

Proposed Advocacy Resolution Submission Form for ASCA AGM 2024

Parents on school councils in Alberta identify issues affecting early childhood services (ECS) to grade 12 students, they would like to see addressed, changed, or resolved, in provincial education.

Please complete this form to submit as a **SPONSOR** of a **Proposed Advocacy Resolution (PAR)** for ASCA member consideration at the April 28, 2024, Annual General Meeting (AGM) **by January 15, 2024**.

SPONSOR (Submitting) School Council Name:	Sam Livingston School Council
School Address:	12011 Bonaventure Dr SE, Calgary, AB T2J 3G7
Co-Sponsor(s) <i>if applicable</i>	
Contact Name: <i>(will be public)</i>	Tosca Nesbitt
Contact Email: <i>(will be public)</i>	ecolesamchair@gmail.com
Title of Recommendation: <i>(example: Mandatory School Uniforms K-9)</i> Preserving safe and inclusive spaces for 2SLGBTQI+ students	
Describe the issue(s) to be addressed, aspect(s) that need to change or be resolved: <i>(see SAMPLE attached)</i> Within the province of Alberta, supports for 2SLGBTQI+ students are already in place. In other provinces across Canada, there have been legislative changes to erode similar supports. We believe it is important to ensure these supports remain intact in the province of Alberta.	
Background: While the number of 'out' youth and the acceptance of them in their communities is increasing, many 2SLGBTQI+ youth still live in fear of being rejected by their family and peers and are afraid of queerphobic bullying. Research out of Toronto indicates that potentially as many as 1 in 5 homeless youth identify as 2SLGBTQI+, and that they are more likely than other youth to be on the streets instead of in shelters due to queerphobia and the fear of violence. Putting this in context, it's important to note that approximately only 4% of Canadians aged 15+ identify as 2SLGBTQI+, meaning a disproportionately high number of 2SLGBTQI+ youth end up experiencing homelessness. In addition, they often face discrimination. An Alberta study noted that three quarters of trans youth faced discrimination because of their gender identity and more than half because of their sexual orientation. Repeated discrimination can weaken self-confidence and lead to mental health issues, including suicidal ideation and self-harm. Research indicates that approximately 30% of youth suicides are by 2SLGBTQI+ youth. This risk of suicide is even higher if youth have not come out yet or have not been accepted by their family. Family relationships are important, and while younger trans youth generally reported feeling their parents cared about them, 81% reported their family did not understand them at all or only understood them a little, and only about 1 in 3 had an adult in their family they could talk to about problems. The same Alberta student noted that 75% of trans youth reported self-harm in the past year, nearly 65% reported thoughts of suicide in the past 12 months and more than 2 in 5 had attempted suicide. One way to maintain supportive environments is through the continued support of Gay Straight Alliances/Queer Straight Alliances (GSAs/QSAs) within schools. Under Section 35.1 of the Education Act, students in Alberta have a right to establish a voluntary student organization intended to promote a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment. This includes GSAs or QSAs. The Government of Alberta notes that 2SLGBTQI+ students are more likely to feel safe and are more comfortable being open about their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression in schools with GSAs/QSAs because	

they provide a place to create a sense of belonging. They go further and note that when students feel accepted for who they are, it can positively impact both academic performance and self-esteem as evidenced through:

- greater school attachment
- improved attendance
- increased sense of empowerment and hope
- new friendships
- improved home and school relationships
- increased comfort being visible as 2SLGBTQI+ or as allies
- reduction of stress due to hiding one's identity
- increased confidence
- enhanced sense of pride

While GSAs/QSAs are an excellent and proven approach to supporting 2SLGBTQI+ students, visibility also matters. As with many other forms of inclusion, seeing relatable examples in curriculum and resources and adjusting policies, forms, and signage to use gender-inclusive terminology can make 2SLGBTQI+ students feel seen, safe, and included.

Resources:

<https://www.alberta.ca/gay-straight-alliances>

<https://oipc.ab.ca/privacy-laws-gay-straight-alliances/>

<https://oipc.ab.ca/resource/school-clubs/>

<https://www.aclrc.com/2-lgbt-youth>

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/12-581-x/2022001/sec6-eng.htm>

[SARAVYC Trans-Youth-Health-Report Alberta-V2-WEB.pdf \(ubc.ca\)](#)

Recommendation: *(more than one action can be included – most often the recipient of ASCA's advocacy efforts is the Minister of Education and/or education stakeholders/partners).*

That the Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) advocate to The Minister for Education and other education stakeholders and partners for:

1. *The preservation of GSAs/QSAs in all schools in Alberta with continued protections surrounding the personal information of students participating in GSAs/QSAs.*
2. *Ensure curriculum uses educational materials that enhance the visibility and understanding of different cultural, ethnic, and sexual minorities. Maintain age-appropriate sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression topics into classroom discussions, lesson plans, curricular outcomes, and library collections.*
3. *Support schools and school boards to be gender inclusive on school forms, websites, and communications, recognizing that gender exists on a spectrum, not as a male/female binary.*
4. *Support professional development for teachers to provide the knowledge and skills to a) respond immediately and in age-appropriate ways to discriminatory language and behaviour, b) use inclusive language, and c) incorporate positive examples that affirm and embrace differing sexual orientations and gender identities.*

IMPORTANT - the following section must be completed:

Are there **CURRENT/EXISTING** ASCA Advocacy Policies that

SUPPORT Yes X No **OR CONTRADICT** Yes X No *this Proposed Advocacy Policy?*

If yes to either, please complete this statement:

If this Proposed Advocacy Policy is passed by ASCA Member School Councils, existing **ASCA Advocacy Policy # _____** should be (choose **one**):

Affirmed Archived Amended to read:

IMPORTANT - the following section must also be completed:

Has your School Council reviewed the following, prior to submitting this **Proposed Advocacy Resolution (PAR)**?

X **ASCA Mission, Vision, Values** X **ASCA Bylaws** X **ASCA Objects of Incorporation**

Signature: Tosca Nesbitt

Should the ASCA Advocacy and Resolutions Committee determine that the PAR is **NOT aligned** with the items on the list above, the following process will apply:

- ASCA will notify the sponsoring School Council contact, to explain/discuss in detail the conflict/misalignment.
- The sponsoring School Council will be offered an opportunity to amend its PAR to align with ASCA Objects, Bylaws, Vision, Mission, etc. by a specified deadline.
- If an amended PAR is not received, it will be considered to be 'withdrawn' by the sponsoring School Council.
- If an amended PAR is received, but still does not align, if time permits the sponsoring School Council will be offered assistance in amending their PAR to align.
- Should the sponsoring School Council decline the offer of assistance and/or not amend its PAR again to align, the proposed PAR will not be accepted.

SAMPLE

SPONSOR (Submitting) School Council Name:	Jonesville Middle School Council
School Address:	123 100 Street, Jonesville, AB, T0T 0T0
Co-Sponsor(s) if applicable	N/A
Contact Name:	Mary Jones
Contact Email: (will be public)	<u>Mary.Jones@jonesville.net</u>
Title of Recommendation: (example: Mandatory School Uniforms K-9) Legislation for Council of School Councils (CoSCs)	
Describe the issue(s) to be addressed, aspect(s) that need to change or be resolved: (see SAMPLE attached)	
Council of School Councils are parent groups comprised of School Council representatives, School Board Trustees and School Division administrators. <u>CoSCs</u> facilitate cooperation and partnership among school councils to create positive collaborations between a divisions' School Councils. This environment of trust and collaboration provides an opportunity to influence decisions regarding policies, procedures and education issues within the division.	
Background:	
Many divisions do not encourage or facilitate the use of <u>CoSCs</u> due to a large number of School Councils as in Urban divisions or due to vast distances between schools as in Rural divisions. There should be provisions within the Education Act to support the creation and utilization of <u>CoSCs</u> to ensure that parents are able to collaborate and create the strongest supports for students.	
Recommendation: (more than one action can be included). That the Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) advocate to _____ for _____.	
That the Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) advocate to the Ministry of Education for the creation and support of Councils of School Councils (<u>CoSCs</u>) to be added to the Education Act.	

Please submit this form by email to parents@albertaschoolcouncils.ca before **January 15, 2024**.

Sponsors may be contacted by the ASCA staff for direction, editing and presentation format for member review, pre-voting, and meeting materials preparation.

Resolutions passed by a majority vote at the AGM become advisory policy, or belief statements, of ASCA and are utilized when contributing input at provincial education committee work.



**Alberta
School Councils' Association**

Promoting parent engagement in public education

207, 11010.142 Street Edmonton AB T5N 2R1 Phone 780.454.9867 or 1.800.661.3470 Fax 780.455.0167 www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca