

School Council Orientation (2024-2025 School Year)

What is a School Council?

A School Council is a structured group of parents, teachers, and community representatives that advises the principal on school-related matters. It serves as a platform for collaboration between parents and the school to enhance student learning.

Mission and Goals

Mission: According to the AJ-AJA bylaws, the mission is “to foster the well-being and effectiveness of our school community and to enhance student learning.”

Core Activities

- Advise and communicate the parents’ perspectives to school administration.
- Establish and review School Council goals, objectives, and procedures.
- Communicate with parents and the school community.
- Facilitating collaboration among school community members.
- Working collaboratively to enrich the student learning experience.
- Hold regular meetings.

Decision-Making Authority

- Set School Council operating procedures and goals.
- Establish policies for council activities.
- Plan engagement activities aligned with the council's purpose.
- Provide advice to the principal and school board.

Excluded Responsibilities

The School Council is not responsible for:

- School governance.
- Employment issues.
- School management.
- Handling complaints

Decision-Making Process

All parents or guardians of students enrolled in the SJ or AJA programs, are school council members and are encouraged to participate and vote. Decisions are made by consensus whenever possible, following a town hall model. Decisions must be clearly stated and recorded in meeting minutes.

Executive Members

Chair (Jake Smith): Plans meetings, facilitates discussions, and acts as the spokesperson for council.

Vice-Chair (Lisa Range): Assists the Chair and manages compliance with privacy regulations.

Secretary (Kristen Holm): Keeps minutes and manages correspondence and records management for the council.

Key Communicator (Kimberly Watkinson): attends Community of School Councils (COSC) meetings, reports back to school council and connects council with the CBE.

Past Chair (Katie Jackson): Offers guidance to the current Chair and executive members.

Principal (Krista Bartlett) and Vice Principal (Anna Johnston): Manages school operations and supports school council activities.

Teacher Representative (rotating): Shares professional insights and represents the teaching perspective.

Meeting Schedule

Meetings occur monthly on Tuesday nights at 6:30 PM in the SJ AJA Learning Commons, except in December and June. Key dates include:

- October 22, 2024
- November 26, 2024
- January 28, 2025
- February 25, 2025
- March 18, 2025
- April 29, 2025
- May 27, 2025 (AGM)

Before the Meeting

A reminder will be sent to the council email list one week before the meeting. The email will include the meeting agenda and previous meeting minutes. All parents are invited to attend and vote. To add new business to the agenda, email suggestions 14 days before the meeting or bring them up during the “New Business” section of the meeting.

Meeting Structure

Meetings follow a structured agenda, including:

- Call to Order
- Land Acknowledgement
- Roll Call (Confirm Quorum)
- Reading and Approval of Minutes
- Reports
- Old Business
- New Business (motions discussed and voted on)
- Announcements (Next Meeting Date)
- Adjournment

Quorum and Motions

- **Quorum:** The minimum number of members required to be present to make decisions, achieved when a majority of voting members present are parents of enrolled students.
- **Motion:** A formal proposal made by a member during a meeting suggesting that the group take a specific action or adopt a certain decision. The process includes introduction, seconding, discussion, voting, and announcing the outcome.

How to Get Involved

Members can contribute to school council meetings by:

- Attending regularly to stay informed.
- Preparing in advance by reviewing the agenda and materials.
- Sharing perspectives to ensure diverse viewpoints are heard.
- Asking questions to foster understanding.
- Proposing ideas for improvements or new initiatives.
- Supporting quieter members to promote inclusivity.
- Engaging in committees for deeper involvement.
- Following up on previous discussions.

Supporting New Members

School councils can help members feel valued, informed, and engaged by:

- Offering orientation sessions to familiarize them with the council structure and processes.
- Providing easy access to important documents and meeting minutes.
- Actively inviting new members to share ideas and ask questions.
- Maintaining open communication regarding schedules and expectations.
- Fostering an inclusive environment that values diverse perspectives.
- Creating feedback opportunities to allow new members to suggest improvements

Get in Touch:

We believe Parent engagement is crucial for building a strong and effective school council
If you have questions, concerns, or an idea you would like to share, please let us know!

Email: parents.sjaja@gmail.com

Additional Resources

Alberta School Councils' Association. (2023). *School council resource guide* (Draft date: September 2016, Update July 2023).

<https://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/public/download/files/181387>

Calgary Board of Education. (2024). *School council handbook* (Updated September 2024).

<https://cbe.ab.ca/FormsManuals/School-Council-Handbook.pdf>

Stanley Jones and AJA School Council. (2023). *SJ-AJA school council bylaws* (Draft date: September 23, 2023).

https://stanleyjones.cbe.ab.ca/documents/b0973b36-02e5-5a8d-819c-b2c52ff306a3/SJ-AJA%20School%20Council%20Bylaws_DRAFT_23sep2023.pdf

Stanley Jones School. (2024). *School council website* (Updated September 27, 2024).

<https://stanleyjones.cbe.ab.ca/school-council>

What to Expect: School Council Meeting Agenda and Language

Agenda Item	Language Typically Used in the Meeting
Call to Order	"I call this meeting to order"
Land Acknowledgement	A land acknowledgment is a statement that recognizes and respects the Indigenous peoples who have historically inhabited and cared for a specific territory.
Roll Call	<p>"An attendance sheet has been passed around the room for our roll call. Please make sure you have signed the document"</p> <p>"I'd like to confirm that we have achieved a quorum. According to our bylaws, quorum is met when a majority of voting members present are parents of students enrolled in our school. Since we have [the number of members present] here today, we can proceed with our agenda and make decisions."</p>
Reading and Approval of Minutes	<p>"Meeting minutes were sent out via email to the meeting. There are also printed copies available here today if anyone has not seen them"</p> <p>"Are there any corrections to the minutes?"</p> <p>"If there are no corrections, the minutes stand approved".</p>
Reports	<p>Reports are an opportunity to share news and updates about what is happening at the school.</p> <p>"I'd like to introduce the Learning Grounds committee for an update on their project..."</p>
Old Business	This section covers action items from the previous meeting. "We'll now move on to our previous business. At the last meeting..."
New Business	<p>"The meeting is now open for new business"</p> <p>Motions are put forward, seconded, discussed, and voted on. Vote outcomes are announced and determine if a motion passes or fails</p>
Announcements	"The next meeting will be held..."
Adjournment	"May I please have a motion to adjourn the meeting?"

How a Motion Works

By following these steps, you can effectively bring forward ideas and proposals during meetings. Here's a concise guide on how to make a motion during a meeting:

Introduce the Motion	Begin by clearly stating, "I move that..." followed by the specific action or proposal you want the group to consider
Second the Motion	Another member must say, "I second the motion" to indicate support. If no one seconds it, the motion is not considered.
Discussion	The Chair opens the floor for discussion. Members can share their thoughts, ask questions, or express support or opposition.
Vote on the Motion	After discussion, the chair calls for a vote. Members indicate their approval or disapproval.
Announce the Outcome	The Chair announces the results of the vote, stating whether the motion has passed or failed.