

ASCA School Council Engagement Task Force – December 2020 RESULTS

9 Responses submitted (as of February 5, 2021)

Thank you for participating in the *School Council Engagement Task Force (SCETF)* for the 2020 – 2021 school year.

The feedback your school council parent representative compiles and submits to the ASCA is greatly appreciated by the Board to assist in their considerations on education issues in Alberta.

The Board utilizes information gathered to inform the advocacy work of the association. This may include advising at external committee meetings, sharing with appropriate Ministries or provincial education organizations, and the potential for Board sponsored Advocacy Resolutions.

Request for input regarding “**Professional Conduct and Competence of Teachers**”.

Background/context:

Any person teaching in Alberta must have a valid teaching certificate, granted by the Ministry of Education.

When a teacher is hired by a publicly funded school board (public, separate and francophone), they must become a member of the Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA).

There are **provincial policies**, and **ATA policies**, that guide the expectations of teacher conduct, rights and responsibilities, and competence.

ASCA maintains that it is not the role of individual parents, or that of a school council, to participate in the supervision or evaluation of teachers. It is beneficial, though, for all education stakeholders to have a general understanding of related expectations, and the application of policies, guidelines and practices for teachers in Alberta.

Alberta Education

Teachers are the foundation of Kindergarten to Grade 12 education in Alberta. They are governed by the [Education Act](#) and must hold a valid Alberta teaching certificate issued by the province in accordance with the [Certification of Teachers and Teacher Leaders Regulation](#) .

As part of maintaining ongoing professional standards, teachers continue to engage in professional development throughout their careers as outlined in the following ministerial orders:

The professional practice of all Alberta teachers is guided by the [Teaching Quality Standard \(TQS\)](#) (*Ministerial Order # 016/97*) (*PDF, 950 KB*). This standard is the basis for certification of all Alberta teachers and holds them accountable to the profession and to the Minister of Education.

The Alberta Education (*Policy 2.1.5*) on [Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy](#) aims to ensure that each teacher’s actions, judgments and decisions are in the best educational interests of students and support optimum learning. School authorities, Early Childhood Services (ECS) operators, superintendents, principals and teachers are responsible for facilitating quality improvement through each teacher’s career-long professional growth.

Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA)

The ATA is the professional organization of teachers in Alberta. Its objectives are set out in the [Teaching Profession Act](#).

“Upholding high professional standards of teacher conduct and competency is vital to protecting the integrity and quality of the teaching profession. In Alberta, provincial legislation gives the Alberta Teachers’ Association the authority and responsibility of administering two processes to support that goal: Discipline Process and Practice Review.”

Source: <https://www.teachers.ab.ca/TheTeachingProfession/ProfessionalConduct/Pages/default.aspx>

Note: The Minister of Education is responsible for processes relating to the conduct and competency of teachers in Alberta’s charter and private schools.

1) Referring to the background materials/links provided above:

Was your school council previously aware of the difference between **Teacher Conduct** and **Teacher Competence**?

1 (11%) If Yes - How was your school council made aware of the difference? (select all that apply):

- The topics (in general – not about specific teachers and/or parents and/or students) of Teacher Conduct and/or Teacher Competence have been discussed at School Council Meetings.
- Our principal has provided information about one or both to all parents.
- Information has been shared with all parents by our Division/Board of Trustees.

Comments:

8 (89%) If No - Why did your school council not know about this? (select all that apply):

- (6) The topics (in general – not about specific teachers and/or parents and/or students) of Teacher Conduct and/or Teacher Competence have not been discussed at School Council Meetings.
- (5) Our principal has not provided information about one or both to all parents.
- (5) Information has not been shared with all parents by our Division/Board of Trustees.
- (2) Our school council does not believe these topics are appropriate business for school council.

Comments:

- Word of mouth in the community is also the way we communicate.
- We would like to ensure that parents/guardians/individuals understand the process involved; and that parent council meetings are not the appropriate time or place to discuss specifics.
- We assume these practices are in place and information is available to those who need it, but none of us has needed or attempted to seek out this information. While it would be interesting to have the principal present to our school council on topics such as these, our agendas are already

full and we do feel parents are likely unwilling to attend additional meetings or extend the current ones to accommodate these topics. We feel that the Division/Board of Trustees should be responsible for disseminating this information to parents, instead of individual school principals or

school councils. We feel that we don't need to know ALL the details related to these topics, but that it does need to be available and easily accessible to all (school councils, parents, etc).

2) Was your school council previously aware of the processes as they relate to Professional Conduct ([Discipline Process](#)) and Competence ([Practice Review](#))?

1 (11%) If Yes - How was your school council made aware of the processes as they relate to Professional Conduct and Competence? (select all that apply):

- (1) The topic (in general – not about specific teachers and/or parents and/or students) of processes as they relate to Professional Conduct and Competence has been discussed at School Council Meetings.
- Our principal has provided information about processes as they relate to Professional Conduct and Competence to all parents.
- Information about processes as they relate to Professional Conduct and Competence has been shared with all parents by our Division/Board of Trustees.

Comments:

8 (89%) If No - Why did your school council not know about the processes as they relate to Professional Conduct and Competence? (select all that apply):

- (6) The topic of processes as they relate to Professional Conduct and Competence has not been discussed at School Council Meetings.
- (5) Our principal has not provided information about processes as they relate to Professional Conduct and Competence to all parents.
- (5) Information about processes as they relate to Professional Conduct and Competence has not been shared with all parents by our Division/Board of Trustees.
- (2) Our school council does not believe learning about the processes as they relate to Professional Conduct and Competence is appropriate business for school council.

Comments:

3) Was your school council previously aware of the **Teaching Quality Standard (TQS)**?

4 (44%) If Yes - How was your school council made aware of the TQS? (select all that apply):

- (2) The topic of the TQS has been discussed at School Council Meetings.
- (1) Our principal has provided information about the TQS to all parents.
- (1) Information about the TQS has been shared with all parents by our Division/Board of Trustees.

Comments:

5 (56%) If No - Why did your school council not know about the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS)?
(select all that apply):

- (4) The topic of the TQS has not been discussed at School Council Meetings.
- (4) Our principal has not provided information about the TQS to all parents.
- (4) Information about the TQS has not been shared with all parents by our Division/Board of Trustees.
- (1) Our school council does not believe learning about the TQS is appropriate business for school council.

Comments:

4) Was your school council previously aware of the provincial Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation (TGSE) Policy?

1 (11%) If Yes - How was your school council made aware of the Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation (TGSE) Policy? (select all that apply):

- (1) The topic (in general – not about specific teachers and/or parents and/or students) of Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation has been discussed at School Council Meetings.
- (1) Our principal has provided information about the Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation (TGSE) to all parents.
- (1) Information about the Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation (TGSE) has been shared with all parents by our Division/Board of Trustees.

Comments:

8 (89%) If No - Why did your school council not know about the Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation (TGSE) Policy? (select all that apply):

- (6) The topic of Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation (TGSE) has not been discussed at School Council Meetings.
- (5) Our principal has not provided information about Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation (TGSE) to all parents.
- (4) Information about the Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation (TGSE) has not been shared with all parents by our Division/Board of Trustees.
- (2) Our school council does not believe learning about the Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation (TGSE) is appropriate business for school council.

Comments:

- 5) Does your school council feel that parents in your school community have the information they need, and understand how, to appropriately address concerns related to the professional conduct and/or competence of teachers?

5 (56%) If Yes - How do parents in your school community obtain the information and understanding needed to appropriately address concerns related to the professional conduct and/or competence of teachers? (select all that apply):

- (3) Our school council provides information and guidance to any parent who asks.
- Our school council provides information and/or resources on our website, social media, in our newsletter, etc.
- (5) Our principal provides information and guidance to any parent who asks.
- (1) Our principal provides information and/or resources on our website, social media, in our newsletter, etc.
- (3) Our school division/Board of Trustees provides information and guidance to any parent who asks.
- Our school division/Board of Trustees provides information and/or resources on our website, social media, in our newsletter, etc. Information about the Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation (TGSE) has been shared with all parents by our Division/Board of Trustees.

Comments:

4 (44%) If No - Why do parents in your school community not have the information they need, or understand how, to appropriately address concerns related to the professional conduct and/or competence of teachers? (select all that apply):

- (4) Parents don't know who to ask, or where to look, for information, resources or guidance.
- (4) Parents are afraid to ask for information, resources or guidance.
- (4) Our school council hasn't provided information, resources or guidance.
- (4) Our principal hasn't provided information, resources or guidance.
- (4) Our school division/Board of Trustees hasn't provided information, resources or guidance.

Comments:

We felt while parents on our school council may know who to ask or be comfortable asking for information, that may not be true for our entire parent community. It is very likely that those involved in these situations are feeling at risk. It is important that we support parents when they have concerns related to these topics, so this information needs to be easily available. Currently this information has not been provided to us (or if it was none of us recall).

- 6) Does your school council feel that it should provide information to help parents in your school community understand how to appropriately address concerns related to the professional conduct and/or competence of teachers?

7 (78%) If Yes - How would your school council provide information to help parents in your school community understand how to appropriately address concerns related to the professional conduct and/or competence of teachers? (select all that apply):

- (6) Through written information available on our website, social media, newsletter, etc.
- (6) Through an item on our school council agenda.
- (3) Through a webinar or virtual presentation.

Comments:

2 (22%) If No - Why does your school council feel it should not provide information to help parents in your school community understand how to appropriately address concerns related to the professional conduct and/or competence of teachers? (select all that apply):

- (2) It is not appropriate for our school council to do this.
- Our school council does not have the capacity to do this.

Comments:

7) Does your school council have any suggestions for improving the current processes of addressing concerns related to the professional conduct and/or competence of teachers?

4 (44%) Yes

Comments:

- The process needs to be clear and shared widely and accessible without spending hours looking online.
- We have discussed this and have a plan to move forward to provide parents with information regarding the process of addressing concerns related to the professional conduct and/or competence of teachers. Ensuring information about the processes is on the division wide website for all parents would be helpful.
- Assure that Principals know their role in sharing the information with School Councils. Ours doesn't.
- We feel that the division/Board should be ultimately accountable to provide this information to parents. As a school council we would like to be able to at least provide links for our parent community, as we feel that school council could provide a way for parents that are nervous or feeling at risk to get the information they need. Perhaps this could be a good topic for the trustee to include in their agenda when they visit us.

5 (56%) No

Comments:

- The school council members were surprised by this survey and were not aware of a lot of the items; which I mentioned in the comments. It was uncomfortable and unclear on responsibilities of information sharing.
- Parent councils work in concert with school administrators. We must each endeavor to respect the others viewpoint or we will be working against each other rather than in support of each other. Parents are not the experts on pedagogy.

Additional comments: