

Hi, I'm Brandi Rai. I'm the president of the Alberta School Councils' Association. I'm also a parent of five kids in Grades 6 through 11, meaning children in elementary years, middle years and high school. Our family lives in Edmonton and I've been involved on multiple school councils for years.

The ASCA represents parents, like me, across this province, and has been doing so for more than 90 years. ASCA works with school councils to help them understand and fulfill their legislated roles. We provide resources and professional development opportunities to school councils, additionally, we advocate for those school councils who are our members by collecting their voices and representing that voice at stakeholder meetings as well as to the Ministry of Education.

We are a non partisan organization and do not endorse any political party or their platforms. We do believe in working with education stakeholders, community members, as well as locally and provincially elected representatives in order to ensure that student needs and families are reflected in the decisions being made that impact our children now, and in their futures.

Our advocacy policy positions come from parents whose school councils submit resolutions and they are debated, rejected, or passed during our AGM by hundreds of member school councils from across the province. ASCA then uses those policies to advocate on behalf of those parents on school councils in our k-12 system in Alberta.

ASCA knows the importance of equitable access to education, we know the importance of supports for all students, and the necessity of the additional supports for students with additional learning needs. We have been walking alongside the parents in our province for decades, and specifically in these last two years we've watched parents hold up communities as they've held up their babies in the face of a global pandemic. Over the past 22 months parents are consistently tasked with adjusting their family's lives and their own employment schedules in order to accommodate decisions made within education with little advance notice, consideration, or consultation.

ASCA would love to see our provincially elected representatives work together to proactively help Albertans through this pandemic and beyond. Well funded education systems and healthcare systems would mean that irrespective of the wave, irrespective of the variant, our systems would be stabilized and secure with sustainable processes so that our children can continue with in person learning, safely, and our communities can continue to flourish.

We would love for the education portfolio to have the funding it needs to provide proper classroom sizes for our children, whether pandemic or endemic status of any illness, we would love for our children's classrooms to have filtration and ventilation that ensures they are safe to participate in their learning experiences, eat lunch together, and not perpetually wear masks.



This is the responsibility of our provincial government to fund and source and provide maintenance to the systems that would keep our children's air safer. When necessary, and during a wave of a highly contagious variant, the appropriate masks should be provided to our children and the staff who support our children. There should be transparency around what type of masks are being offered to our children and how effective they are going to be. Many families are grateful for the rapid tests that will be available to students, but want to see appropriate protocols in place for accurate data collection, reporting to schools, contact tracing and appropriate isolation measures in place to ensure that families are aware of the risks to their students, and also that their students have the ability to access the learning opportunities they need.

I could expand in many directions, on many topics this morning, and they would all lead to ensuring that children have sustainably safe classrooms so that they do not continue to sacrifice their opportunities and health, whether mental or physical, due to provincial mismanagement of this pandemic response.

Albertans deserve to see the modelling for this wave and any others, and we deserve transparency related to the recommendations that the Chief Medical Officer of Health offers those who are making decisions.

ASCA encourages school councils to work together with their administrators, trustees and elected representatives, such as their MLAs, in order to fulfill their roles as well as to ensure that their experiences, and their wisdom is captured in decisions.

In closing, our children deserve better so we must all do better, thank you for your time this morning.

Brandi Rai

ASCA President

