



Issue Resolutions Preview 2016

Dear Alberta School Councils' Association Parent Members,

The Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) advocacy efforts are informed and shaped by provincially relevant resolutions that parents on school councils bring forward, debate, and pass into policy each year at the ASCA Annual General Meeting.

Step 1:

Parents of member school councils/Councils of School Councils draft and submit issue resolution ideas and explanations to the ASCA provincial office. (Draft resolutions may be submitted to the office any time from the first call for resolutions that is issued at the close of one AGM, up to the submission deadline date for the upcoming AGM, which was December 16, 2015.)

Step 2:

Using this Resolutions Preview document, parents, through their ASCA member school councils may review and provide input to the proposed draft issue resolutions. (The Preview will also be available on our website at www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca so more of your parent community can review it if they wish.)

Step 3:

Further drafts of the issue resolutions that may reflect member input will be returned to your council in March as part of the complete AGM package. Your school council parent members decide how your AGM parent delegate or proxy delegate will vote to represent your council.

Please take time to review this year's attached preview. The comments and/or questions of clarification your council parents may have about the proposed resolutions should be forwarded directly to the sponsoring council contact and you may choose to cc ASCA also. Contact sponsors through email using the addresses provided on the Summary Table.

Your input/questions/comments may be considered by the sponsors with respect to their next drafts.

if your council is seeking additional information, some links related to the draft resolution topics are provided in this package.

All input must be sent to sponsors by March 4, 2016.

ASCA thanks you for your valuable participation in the policy setting process.

Summary Table

First draft proposed issue resolutions 2016 ASCA AGM

#	Title	Sponsoring ASCA Member School Council(s)	Email Use these email addresses to contact the issue resolution sponsors with your council's questions and feedback on the draft proposed issue resolutions.
P16-01	Consent as an addition to the Alberta sexual education curriculum	Lethbridge #51 COSC	joy.morris@uleth.ca
P16-02	Visual resources related to provincial assessments	Lethbridge #51 COSC	joy.morris@uleth.ca
P16-03	Individualized Program Plans (IPPs)/Instructional Support Plans (ISPs) and other outcome based tools	Lethbridge #51 COSC	joy.morris@uleth.ca
P16-04	LGBTQ access to information	Lethbridge #51 COSC	joy.morris@uleth.ca
P16-05	Provincial Support for Transfer Station development in regionalized transportation systems	Greystone Middle Centennial	shelleyg@provincialsafety.ca

Information Links provided by ASCA

2015-16 Funding Manual, Accountability Pillar, Transportation
<http://www.education.alberta.ca/admin/funding/manual.aspx>
<http://www.education.alberta.ca/admin/funding/accountability.aspx>

Education Legislation and Regulations
<http://www.education.alberta.ca/department/policy/legislation.aspx>

School Infrastructure (Modular Classrooms)
<http://www.infrastructure.alberta.ca/636.htm>

Provincial Assessments and Accommodations
<https://education.alberta.ca/provincial-achievement-tests/information-bulletin/>

Programs of Study
<https://education.alberta.ca/programs-of-study/programs-of-study/>

IPP's/ISP's
<https://archive.education.alberta.ca/admin/supportingstudent/instructionalsupports.aspx>

ASCA Current Policy Statements
<http://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/?page=Policy>

Possible conversation starters for your council about the proposed draft resolutions

- *Is this issue something we are aware of/familiar with in our school/district or other schools/districts in Alberta?*
- *Does the resolution reflect the parent perspective on the issue?*
- *What suggestions do we have for the sponsoring council that could make the parent perspective stronger?*
- *Does the issue resolution wording reflect a provincially relevant position for school councils?*
- *Without changing the intent, what suggestions could our council provide to the sponsoring council that might make the position provincially relevant for school councils?*
- *Are there any time constraints with respect to action on a proposed issue?*

Sponsors of draft proposed resolutions are responsible for ensuring links to information provided in their submission are current.

Please direct your council's questions or comments about any proposed resolutions to the sponsoring council/COSC's contact person, you may cc ASCA on your comments if you wish at parents@albertaschoolcouncils.ca.

P 16-01 Consent as an addition to Alberta sexual education curriculum

Background:

This motion passed into policy at the Alberta School Boards Association Fall General meeting:

“That the topic of consent, as defined in the Canadian Criminal Code, be incorporated in the curriculum related to sexual education.”

As the Programs of Study are set by the Ministry of Education, it is important for parents to support this position from our own perspective.

The following “lay summary” of Section 273.1 of the Canadian Criminal Code is quoted from the ASBA policy background that was provided by Edmonton Public Schools:

- You can only consent for yourself.
- You actually have to be able to give consent. That means you have to be awake, conscious, and sober enough to make a clear decision.
- People in positions of trust, power, or authority can’t abuse their position to get sexual activity.
- If you imply no through your words or behaviours that’s just as good as saying, “NO.”
- You have the right to change your mind and stop anytime for any reason during sexual activity.

Although “human sexuality outcomes from Alberta Education’s Programs of Study for Health and Life Skills Kindergarten to Grade 9, and Career and Life Management on the teachingsexualhealth.ca website shows sexual health outcomes that allow for and promote the discussion of consent within the context of safety and responsibility, and healthy relationships” (ASBA policy background) so that individual teachers may and do cover it, it is not explicitly mandated at any point in the curriculum. While individual families may discuss consent with their children at a deep level, either directly or through the medium of a religious, ethnic, or other group, this opportunity may not be available to all students. Surely none of us would wish our children to be required to deal with other students who do not have an understanding at least of what is required to constitute a minimal standard of consent, according to Canadian law. This is laid out (for the purposes of defining sexual assault) in Section 273.1 of the Canadian Criminal Code, and includes examples of specific situations that do not constitute consent at law.

Understanding what does and does not constitute consent is fundamental to all kinds of human interaction. More specifically, in the context of sexual education, our children have the right and obligation to know how Canadian law defines and determines consent.

It is to all of our benefit if our kids understand how Canadian society and government have determined the law applies to their interactions. Since sexual education is always a touchy subject, it is important to show that parents are supportive of adding consent to the curriculum.

Whereas the Alberta School Boards Association has passed a motion asking the government to incorporate the topic of consent into the Alberta sexual education curriculum, and

Whereas sexual education is a very sensitive topic, making it important to show that parents are supportive of any proposed changes to the curriculum, and

Whereas it is important that our children have at least a basic understanding of how consent is defined by law, since consent is fundamental to many aspects of human interaction, therefore

Be it resolved that the Alberta School Councils' Association supports the Alberta School Boards Association in their efforts to have the topic of consent, as defined in the Canadian Criminal Code, incorporated into the curriculum related to sexual education.

P16-02 Visual resources related to provincial assessments

Background:

Students that are visually impaired are able to complete provincial assessments in braille. Scribes and readers are currently provided in provincial assessments to assist students who require them for their learning success. Some students need other accommodations that are not routinely provided for assessments, though they may be available to the student in the classroom.

Children (especially those with Autism spectrum disorders) are sometimes given visual learning tools as a learning technique that assists them in understanding concepts. These visual learning tools may vary from classroom to classroom and from student to student, and currently students are not permitted to use them when completing provincial assessments. In order for visual learning tools to provide fair and effective assistance on provincial assessments to all children who use them, common visual learning tools should be centrally developed in conjunction with the curriculum. These common tools should then be made available to all students who need them during their studies. Furthermore, versions of the provincial assessments that include these visual tools should be provided to students who need them. This would increase the completion rate for provincial assessments by allowing these students to take the assessments, rather than being exempted.

As an example of a visual tool, when learning about settlement timelines, where most students might be expected to write the names of different ethnic groups in the order they arrived, a student requiring visual tools might have pictures of people from different ethnic groups that they sort into the correct order.

Whereas visual tools can be used for assisting children with Autism spectrum disorders and other disabilities, and

Whereas these visual tools assist the children to complete assessments successfully throughout the school year, and

Whereas the provision of common visual resources would allow students to be able to learn the program of study material throughout the year and then recognize these common visuals on the provincial assessments, enabling them to complete the provincial assessments rather than obtaining an exemption, therefore

We request that Alberta Education make provincial assessments accessible to all students by providing common visual resources to schools, to be used in learning and assessments.

We further request that Alberta Education provide versions of provincial assessments that incorporate these common visual resources.

P16-03 Individualized Program Plans (IPPs)/Instructional Support Plans (ISPs) and other outcome based tools

Background:

Programs of Study outcomes are in place at the beginning of each school year. For students with exceptional learning needs, the equivalent to a program of study often takes the form of something called an IPP or ISP. Unfortunately, these students may fall behind because there is often a delay getting an appropriate learning plan (such as an IPP or ISP) in place. It is unacceptable that some of our students are unable to achieve their learning outcomes because of these delays.

Students with exceptional learning needs are typically identified early. Their cases are usually detailed in extensive paperwork that follows them if they move. A great deal of discussion amongst their educators and parents usually takes place well before they transition to a new classroom and grade level.

Whereas for the most part, a school is able to identify which students will be in their classrooms for the beginning of a school year, in advance of the beginning of the school year, and

Whereas students with exceptional learning needs should be able to begin their learning plan at the beginning of a school year alongside their classmates, and

Whereas it is the responsibility of a school authority to ensure the programs of study are being delivered to each and every student, and

Whereas school authority and school planning for necessary resources occurs in advance of the beginning of a school year, and

Whereas IPPs and ISPs are fluid documents that can be changed as the child and teacher adjust to the new setting and grade level, therefore

We request that school boards allocate staff time so as to ensure that IPPs, ISPs, and related tools can be developed in advance of the beginning of a school year, except where extenuating circumstances make this impossible.

We further request that Alberta Education in collaboration with Alberta School Boards Association, the Alberta Teachers Association and the Alberta Association of the Deans of Education ensure that school support personnel and classroom teachers have the knowledge, skills and attributes to design relevant IPPs/ISPs (Individualized Program Plans/Instructional Support Plans) for students.

P16-04 LGBTQ access to information

Background: All school districts have been required to work on and update their respective policy(ies) relating to Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments to ensure that those policies encompass the needs of students who declare as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, or Queer (LGBTQ). This occurred on November 4th, 2015, when Minister of Education, David Eggen directly instructed each school board in Alberta to draft a transgender policy that adheres to provincial law by March 31st, 2016.

As this may be a controversial issue in a school community, parents/school councils wanting to become more knowledgeable on this subject, should not be limited or feel intimidated if they want to expand their scope of knowledge and to advocate or influence their local Board's LGBTQ Policies and Procedures.

Whereas parents/school councils would like to be able to easily access information in regards to LGBTQ Policies and Procedures from districts around the province, as well as best practice nationwide, and

Whereas parents/school councils should have access to an understandable, manageable, reference guide or "toolkit", and

Whereas this is a province-wide issue that may impact every school community, therefore

Be it resolved that Alberta School Councils' Association prepare an information package ("toolkit") containing resources, research, model policies and practices, and relevant legislation for school councils so school councils are supported should they wish to approach their school boards to engage and broaden the discussion around Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Queer (LGBTQ) Policies and Procedures.

P16-05 Provincial Support for Transfer Station development in regionalized transportation systems

Background:

In an effort to maximize efficiency and lower operating costs by reducing the number of busses on our roads, and creating efficiencies in bus route designs, it is our understanding that the Provincial Government has strongly encouraged school boards to regionalize transportation systems.

Regional transportation systems can be utilized by all boards and schools in a geographic area. Every bus is filled, and operating costs are reduced.

Regional transportation systems reduce student transport times which can have a positive impact on learning. Efficient systems where large transfer stations are utilised, increase student safety and parent user fees may decrease.

Regional transportation also reduces the number of buses dropping off at schools. At many larger population schools, the student drop-off areas are much too small to accommodate a traditional transportation system which could in turn, decrease student safety.

Parkland School Division has proudly operated a regional transportation system since 1995. This system has grown to safely transfer approximately 14,200 students each day with the use of two transfer stations, one in Stony Plain and one in Spruce Grove.

Parkland County, Spruce Grove, and Stony Plain have experienced enormous growth in the community. The existing transfer station in Spruce Grove is currently running over capacity, jeopardizing the safety of our students. In order for regional bus systems to remain effective, efficient, and safe for students, appropriate transfer site infrastructure is necessary and needs to be appropriately funded at the time of school construction. There is an addition of two new schools in the area planned over the next 3 years, therefore, an additional transfer station is desperately required.

Because it is highly likely that this situation is occurring in other high growth school divisions within the province and needs to be addressed,

Because currently, there is no funding offered by Alberta Education or Alberta Infrastructure or municipal areas to cover any or all costs associated with a required Bus Transfer Station,

Because the estimated cost to complete the project is \$1.8 million,

Because without appropriate funding for transportation infrastructure for a government encouraged initiative, the School Board is forced to tap into reserves to fund this infrastructure expense,

Because the intent for reserves is that they are only to be used to fund emergency situations, and

Because these funds require replenishing from other sources such as higher user fees, or reallocating funds from the classroom,

Because planning for new schools in the province, should include budget consideration and planning for the associated infrastructure to accommodate an efficient regionalized bus transportation system,

We Request that as schools are planned and budgeted for, Alberta Education provide necessary funding for the the planning and development of bus transport transfer stations for regionalized bus transportation systems.

Information References: Parkland transportation fees;

<http://psd70.ab.ca/Bus%20Passes%20and%20Cross%20Attendance%20Area%20Fees.php>

Parkland School Division Board agenda item memorandum regarding Spruce Grove Transfer Station- Reserves;

http://www.psd70.ab.ca/documents/general/20151103_Agenda_Item_7_3_SG_Bus_Transfer_Reserves.pdf

Regional Transportation Overview (submitted by Jordi Weidman Director of Strategic Planning & Communications for Parkland School Division);

See attached

We invite and encourage school councils and CoSCs to compare their own current transportation systems and fees associated with them.