



Alberta
School Councils' Association

**OPEN RECRUITING AND RETAINING SCHOOL COUNCIL
MEMBERS WORKSHOP**

HANDOUTS

School Council:

A group of people who work together to **advise the principal and the board respecting matters relating to the school.**

A means for parents and community members to work together with the school to support and enhance student learning. *Alberta School Council Resource Manual, 2006*

Intro 1



Role of School Councils:

- Foster, develop, maintain and reflect the culture of the school
- Create the forum and opportunity for participation in school-based decision making.
- Seek and represent school community views.

Intro 2



School Council Membership:

- Principal
- Teacher
- Student (if senior high)
- Parents of children enrolled in the school must be the majority
- Others as decided

School Councils Regulation

Intro 3



School Council Functions:

- Advise principal and board on any matter relating to the school
- Decide operating procedures for itself
- Carry out activities related to its advisory role
- Handle monies
- Submit annual report of activities and financial statements to school board

Intro 4



School Councils are NOT:

- **School governance bodies** (see school board)
- **Employers** (see school board)
- **School managers** (see principal)
- **Primarily fundraisers**
- **Primarily lobbyists**
- **Complaint sessions**

Alberta School Council Resource Manual, Page 10

Intro 5



WHY VOLUNTEER FOR SCHOOL COUNCIL?

20 Great Reasons to Join School Council

- To support your child
- To get to know a new community
- To help someone
- To have an impact
- To be an agent for change
- To keep skills alive
- To learn the truth
- To be an advocate
- To learn something new
- Because we are asked
- To donate your professional skills
- To assure progress
- To be informed of your school's environment
- As an excuse to do something that you love
- Because of interest in education
- To be challenged
- To stand up and be counted

Why People Volunteer:

- To feel valued
- To be trusted
- To be listened to
- To be respected
- To have two-way communication and be inclusive
- To have growth opportunities
- To be recognized
- To feel supported
- To have fair expectations
- To feel connected
- To be an advocate
- To keep skills alive
- To be part of a team
- To learn something new
- To have impact
- To be challenged
- Because they were asked
- To assure progress
- To donate professional skills
- To make new friends
- To see that resources are well-allocated

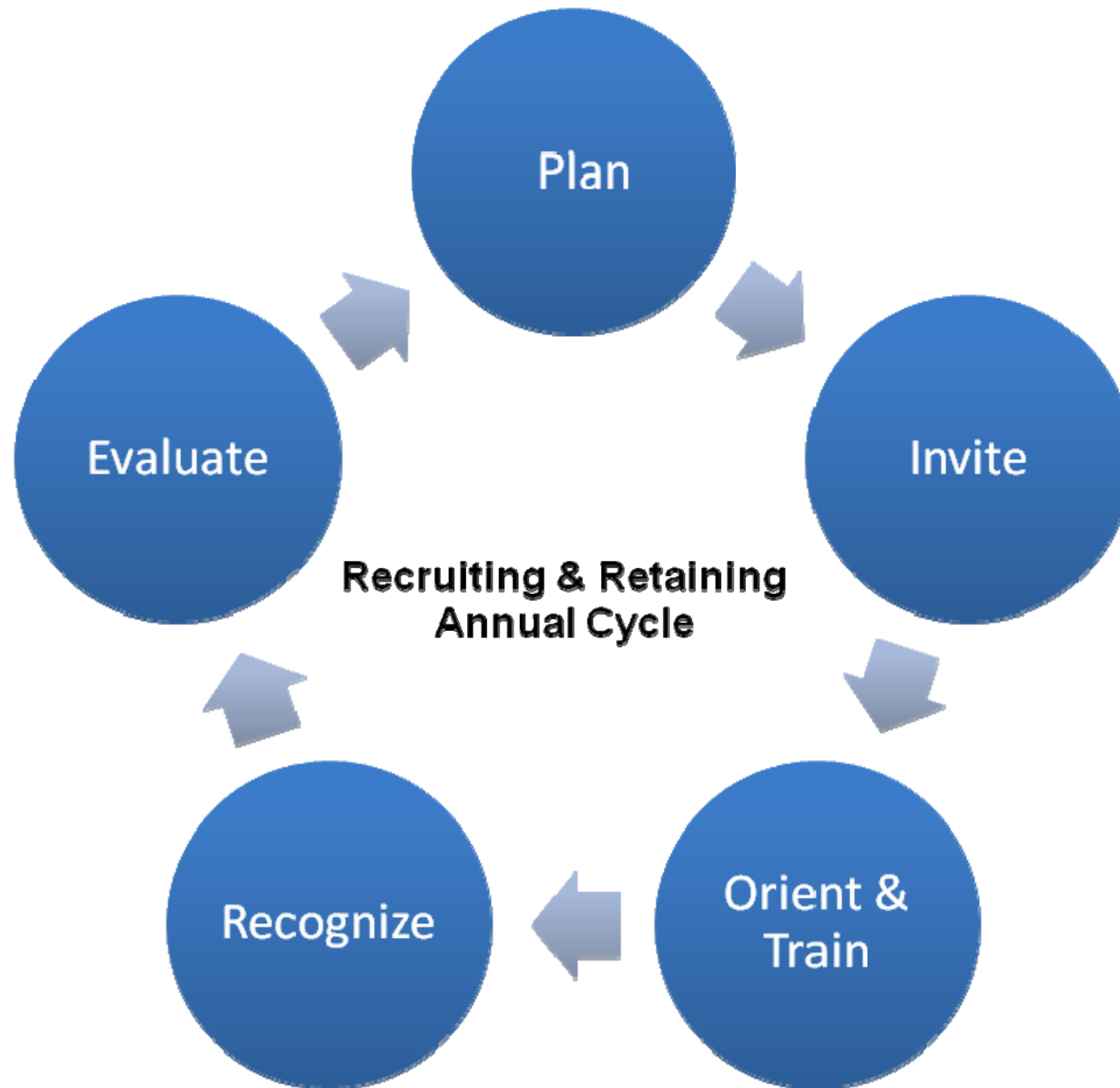


REASONS WHY PEOPLE SAY “NO”

- They feel they were never asked
- Do not know the purpose of school council
- Do not know what school council does (functions)
- Issues to be addressed seem overwhelming
- Feel work is not valued
- No support or training offered
- Meeting topics are not of interest
- Fear that commitment is too large
- Long-time volunteers may have strong personalities and not appear welcoming to new ideas or people
- Out-of-pocket expenses for child care
- Bad reputation of past school councils or of meetings
- Do not understand the many roles parents or a school council can assume
- Limited time
- Thinking they have nothing to offer
- Fear of attending a meeting where they don't know anyone
- No transportation available
- Their schedules don't match
 - Meetings are always in the evening
 - Orientation is during the day



RECRUITING AND RETAINING ANNUAL CYCLE



IDEAS TO RECRUIT SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Ask for a parent representative for each class that communicates information about school council and also gathers input from the parents
- Personally invite people to participate
- Inform your school community
- School Council Booth - teacher night, school registration day, school BBQ, first day of school coffee with the principal providing info about the school council and extending invitations to attend meetings
- Publish the agenda in the newsletter asking for people who have thoughts, opinions, information to attend
- Respect every parents' choice of involvement and understand that participation on school council is not necessarily defined by attending meetings
- Organize a phone 'out'
- Provide a registration sheet at the beginning of the year asking the parents what involvement they would like and how much time they would like to give.
- Publish a school council calendar of events every month including the school council meeting agenda.
- Provide a hard copy and on-line access of the school council's plan
- Involve community members: alumni, the clergy, political figures (past or present), elders, leaders in the media, retired people, cultural groups
- Have a school council presence at community events—providing school council activity sign up sheets at those events illustrating the range of school council activities
- Ask potential council members for short term assistance in areas of interest or expertise
 - e.g. advising on strategic planning, research, budget, craft fair, library, fitness center
- Sponsor workshops on topics of interest for parents
- Provide parents with information and opportunities for training/orientation, skill development
 - e.g. attending Alberta School Councils' Association Annual Conference
- Invite parents to become a committee member
- Mentor new school council members



IDEAS TO RECRUIT SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Make presentations to the kindergarten parents
- Encourage school council members to bring parents to the meeting to introduce parents to the business of school council

These ideas will have different applications and success based on your unique school community. The annual cycle of recruiting includes evaluation, and the school council should include an evaluative component when implementing strategies. A school council may want to evaluate the resources and volunteer availability when choosing a strategy to ensure it does not consume the school council's resources.

