

School Based Decision Making

The Division believes that providing responsibility for school-based decision-making will empower those persons closest to the students to make decisions about the instructional programs and services for those students.

Under School Based Decision Making, School Administrators are to organize their schools in a manner consistent with Alberta Education requirements and the goals in the Pembina Hills Education Plan.

Limits on the amount to be spent in various departments such as Administration, Operations and Maintenance and Transportation are set out in the respective funding regulations of Alberta Education and Alberta Infrastructure.

The majority of total school revenue will be forthcoming from Alberta Education. Alberta Education will requisition all the municipalities (setting the mill rate on an annual basis) to fund the Alberta School Foundation Fund. The Division will receive funds from the A.S.F.F. on a per pupil basis for instruction and transportation. Alberta Grants will make up the balance of the revenue received by the Division. A special school tax levy would only be available if one were accepted by the electors in a plebiscite and must be for a specific purpose.

Procedures:

1. A school and its community will have the authority and the support to make decisions which directly impact the education of students and will be accountable for the results.
2. School Based Decision Making Definition:
An organizational model based on the belief that, given a commensurate level of authority and resources, a school and its community can collaboratively make decisions regarding programs and services within a district framework.
3. Belief Statements:
 - 3.1 Education is a shared responsibility.
 - 3.2 Decisions will be made by those affected by the decision and accountable within the school community.
 - 3.3 Decisions will be made in the best interest of students.
 - 3.4 Students will have access to an equitable education within their home community wherever possible.
 - 3.5 As schools respond to local economic, cultural, demographic and educational needs they shall develop distinctiveness.
 - 3.6 Change will be fostered by supporting risk-taking and creativity in a positive and collaborative environment.
 - 3.7 Open communication is vital to success.
 - 3.8 School Based Decision Making will lead from independence to interdependence.
4. Goals of School Based Decision Making
 - 4.1 To involve the school community in key school planning decisions such as the School's Education Plan.

- Outcome: The community involvement process will reflect community needs with regard to the education of students.
- 4.2 To recognize the uniqueness of each school in its community.
Outcome: The School's Education Plan defines individual school goals.
- 4.3 To encourage and support collaboration, communication and team building within the school community.
Outcome: Decisions are made by those most affected and accountable.
- 4.4 To maximize the allocation of human and other resources for the benefit of student learning.
Outcome: The learning needs of students are met given available resources.
5. Budgeting
- 5.1 The school and its community will determine the budgeting process.
- 5.2 The process should involve staff and parent representatives.
- 5.3 The school budget should reflect the goals, priorities and directions of the School Education Plan.
6. Communication
- 6.1 Schools are responsible for establishing two-way communication links with members of the school community.
- 6.2 Communication links should address both the internal school community (e.g. staff meetings, staff council, E-mail, bulletin boards) and those external to the school community (e.g. newsletters, forums, handbooks).
7. Roles (from Roles and Responsibilities in Education, Alberta Education)
- 7.1 Two components of educational restructuring in Alberta have a significant impact on the roles and responsibilities of various members of the education community. These are:
- 7.1.1 School based decision making, which permits schools and their communities to make many major decisions about programs and policies, and
- 7.1.2 School councils, which give a stronger voice to parents and community members.
- 7.2 The new roles and responsibilities are based on four assumptions:
- 7.2.1 All members of society have a responsibility to contribute to the education of young people, and an important role to play in education.
- 7.2.2 All roles and responsibilities in education are interrelated.
- 7.2.3 Clarifying roles and responsibilities will strengthen relationships and consequently improve the quality of education.
- 7.2.4 In the education community, positive attitudes and goodwill are as important as legislative and regulatory controls.
- 7.3 Roles and Responsibilities for the key players in education (students, teachers, school administrators, parents, superintendent, and board) are outlined in the *School Act* and Pembina Hills Policy.

Guidelines

1. Guidelines with Respect to Planning:
- 1.1 Each school community will develop a School Education Plan which acknowledges system directions and reflects local needs.
- 1.2 The School Education Plan should include:
- mission statement
 - mandate statement
 - vision statement
 - beliefs/values

- goals, objectives and performance measures
 - school profile/history
 - key issues and trends
2. Guidelines with Respect to Reporting:
- 2.1 Each school will prepare and present an annual report for the school community and Board.
- 2.2 The report will be distributed by September and will be based on the prior school year.
- 2.3 The report will include:
- School Council report as outlined in the School Council Resource Guide.
 - Achievement of school, school system and provincial goals.
 - Report on student results and other school performance measures.
 - School program report.
 - School financial report
 - Other information as determined by the school and its Council.
3. Guidelines with Respect to Decision Making:
Decision making in the school community can be grouped around three (3) distinct decision making processes: collaboration, consultation and independent (unilateral) decision making. Each decision making process has a role in the school community. While not exhaustive, the following definition and examples help clarify the types of decision making in a school community and the decision making process appropriate to the issue.
- 3.1 Collaboration: working together toward common goals and purposes.
- 3.2 Consultation: an exchange of correspondence, a meeting, an exchange of ideas and information, or an opportunity for input prior to a decision actually being made (from School Council Resource Manual).
- 3.3 Independent (Unilateral) Decision: School Administrator or whoever is authorized to make the decision does so without consulting or working collaboratively.
- 3.4 Examples of the types of decisions that could be made and the appropriate decision making mechanism.
- 3.4.1 Collaboration
- The "larger" decisions that relate to long term vision, mission, beliefs, goals, policies.
- 3.4.2 Consultation
- staff hiring decisions
 - timetable and school organization
 - staff assignments
 - staff performance reviews
- 3.4.3 Independent (unilateral)
- routine decisions
 - emergency responses
 - decisions within the professional scope of responsibilities (e.g. student evaluation)
4. Each school community will develop and follow a decision making plan which outlines those decisions that will be made collaboratively, those in consultation and those independently.

Reference

[AP 30-21 Operating and Capital Reserves](#)