



MEDIA RELEASE

12 July 2021

Parent voice in education is vital, but is the Minister actually listening?

Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) is concerned with the decision of Education Minister LaGrange to form a Parent Advisory Council, comprised of 40 parents in the province, to offer input on education priorities, issues, challenges, and foster open and respectful dialogue.

"We are grateful for the parents that serve on school councils and contribute to student success. We care about that voice, and want them to be heard." said ASCA President Brandi Rai. "Parents use their voices and expertise in a variety of opportunities; this is one they are being offered, and we are asking will they actually be listened to?"

On a variety of issues, parents and teachers have reached out to this Minister to express their concerns and have not felt heard. Recent examples can be found in relation to the draft K-6 curriculum. Letters of concern, emails and petitions seem to be ignored. ASCA's own membership passed policy related to the draft curriculum that was shared with the Minister, and even months later, have received no acknowledgement or response.

For over 90 years, the Association has advocated for and promoted parent engagement in education. ASCA has been working for parents, with parents, and as parents, for decades in this province. Long before school councils were legislated, ASCA stood in partnership with other education stakeholders and represented the parent voice in Alberta's education system.

Good leadership understands that listening to diverse and often opposing opinions can create better outcomes. Great leadership actively collaborates and dialogues with all stakeholders to ensure their decisions reflect the needs of all constituents. Doing what is right is not always easy, but is always necessary in order to be true servant leaders.

ASCA has worked diligently for its 1300+ Member School Councils to collect and share input opportunities on education issues including *Assessment, Funding, Accountability, Curriculum, Student Health, Transportation, School Councils/Parental Involvement*, and provides a democratic process to accomplish policies to advocate for. See [ASCA Advocacy Policy Manual](#).

"Parents don't want to be a checkbox, or handpicked, so our input is homogenous", says Brandi, "I am very concerned about the authenticity and transparency of this process. The parent voice in education is vital for student success and is effective if it is actually being heard and used."

Inquiries may be directed to:

Wendy Keiver, Executive Director 780-454-9867 x101 or toll free 1-800-661-3470 or 780.940.9572 (cell)
Jolaine Kochisarli, Communications Director 780-454-9867 x102, 780-991-6434 (cell)