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# ST. BENEDICT SCHOOL

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2024-2025 School Council Annual Report

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# School Council Annual Report

## 1. Names of Executive

- Co-Chair: Lindsay Whittaker
- Co-Chair: Chris Self
- Other Members: Fran Tofa-Chizanga

## 2. Number of Meetings Throughout the Year

- Total Meetings Held: 6 (including AGM)
- Meeting Dates:
  - AGM - October 2024 (arranged by Administration only, as no active executive were continuing from the previous year)
  - 1<sup>st</sup> meeting – December 2024
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting – January 2025
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting – March 2025
  - 4<sup>th</sup> meeting – May 2025 (Joint Planning with Fundraising Society and Administration)
  - 5<sup>th</sup> meeting – June 2025

## 3. Average Number of Attendees

- Average Attendance: 3
- Notable Trends: the AGM and first meeting of the Council were only attended by one parent and school administration; after the Christmas Concert's and announcements and engagements with the parents at the school, the membership increased to a total of 3 parents, and administration for the rest of the meeting. The best attended meeting was the May 2025 planning meeting, with 9 individuals (between council, fundraising society and administration).

## 4. Council Composition

- **Community Members or Secondary Students Involved:** No (no students as it's elementary school, but no community members this year).
- **Explanation:** All of council are parents of children at the school, and efforts throughout the year to increase communication and engagement of parents in all grades were made by council members and Administration. Considerable scheduling challenges for parents

remain, and the school council is consideration earlier invitations for members to attend for 2025-26 school year, and more regular communication with the whole school.

## 5. Key Areas of Focus

### Area 1: Rebuilding

- Activities:
  - All previous school council members resigned at the end of 2023-24 year, save for Ms. Whittaker; Ms. Whittaker became council chairperson at the AGM.
  - Ms. Whittaker attended the Council of School Council's meeting October 15 to meet other school council reps and learn from their experiences.
  - Ms. Whittaker registered for the Alberta School Council's Association (ASCA), thanks to the board's agreement to pay for councils to be registered ASCA members in 2024-25.
  - Ms. Whittaker coordinated with the fundraising society to hold a joint planning session between both groups and Administration in May 2025. This is the first of this kind of session since the start of the fundraising society and was a good meeting of the minds opportunity to really talk candidly with each other about the growth of students, the benefits of a plan to administration and the school and its teaching staff.
- Challenges:
  - Considerable energy and focused efforts to rebuild trust with the fundraising society, and repair fractured relationships between Council, fundraising society and Administration were necessary to allow for the council to move forward.
  - Record keeping was a significant challenge for the newly incoming chairperson, and the resetting of the website and email access took time – delaying the Council getting started again.

### Area 2: Early Elementary Parent Engagement

- Activities:
  - Council prioritized focusing parent engagement efforts on ECS/Kinder, Grade 1 and Grade 2 for this school year. It was thought that rebuilding community and engagement of the youngest students and families in the school, might allow for increased family involvement in upcoming years.
  - Council will monitor if their efforts at this early elementary engagement have made any change in parent engagement with the school council, or with volunteering at the school.

- District staff K. Baisley provided several engagement sessions for parents within STAR Catholic and also joined the first couple meetings of the school council to provide additional ideas on parent engagement and supports for the implementation of the Third Path at St. Bens.
- Challenges:
  - Due to council only being one person for the first 4 months of the school year, the co-chairperson had to rely on administration and district office support for priority activity development and options for parent engagement.
  - Most parents do not know about the Third Path, and the chairperson was able to provide a brief review of it with the new members that joined in January 2025; however, it would be important to have an increased focus on this 'way' of approaching the school and the community at St. Bens in the future.

### Area 3: Reviewing Operating Procedures.

- Activities:
  - The School Council operating procedures were rewritten and updated considerably to reflect changes in the school board policies, changes in administration priorities and changes in Alberta Education's expectations of councils as per regulation.
  - Necessary to ensure that the Council was functioning according to legislation and policy again.
  - Revised operating procedures were shared with school administration for review and will be provided to the members of the school and/or community who attend the 2025-26 AGM for approval.
- Challenges:
  - Operating procedures were significantly outdated, and so much research on the ASCA and Alberta Education sites was required; other school council policies from STAR Catholic schools were used to ensure alignment and borrow from best practices.

## 6. Advisory/Consultation Activities

### School-Level Engagement

- *Budget*: Brief review of the upcoming budget areas provided by the Administration at the May 2025 meeting.
- *Education Plan*: Education plan was reviewed also at the May 2025 meeting, jointly with the fundraising society for use in the development of the shared plan for the next three years.

- *School Fees:* There are limited school fees as much of the ‘additional’ fees were covered by the fundraising society; thank you PEACE! There were no concerns noted from council around school fees in the 2024-25 year.

## Division-Level Engagement

- *Council of School Councils (COSC):* attended the COSC and engaged in the activities. Co-chair appreciated hearing about challenges from others and was able to recognize the issues experienced at St. Bens are not limited to this school.
- *Trustee Engagement:* Attended the Divisional engagement day, and talked through the 2023-2027 key goals and priorities of the Board. The survey results from the whole Division were useful information and could be used when reviewing the local school specific survey results as well.

## 7. Alberta School Council Engagement Grant

- *Accessed Grant Money:* Yes
- *Utilization:*  
Event for Kindergarten Grad, including Where You will Go wishing wall, carnival and other activities meant to include the parents in the school environment and build engagement-seeking and interest; trying to ensure that these parents continue within the St. Bens school parent community in future years. Craft materials for parent engagement were purchased and utilized; the PEACE Society provided food and drinks for the event; the ASCE grant money was not used for those.

## 8. Alberta School Councils’ Association (ASCA) Involvement

- *Utilization of ASCA Resources:* Yes
- *AGM and Conference Attendance:* No did not attend, however AGM materials were reviewed, but no active advocacy was undertaken by the Council this year, and there were no AGM issues of relevance for Council.

## 9. Suggestions for Future COSC Meetings

- Continued engagement focus is helpful, sharing of the operating procedures via a website, or an ongoing COSC’s web forum or google classroom to share resources would be very useful.