

# **Are School Community Councils Realizing their Mandate?**

**Presenter: Ted Amendt**



# What does the SCC do?

- **If I were to ask you what the primary role of your SCC is, what would you say it is?**

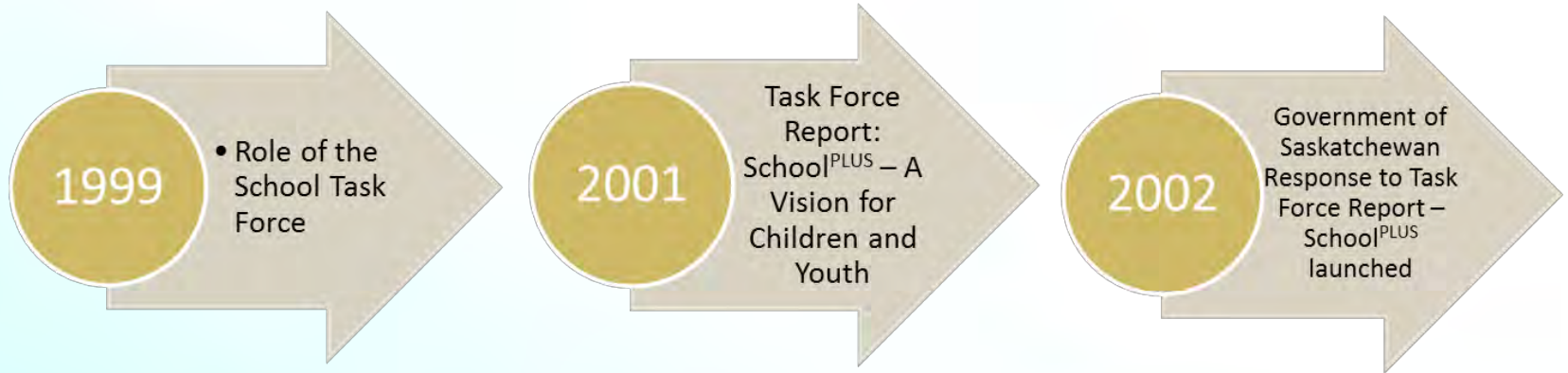


# What Brings Me to This?

- **2016 Adopted Resolution**
- **20+ years in Saskatchewan's K-12 education sector**
- **Team member at outset of development of SCCs**
- **SSBA employee – recently completed SCC evaluation report**
- **PhD Candidate at University of Saskatchewan**
- **Parent, researcher, policy-maker. Passion for family and community engagement in schools.**



# Historical Timeline



# Historical Timeline (cont'd)



# Historical Timeline (cont'd)



# SCC Mandate

The purpose of SCCs is to “develop shared responsibility for the learning success and well-being of all children and youth; and, encourage and facilitate parent and community engagement in school planning and improvement processes.”

(Saskatchewan Learning, 2005, p. 8)



# SCC Mandate

The School Community Council facilitates parent and community participation in school planning, and provides advice to the board of education and the school's staff.

*(The Education Act, 1995)*





# SCC Mandate

In co-operation with the school staff, the SCC is to develop and recommend to its board of education for approval a school level plan that is in accordance with the board of education's strategic plan.

*(The Education Regulations, 2015)*



# Interesting Facts

- School council structures exist across Canada.
- Nearly all have a clear mandate to support student learning and achievement.
- They have varying degrees of autonomy.
- There is a sense of a mandate not achieved.

(Carlson 2013; Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2011)



# SCC Evaluation

- **Collaborative study with the SSBA.**
- **120 participants:**
  - SCC urban members
  - SCC rural members
  - School board members and Directors
  - Education partners and those with responsibilities for SCCs.



# SCC Evaluation Findings

- **A Sense of a Mandate Not Achieved**
  - “You just bake things like back in the 50’s”. (SCC member)
  - “There is a lack of awareness of what the mandate is.” (SCC member)



# SCC Evaluation Findings

- **Beliefs and assumptions impact on SCCs achieving their mandate.**
  - “Unless SCC members are former teachers, administrators, learning coaches or reading, writing or math specialists, they have a difficult time giving their input on how schools should be teaching students.” (Board member/Directors group)
  - “I think it is asking a lot of new immigrants to weigh in on strategic plan – they are not ready for it – it is too much for my newcomers.” (Education Partners Group)
  - I haven’t found that the SCC can make that goal on their own – it is driven by the school administration.” (Education Partners Group)



# SCC Evaluation Findings

- **The Key Role of the Principal**
- **“The administrator is the key. Our administrative team is three lovely people. The tone, attitude, acceptance of the principal to invite and engage community to be involved.” (SCC member)**



# SCC Evaluation Findings

- **Fundraising**
- ***Alice in Wonderland.*** Alice asks the Cheshire cat, “Would you tell me please which way I ought to go from here?” “That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” the cat tells her. “I don’t much care,” Alice says. “Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” the cat replies.



# SCC Evaluation Findings

- **Providing Adequate Supports, and Creating New Supports for SCCs**
- **Supports are in place, however, these are inconsistent across schools/school divisions.**
- **A division-wide forum for SCCs to network and engage with the board of education and senior school division officials.**





# SCC Evaluation Findings

- **Making the SCC an Inviting Structure**
- **2011 Evaluation – SCC structure “too intimidating.”**
- **Acknowledgement that the perception remains that the SCC is too intimidating for some parents, particularly Indigenous and newcomers.**



# Table Dialogue

- **What's your reaction to the findings?**
  - **SCCs are not focused on their mandate.**
  - **Beliefs and assumptions about SCCs.**
  - **Key role of the Principal.**
  - **Fundraising**
  - **Adequate supports for SCCs?**
  - **SCCs “too intimidating”.**



# The Role of Boards

- **At your tables please discuss.**
  - **Direction: What can boards of education do to re-focus SCCs on their mandate? What supports are required?**
  - **Control: What do boards of education require to gain reasonable assurance that SCCs are delivering on their mandate?**



# Things to Pay Attention To

- **Switch business approach to partnership approach (Bryan & Henry, 2012; Henderson, Mapp, Johnson & Davies, 2007).**
- **Develop trust and relationships.**
- **Examine beliefs and assumptions when it comes to engaging families and communities (Pushor & Amendt, 2018; Kirby & DiPaola, 2011).**



# Closing

- Questions???
- Something you are taking away ...
- Thank You!!



# Presented By

**Ted Amendt, PhD Candidate  
College of Education**

**University of Saskatchewan**

**[tamendt@saskschoolboards.ca](mailto:tamendt@saskschoolboards.ca)**

**306-569-0751 ext. 141**

**<https://saskschoolboards.ca/wp-content/uploads/SCC-Evaluation-Research-Report.pdf>**

