

## ASCA School Council Engagement Task Force - March 2019 RESULTS – TOTAL RESPONSES 9

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Thank you for participating in the *School Council Engagement Task Force (SCETF)* for the 2018 – 2019 school year.

The feedback that 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.*

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### Request for input regarding **respectful and inclusive learning environments**.

#### *Background/context:*

Alberta Education’s Business Plan Outcome #3 “Alberta’s education system respects diversity and promotes inclusion”:

*Human rights and diversity are integral to a strong society. Education plays an important role in the preparation of responsible, caring, and successful citizens. The ministry enables children and students to pursue success and develop competencies during their education that contributes to participation in diverse and inclusive communities.*

*An inclusive education system is established when the system anticipates and values diversity, understands learners’ strengths and needs, and reduces barriers to promote a culture of well-being. This is done through effective and meaningful collaboration with parents and partners to meet the educational needs of children and students.*

#### ASCA Grant deliverable:

*Respecting diversity and promoting inclusion, School Councils contribute to safe, caring and healthy learning environments that meet the needs of all students.*

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#### 1. How does your school council contribute to respectful and inclusive learning environments for all students?

- Currently all School Council events and activities are accessible to all the students. In the case of evening events it is up to the family unit to decide whether or not to attend but in no way has School Council done anything to exclude anyone. Going forward this question does arise the possibility that maybe more can be done to increase attendance and remove barriers that would make it difficult for some students to attend.

- Events to promote social well-being for all students; Healthy Hunger lunch program which takes into account personal dietary restrictions and supporting healthy choices; promoting an all inclusive faith community through invitation and community participation

- Our school as a very diverse student body. We celebrate numerous cultural holidays; we support a variety of student clubs; sports; arts; GSA; robotics; we have had smudging and a strong effort at FNMI awareness. We invite any parent or stakeholder who may have concerns or simply wishes to attend a meeting to do so. For those who cannot we broadcast our meetings on facebook.

- Our School Council has about 12 active members (excluding school administration) that make up our executive; division/grade representatives and other members at large. As a council we provide advice and consult with the Principal and School Board on matters relating to the School such as: school philosophy; mission and vision; policies; improvement plans; programs and directions and budget allocations to meet student needs. Parents of students in the school can contact division/grade representatives (which are made public with contact information) about concerns that they have. Representatives can advise parents to talk with principal or bring concern to a council meeting where it can be discussed and the principal can advise on the best way to proceed. Sometimes it can be a flow of information back to the parent or advised to contact principal. In the 2016/2017 school year parents brought concerns regarding safety of students who would be required to walk to the new school when it opened. Such concerns included lack of sidewalks; crosswalks; wildlife and students having to learn to walk in January when the school was proposed to be opened. With the support of School Council a committee was formed to lobby the local school district for bussing of these students. This committee was successful and a one year pilot project was granted for the 2018/2019 school year. This pilot project is currently being revisited by the school district to see if it will continue to run. As a school council we support school wide events/initiatives that will support and enhance student learning; encourage participation and promote the well-being of the School community. Such school initiatives are:- Community Pride Time Activities. These pride activities consist of students throughout the school being sorted into different prides (teams/houses). Each pride consists of a mix of students from K-8. Students will remain in the same pride for the whole school year; helping them to build relationships with the other staff/students within their prides. The goal behind these events is to build community and establish more connections throughout our school. The hope is to have an activity approximately once per month. These events will: be related to curriculum; help to build stronger relationships; and provide opportunities to showcase how proud we are of our school.

-Wildcat Wellness Warriors This program is facilitated by a teacher and student parent (who is also a member of School Council) and is made of a group of grade 4-5-6 students that meet and come up with ways to promote a positive difference at the school by creating a healthy environment. At the meetings this year there has been many different topics discussed and then the students take what they have learned back to their classes. Some topics are purely information based while others have information with an activity that helps promote the topic. Examples are:- healthy fruit helps a healthy mind; fruit bowls were placed in each class.-well balanced breakfast; milk and fruit were given out to each student with Christmas pancakes.-students from younger grades feeling alone at recess; students from program to identify students alone and interact/involve them on the playground/outdoor activities.- promote nutritious foods; school wide smoothie day.

- Our school council; encourages the staff to consider inclusive learning conferences; seminars etc as a choice for education on PD days. We forward information regarding Inclusive learning events open to the community. We provide input based on parent's input regarding how special needs students feel accommodated and what they can do to increase their sense of citizenship.

- Supporting a new playground with inclusive play as a priority - for children of all abilities. Health and Wellness focus - special events ensure all children relate to the topic; all in the gym with a focus on wellbeing; fund recess buckets which bring students together in the playground. Noon Hour Clubs - a way for students to learn together in many ways. Collaboration with school admin ensures parent advisory work is focused on what's important for the students. Parents invited to the blanket exercise for example. Parents have had math night to stay abreast of the learnings. Jon Thomas presented to parents around social media; which enables parents to understand the environment our children are in. School Council is a supporter of the leader in me school priorities.

- This was a more difficult question for our council as we weren't sure how/if we did contribute in a direct way to the inclusive learning environment for students. After some discussion we decided that through the events we sponsor; organize and supply volunteers for we support a respectful and inclusive learning environment. For example; we sponsor and organize an Italian & French Culture Carnevale each year. We also organize and fund a Welcome Back to School social in September; Hot Chocolate & Cookie Social in November and Spring Family Event in May. These social events are aimed at bringing the school community together to connect and reconnect the families with each other. We also felt that the parent and guardians that volunteer for these events and in the school role model what good citizenship is which includes being respectful and inclusive. We also concluded that we could find other ways to be more purposeful in supporting an inclusive learning environment.

- We provide financial support for teachers to run school wide events. In May we funded an all day all school Native learning day for example.

- We work together with administration to ensure that tools are provided for all students. Whether fidget gadgets; exercise balls; or a safe place for time out & recharge. Administration keeps us abreast of needs; and news.