Place: Creating a School Vision, by Roland Barth and Morag Pansegrau, (October, 1994). *The Canadian Administrator* 34(1) 1-9.

Parent Advisory Councils, Edmonton Public Schools.

Parents and Schools: Partners in Education. Manitoba Education and Training, 1995.

Parents as Partners in Education, by Eugenia Hopworth Berger, 1981, CV Moseby Co. New York, USA.

Parents and Teachers: Partners in Learning, Jan Baskwill, Scholastic, 1989.

Parent Involvement and School Boards: A Partnership, Canadian School Boards Association, Ottawa, Ontario. telephone: 613-235-3724.

Robert's Rules of Order Revised, Robert, Henry M, 1971.

Roles and Responsibilities in Education: Position Paper. December 1994, Alberta Education.

School-Based Planning: Talking and Growing Together, by Susan Stephenson, pp. 174, 1994, *Explore Learning*, London, Ontario, telephone 519-679-3634.

School Council Handbooks, October 1991, from Calgary Public, Edmonton Public and Calgary Catholic School Districts.

Strategic Planning - An overview, *Site-Based Strategic Planning in Perspective: Horizons 2000 . . . Deciding on Tomorrow Today*, Tymko, J. Lawrence. May, 1990.

The Politics of School/Community Relations, Frank W. Lutz and Carol Merz, Teachers College Press, Columbia University, New York and London.

Working Together for Educational Excellence, Newfoundland Education and Training. 1995.

AUDIO VISUAL

Parent Involvement: A Program for Teachers and Educators, a series of film strips featuring a discussion between parents and educators about the advantages and difficulties of parent participation. Parents Magazine Films Inc., 52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017 USA.

Common Miracles: A Revolution in Learning, a video about new theories and changes in learning, 1993, 50 mins., SMA Distribution, 5576 Ambler Drive, Mississauga, Ontario L4W 2K9.

OTHER

SchoolNet:

An educational resource on the Internet. The service aims to link all of Canada's schools on the Internet and offers a range of information to students and school councils.

National SchoolNet Office
Industry Canada
235 Queen Street, 8th Floor West
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H5
Tel: 1-800-268-6608 Fax: (613) 998-0943
e-mail: schoolnet@ic.gc.ca

Provincial Stakeholders and Addresses

Alberta Education
11160 Jasper Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T5K 0L2
Telephone: (780) 427-7484
Fax: (780) 422-1400

Alberta Home and School Councils' Association
Suite 102, 12310 105 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T5N 0Y4
Telephone: (780) 454-9867
Toll free: 1-800-661-3470
Fax: (780) 455-0167

Alberta School Boards Association
12310 105 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T5N 0Y4
Telephone: (780) 482-7311
Fax: (780) 482-5659

The Alberta Teachers' Association
11010 142 Street NW
Edmonton, AB T5N 2R1
Telephone: (780) 453-2411
Fax: (780) 455-6481

Association of School Business Officials of Alberta
12310 105 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T5N 0Y4
Telephone: (780) 482-7311
Fax: (780) 482-5659

Canadian Home and School
and Parent-Teacher Federation
Suite 104, 858 Bank Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 3W3
Telephone: (613) 234-7292
Fax: (613) 234-3913

College of Alberta School Superintendents
12310 105 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T5N 0Y4
Telephone: (780) 482-7311
Fax: (780) 482-5659

Council on School Administration
c/o The Alberta Teachers' Association
11010 142 Street NW
Edmonton, AB T5N 2R1
Telephone: (780) 453-2411
Fax: (780) 455-6481

Faculty of Education
University of Lethbridge
4401 University Drive S
Lethbridge, AB T1K 3M4
Telephone: (403) 381-5580
Fax: (403) 329-2252

Faculty of Education
University of Calgary
Office of the Dean
2500 University Drive NW
Calgary, AB T2N 1N4
Telephone: (403) 220-5627
Fax: (403) 282-5849

Faculty of Education
University of Alberta
57 University Campus NW
Edmonton, AB T6G 2G5
Telephone: (780) 492-3751
Fax: (780) 492-0236

*Contact provincial agencies to get the names and contact numbers of your local representative.

Glossary

Definitions of educational terms	K1
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Definitions of educational terms

Accountability

- an obligation to answer for the execution of one's assigned responsibilities.

Action Plans

- specify the tasks that are required to be done, the person required for the task, the target completion date, and the sign-off date.

Advocacy

- establishing the organization's identity in the community through clear statements of the organization's values, beliefs and mission.

Beliefs

- a body of convictions commonly held by a school community.

Benchmark

- the state or level of performance at a particular point in time. Benchmark data provide the basis for performance comparison over time.

Capital Block

- funding for the costs of school facilities including: upgrading buildings, retiring debt owed on school facilities, constructing new facilities and funding Career and Technology Studies program equipment.

Code of Ethics

- a guide to behaviour of a high moral standard.

Community Representative

- a member of the community or a representative of a business that has a link with the school.

Collaboration:

- working together toward common goals.

Consultation

- an exchange of correspondence, a meeting, an exchange of ideas and information, or an opportunity for input prior to a decision actually being made. Good administrative practice would include communication of what decision was made.

Consensus

- agreement in opinion.

Consumers

- those who access education programs and services, eg. students and parents are consumers of educational programs.

Dual Track School

- has more than one program, eg. both English Language and French Immersion Programs.

Enhanced Opportunity Programs

- project funds are provided to school boards to cover costs of special programs and services in schools where sizable numbers of students are economically or socially disadvantaged.

Ex Officio

- *By virtue of office.* For example, the chair is an ex officio member of all school council committees because of the position as chair.

Financial Plan

- a revenue and expenditure summary and a description of how resources will be used to address priorities and implement the education plan.

Funding Framework

- the guidelines for allocation of funds to public and separate school boards in Alberta. The framework allocates funding in three blocks: instruction, support, and capital. It provides school boards the freedom to decide on how to deploy resources, which learning resources to use and how to implement the various educational programs they choose to offer. Details of the policy are found in Alberta Education's: *A Framework for Funding School Boards in the 1995-96 School Year.*

Goal

- desired improvements or key changes that must take place over time to achieve the vision.

Governance

- the act of establishing and monitoring the long term direction of an organization through policy.

Implementation

- involves putting the organization's activities into place. Activities may include provision of programs and services, coordination of volunteers and fiscal and resource management.

Implementation Schedule

- logical sequence of strategies over the plan period with a specified completion year.

Liability

- See *School Act*, s.44(1). School council members have the same liability protection as the board and its employees.

Management

- planning and coordinating the organization’s activities and supervising policy implementation. This function may be carried out by a senior staff person or by a group of people given that responsibility.

Mission and Mandate

- a clear, concise statement of the organization’s educational purpose with a focus on students. A statement of the school council’s responsibility flowing from the *School Act*, the School Councils Regulation, the Alberta government’s Three-Year Plan for Education, and the mission and mandate of the school jurisdiction.

Mission

- broad statement of the “business” of the school.

Multi-Track School

- refers to schools that offer several program ie, French Immersion, Ukranian Immersion.

Objectives

- quantitative or qualitative, time-certain, action-based expressions of a desired end result.

Partners

- people who share similar interests and/or concerns and work together to achieve a common purpose.

Performance Measures

- information that will be used to assess and report on outcomes and achievements
- mandated provincial performance measures related to provincial goals and results
- local measures as determined by the board
- trends—performance over time, and,
- benchmarks and targets for provincial and local measures.

School Community

- students enrolled in the school and their parents, children enrolled in an ECS program at the school and their parents, the school staff, and other persons who have an interest in the school.

School Council

- a collective association of parents, teachers, principals, staff, students, and community representatives who seek to work together to promote the well-being and effectiveness of the entire school community and thereby to enhance student learning.

Service Volunteers

- individuals who assist in implementing programs and services.

Shareholders

- a group of people who contribute time, money, support, knowledge and skills to a cause.

Single Track School

- has English Language or French Language Programs only.

Strategies

- the key steps or actions taken to achieve goals.

Student Assessment

- the systematic process of gathering information about student achievement in relation to provincial standards.

Target

- the specific level of performance to be achieved or maintained within a given period of time.

Trend

- direction of performance data over time. A trend may show increasing, decreasing or static data values.

Trustee

- in accordance with the *School Act* 1(1)(y), a member of a board. *School Act* s.1(a)(b) defines a board as a board of trustees of a district or division.

Value

- a basic belief held by an individual.

Vision

- a description of the fundamental character of education desired three to five years from now, which incorporate the values of the school council.

Result

- the measurable, specific outcomes of achieving a goal.

School-based decision making

- a process through which major decisions are made at the school level about policies, instructional programs and services and how funds are allocated to support them
- involves the whole school community in teaching and learning in order to ensure high levels of student achievement.

Education Acronyms:

ACSTA	Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AHSCA	Alberta Home and School Councils' Association
ASBA	Alberta School Boards Association
ASBOA	Association of School Business Officials of Alberta
ATA	The Alberta Teachers' Association
CASS	College of Alberta School Superintendents
CHSPTF	Canadian Home and School Parent Teacher Federation
ECS	Early Childhood Services
ESL	English as a Second Language
FSL	French as a Second Language
PAC	Parent Advisory Council
PSBAA	Public School Boards' Association of Alberta
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SBDM	School-Based Decision Making

Thanks

Special thanks..... L1

SECTION L

Thanks

Thanks

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