

# School Community Council Update

## SCC Survey Results

Summary by Toni Cooke

The purpose of the questionnaire was to establish a more effective method of providing support to the School Community Councils. The questionnaire was a tool to gauge the progress of individual councils and to identify similarities as well as differences.

The information generated from the questionnaires has helped identify strengths and specific supports needed for councils. It has also identified emerging challenges. The questionnaire gave the councils an opportunity to self-evaluate and to share their work and efforts.

From the questionnaires returned it became apparent that the initial directives such as developing constitutions and codes of conduct have been established. Hence, most councils are well on their way to shifting some of their focus from fund-raising to student learning and engagement.

### I. How The Questionnaire Supports the Directive by the Ministry of Education?

School Community Councils have been established in all of the schools of the Saskatchewan Rivers School Division. The Board of Education supports the continued development of the School Community Councils in the following ways:

1. **Funding** – annual grant of \$1,000.00 and the purchase of annual membership in the Saskatchewan Association of School Councils for each council.
2. **Support** – a superintendent is assigned to assist School Community Councils and also the Board has provided a resource person who is able to deliver workshops and provide ongoing individual support.
3. **Communication** – all handbooks and manuals needed by School Community Councils are available on line at the school division website as well a newsletter, the School Community Council Update, is published throughout the school year.

The information from the questionnaires will enable the school division to track the progress of each council. It will ensure that all councils are working toward meeting the timelines established by the Ministry. It gives a starting point and more can be updated in the future.

### II. Questionnaires Returned

A total of thirty questionnaires were mailed to the School Community Council chairpersons. There were seventeen returned and thirteen not returned. The councils that did not return the questionnaires have all

#### Parent Advisory Committee

Every School Community Council is invited to send representatives to the Parent Advisory Committee. The next meeting is on **Thursday, October 16, 2008** at the Education Centre (545 11th Street East, Prince Albert). The meeting begins at 7:00 PM and ends promptly at 8:30 PM.

been contacted. Some said they will do them in the fall. Some felt they would try to do them after members are elected. Others either had forgotten or some said they ran out of time.

Questionnaires were received from the School Community Councils representing the following schools:

The Community Schools in Big River;	Canwood Community School;
East Central School;	Ecole Vickers School;
John Diefenbaker School;	Kinistino School;
Osborne School;	Prince Albert Collegiate Institute;
Princess Margaret School;	Queen Mary Community School;
Riverside Community School;	Shellbrook Elementary School;
Spruce Home School;	St. Louis Community School;
Vincent Massey Community School;	West Central School; and,
Westview Community School.	

### III. Information From the Questions

**Question 1:** Do you know the school SMART goal(s)? Yes -15 No - 2

**Question 2:** Many interesting initiatives have been taken to support the SMART goal. Some examples are:

- ♦ communication class;
- ♦ purchasing library books;
- ♦ math curriculum information night;
- ♦ public speaking competition; and,
- ♦ supporting literature classes;
- ♦ purchasing SMART boards;
- ♦ purchase of computers;
- ♦ support of literacy programs.

**Question 2b:** Intended Outcomes from Initiatives. Some examples are:

- ♦ more parent involvement with family literacy;
- ♦ support the school SMART goal;
- ♦ improved learning opportunities for students;
- ♦ support by purchasing resources; and,
- ♦ increase levels of reading and comprehension.

**Question 3:** Initiatives outside of supporting the SMART goal. Some examples are:

- ♦ purchasing of playground equipment;
- ♦ barbecues;
- ♦ parent education;
- ♦ teacher appreciation;
- ♦ bike rodeos;
- ♦ coupon books;
- ♦ skating rink maintenance;
- ♦ baby clinics; and,
- ♦ developing relationships amongst the community;
- ♦ nutrition program support;
- ♦ family activities;
- ♦ fundraising for school needs;
- ♦ support of field trips;
- ♦ fun nights;
- ♦ community clubs/programs;
- ♦ family literacy programs.

"Our goal of supporting our school's SMART goal has given us a clear focus and mandate."

**Question 3b:** Intended outcomes from these initiatives. Some examples are:

- ◆ to increase parent involvement in the school;
- ◆ to build community; and,
- ◆ to build the volunteer program.

**Question 4:** Has your SCC provided advice or made recommendations to your school, the Board of Education, government.....

Yes – 10      No – 7

**Question 5:** Does your SCC regularly consult with students, parents, community members, school principal.....

Yes – 14      No – 3

**Question 6:** Describe fundraising that the SCC has approved. Many common activities include:

- |                      |                 |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| ◆ hot dog sales;     | ◆ dances;       |
| ◆ bingos;            | ◆ pizza sales;  |
| ◆ bake sales;        | ◆ walk-a-thons; |
| ◆ garage sales; and, | ◆ fun nights.   |

"Our outcome overall is to support our students, their families and school staff in a variety of ways - by volunteering in the school, by organizing different events that support our students and school staff, fundraising for equipment etc. Outcomes can be something as simple as a nice afternoon at the Grandparents' Tea or more tangible, like new playground equipment."

**Question 7:** How is your council using its membership in the Saskatchewan Association of School Councils?

Six School Community Councils were using their membership by reading the SASC newsletters, and receiving teacher appreciation ideas. Not many School Community Councils are utilizing the intent of the connection with the provincial organization.

**Question 8:** Describe what is working well for your SCC.

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| ◆ most feel that they are meeting their goals; | ◆ consistent membership; |
| ◆ cooperation;                                 | ◆ good discussion;       |
| ◆ great administrative support;                | ◆ fundraising;           |
| ◆ open communication;                          | ◆ dedicated volunteers;  |
| ◆ regular meetings;                            | ◆ trust/honesty;         |
| ◆ not getting caught up with community issues; | ◆ respect.               |

**Question 9:** Describe areas where you think there could be improvement. Some examples include:

- ◆ more parental involvement in classrooms;
- ◆ involving more parents in the School Community Council;
- ◆ taking minutes at the meeting;
- ◆ keeping more accurate records;
- ◆ finding better ways to support the school's SMART goal;
- ◆ getting more male School Community Council members;

- ◆ getting involved in PAC meetings;
- ◆ setting meeting dates ahead of time and advertising them;
- ◆ better communication all around;
- ◆ being more visible in the school;
- ◆ developing goals; and,
- ◆ more support from Board of Education members.

**Question 10:** What do you see as opportunities for growth? Some examples are:

- ◆ more partnerships with other schools;
- ◆ require more direction on what our goals are or should be;
- ◆ more parental involvement;
- ◆ more information sessions for parents;
- ◆ growth is hard to see with lack of the council members;
- ◆ better communication with parents and community;
- ◆ making the community aware of the council and its' role;
- ◆ more community activities;
- ◆ develop consistent plans to achieve school goals; and,
- ◆ ongoing mentorship of parents who take on executive positions.

*"We need the opportunity to better utilize the support the school division has available to us."*

**Question 11:** What additional supports/training does your council need?

The following comments were offered:

- ◆ general yearly overview of new guidelines;
- ◆ retreat for executive members;
- ◆ what are our roles as SCC members;
- ◆ how to run effective meetings;
- ◆ ideas on how to support the school SMART goal;
- ◆ continued education on new curriculum or changes in education;
- ◆ copy of the binder;
- ◆ having different councils host the PAC meetings;
- ◆ clear definition of high school councils;
- ◆ training in meeting management;
- ◆ how to increase parental involvement and keep them involved;
- ◆ what are our boundaries of authority;
- ◆ professional speakers for motivation;
- ◆ continued support from Saskatchewan Rivers School Division;
- ◆ don't need any training;
- ◆ fundraising ideas;
- ◆ seeing more Board of Education members; and,
- ◆ ways to search for more dollars to improve our schools.

*"We would like to see more men involved in the Council and school activities (particularly good-looking ones)!"*

**Question 12:** What changes have you observed since the creation of School Community Councils?

- ◆ none;
- ◆ less input;
- ◆ only our name;
- ◆ more new members;
- ◆ The new structure integrates the council with the learning program and staff much more.
- ◆ we work as a cohesive group now;
- ◆ transition time;
- ◆ more information given for parents and the community;
- ◆ more aligned with school goals; and,

**Question 13:** How do you see your SCC evolving or growing?

- ◆ more student involvement;
- ◆ attracting more members;
- ◆ creating a healthy, strong council;
- ◆ more impact on students' educational needs.
- ◆ more community involvement;
- ◆ forever changing and evolving;

### **Baseline of Information Received**

The information that was received from the questionnaires gives a baseline to which we can continue to add to in the future. We can begin to build an individual profile for each council and we will be able to see their progress and continue to build their capacity. It will be essential to get the rest of the questionnaires to begin this process.

### **Conclusion**

The questionnaires provided a glimpse into the general framework of the School Community Councils in the Saskatchewan Rivers School Division. I was invited to visit nine councils during the 2007 – 2008 school year. It was not possible to attend meetings of all the councils within a single school year. I was also sensitive to them and did not want to push myself into their meetings. I feel that trust is beginning to build. I communicated with all the council chairs either by telephone or email. I certainly made it known that I was available to answer questions, attend their meetings or to provide ongoing support. This school year (2008-2009) I will be able to visit more councils and offer more support through workshops or presentations. Further communication will provide the information required to formulate a more in-depth profile of the councils. I have enjoyed the interaction with the School Community Councils and look forward to more!

"Transition from our old Local Board to our School Community Council has been smooth and efficient."

"This is a transitional time for us. Our new principal is promising to guide us in a great direction!"

"Once we make the community more aware of what our role is in the school, we hope to be able to actively involve the community in our activities."

"Cooperation is what's working well for our council. Cooperation as a group, with the school, parents and community."

"We feel at this time we achieve any goal we set our minds to. We keep goals realistic and attainable within the school year."



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This newsletter is distributed to each School Community Council in the school division, members of the Board of Education, Education Centre and school-based Administration, the Saskatchewan Association of School Councils and the Saskatchewan School Boards Association.