



Battle River School Division

Information for School Councils

There is a lot of behind-the-scenes work done by School Councils and a lot of behind-the-scenes information to know. The Finance Department of Battle River School Division wants to help School Councils be knowledgeable and prepared for the "business" functions they will oversee. We hope this document will be useful in knowing what's expected.

The role of parents within the school community is an integral part of the overall education system.

Parent involvement can either be as a member of the school council or school fundraising society. Both groups provide great support to schools, but the rules are different for each of them.

School Councils are mandated under the Education Act. They exist for the purpose of supporting the school administration and school activities. A School Council includes parents, principals, teachers, older students and community members. A School Council cannot be incorporated.

School Councils are provided indemnity under the school board's insurance coverage, which means BRSD's insurance will cover the School Council if an insurance claim should arise.

A School Council is required to follow the Administrative Procedures set out by the School Division. Here is a link that leads to the BRSD Administrative Procedures governing School Councils. [School Councils AP 110](#)

School Councils are also required to fill out Fundraising forms for any fundraising activities and these are to be filed with the School Administrative Assistant. [Fundraising AP 107](#)

Schools sometimes charge fees for student activities and sometimes School Councils raise funds for student activities. *School Generated Funds (SGF)* are the funds generated either by fees and/or fundraising for school activities. All of these funds must be handled through one bank account held at the school. These funds are part of BRSD's Audited Financial Statements and are reported to Alberta Education.

Note: If your School Council has a separate bank account from the school, please contact the Administrator of the school to start the process of amalgamating these accounts.

Funds raised must be used to benefit students. School Administrator(s) shall consult with staff and School Council at the beginning of the year regarding the nature of fundraising activities that will occur during the year. Funds must not replace public funding for education, or instructional purposes/basic education items. The purpose of each fundraising activity and the anticipated disposition of monies raised shall be made known to students and parents prior to the activity getting started.

3 *Important School Council things to remember:*

A School Council's meeting minutes need to be recorded for each meeting and submitted to the School Administrative Assistant to retain with all records.

School Generated Funds are to be reported to School Council/Advisory Committee and the staff three times per year or upon request of the council. At a minimum, reports dated August 31st, December 31st and April 30th must be provided.

School Generated Funds are audited on a three year cycle, to ensure Administrative Procedures are being followed and the students' funds are adequately safeguarded.

[School Generated Funds AP 106](#)

The Alberta School Councils Association

Is an organization formed to support and assist all school councils in the Province. BRSD pays the membership for each of our School Councils to be part of the ASCA. They offer workshops and advice. Here's their website:

<https://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/>



A School Society is a separate incorporated body that is able to undertake fundraising activities which require a gaming licence from Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Commission, such as bingos, casinos or raffles. Here are two links to obtain further information. [Incorporate a society](#) [AGLC Gaming Licences](#)

As a School Society your fundraising efforts are for the same purpose as a School Council but you do not need to fill in the BRSD Fundraising form as your activities are not filed with the School Division's financial statements. That being said it is important to communicate with the school Administrator on any fundraising activities for the school.

As a School Society you are required to file an annual report for the Society as your funds are not reported as part of the school division's funds. Reporting for School Society financial statements would be determined by the board of the Society. We would highly encourage these being reported at each meeting and recorded in your minutes.

Incorporated school societies are *not* provided indemnity under the school board's insurance. As a separate legal entity, they require their own insurance policy to ensure the organization, members and directors are afforded coverage in the event of an accident or loss due to third party, bodily injury and property damage, theft of cash or allegations of breach of duty or wrongful acts by the directors and volunteers.

Please contact Cheryl Kropinske at ckropinske@brsd.ab.ca if you require insurance coverage for your School Society.

Larger-Scale Projects

- so you want to build a playground or buy a score clock

Many large-scale projects for schools are funded in whole, or in part, by School Councils and Societies. Common projects could include playground projects, outdoor court paving, audio/visual equipment and chromebooks in a cart.

All proposed projects require approval from the school Administrator. In addition, the Division Facilities and / or Technology Departments must be consulted if the project involves modification to school grounds, buildings, and / or any existing equipment / systems such as gym scoreboards.

If a proposed project receives approval from all required parties and funding is secured to commence with the project, please contact the Division Finance Department. Coordination of capital purchases between the Division and Societies or School Councils is important, as the Division is eligible for a 68% GST rebate, which can equate to substantial savings on purchases.

When a project is complete – when the playground is opened or the scoreboard installed, for example – ownership transfers to the Division. This is because it is the Division that typically handles insurance and maintenance of the goods. In essence, the assets have been donated to the Division. Special approval must be obtained if a Society wishes to retain ownership of an asset located on school property.

Societies typically secure necessary funds for capital projects via a combination of fundraising endeavors and approved grants. The Community Facility Enhancement Program (CFEP) is funded by the Government of Alberta and offers a grant program to which many Societies submit applications. Unincorporated groups, such as School Councils, are not eligible for CFEP grant funding.

Please use the following link to obtain information regarding CFEP grants:

<https://www.alberta.ca/community-facility-enhancement-program.aspx/>

A Community Initiative Program (CIP) grant is another potential source of funding depending on the nature of the project. The following link provides access to CIP grant information:

<https://www.alberta.ca/community-initiatives-program.aspx/>



Rycor Program - Fees & Hot Lunch

To better serve our parents/guardians, BRSD offers an online fee payment system through our schools websites. Parents/guardians can view and pay fees for multiple students at multiple schools, if applicable, in a single transaction.



School Online Payments

Rycor allows the schools to accept credit cards and Visa Debit and Debit Mastercard Online through their website with a hassle free payment experience. Reducing the amount of cash collected in the schools allows the Administrative Assistant more time to focus on other crucial duties. Another benefit to having parents pay online is the inability of theft or fraudulent activity.

There is a module within Rycor that allows Administrative Assistants to create custom forms for use online, reducing the amount of paperwork that goes back and forth between the school and parents. An example of this is hot lunch forms. We have a few schools using Rycor for their hot lunch program, with more coming on board for the 2019/2020 school year!

School Councils can have a designated person on their council who can be given access to Rycor. This person can adapt the hot lunch form templates that we have available or create a new form. Within the module, an inventory report of all the items ordered and paid for is available; making the ordering process for the School a smooth one!

Digital student records—School Councils can spread the word

Did you know that all school divisions across Alberta are moving to Digital Student Records?

Schools will be able to upload digital documents to PASI (Provincial Approach to Student Information) to effectively support students as they move from school to school, teacher to teacher and grade to grade.

A current teacher, or a teacher that is receiving a new student, will have immediate access to digital student information. The current process requires physical records to be stored and transferred manually, which can lead to significant delays when attempting to access student information. Having quicker access to these records will allow teachers to determine the best ways to support each student.

Battle River School Division is working on processes to obtain this goal. This will be at least a two year process because as you can imagine we have thousands of records that need to be uploaded.

Each student record needs to be complete in order for the School Division to receive funding from Alberta Education for each student. For example, if we do not have a birth certificate on file for a student we will not receive funding. Please, as a parent, make sure any documents requested from your school are provided to the Administrative Assistant as soon as possible.

As a School Council, please share that information with other parents!