

MINISTER'S Youth Council

Frequently Asked Questions

1. General Information for Students

What is the Minister's Youth Council?

The Minister's Youth Council will be a team of approximately 32 Alberta junior and senior high students who will provide input to the Minister and the Ministry of Education on provincial education initiatives. The Council members will bring diverse interests, identities, backgrounds and perspectives from all across Alberta.

What is expected of members of the Minister's Youth Council?

The Minister's Youth Council will have an important role in the education system. Working at the provincial level, all Council members will:

- Be active and responsible members.
- Be available to attend all meetings.
- Share the diverse student perspective with the Minister of Education.
- Work with one another and Alberta Education staff to provide input on education issues. Interact with each other outside of meetings to discuss ideas and upcoming activities.

What is the time commitment for Council members?

Council members will serve a ten-month term, aligned with the school year. They will attend three meetings to be held:

- September 29 - October 2, 2017
- February 2 - 5, 2018
- May 4 - 7, 2018

Note: Dates could be subject to change.

Each meeting will begin Friday evening and run through to Monday afternoon. There will also be time between meetings that Council members will use technology to discuss ideas and upcoming activities.

Where will the meetings be held?

The three meetings will be held in Edmonton at the Bennett Centre, <http://bennettcentre.epsb.ca/>. All overnight accommodations, meals and snacks, meeting rooms and outdoor activity areas are provided at the Bennett Centre.

Do I have to take care of my own travel arrangements?

No, all your travel and accommodation needs will be taken care of by the Government of Alberta. The government will book and pay for your travel.

School or school district representatives are not required to accompany or chaperone Council members.

Will someone meet me at the airport or bus station when I arrive in Edmonton?

Yes, an adult chaperone will meet you and ensure that you get to the Bennett Centre safely. At the end of the meeting on Monday, an adult chaperone will accompany you to the airport or bus station for your return home.

Will there be chaperones with us at all times?

Government of Alberta staff, which includes certificated teachers, will provide supervision at all times. There will be 1 adult chaperone for every 6 students.

Will there be guidelines and expectations to ensure welcoming, caring, respectful and safe environments for all Council members?

Yes, all Council members and their parents or legal guardians will be made aware of expectations for student behavior and conduct, including the responsible use of digital technologies. Council members will be provided training to understand their responsibilities and with their parents or legal guardians be required to sign an acknowledgment of behavior and conduct expectations.

What will I do at the meetings?

The Council members will work along with the Minister and ministry representatives to provide input on education issues that impact students. As authentic partners, Council members may act as planners, advisors, researchers, participants, respondents, facilitators, and presenters.

Am I an official student representative for my school district?

No, the members of the Minister's Youth Council will form a representative group of Alberta students, not of their school districts.

Will there be accommodations for special needs and/or circumstances?

Yes, accommodations will be provided by Government of Alberta staff, according to your specific situation.

Will there be free time?

All Council members will remain at the Bennett Centre throughout each meeting from Friday evening through to Monday afternoon. In addition to the work of the Council, a variety of recreational activities will be included. Supervision will be provided at all times.

If I am selected for the Minister's Youth Council, what happens next?

The selected Council members will be notified by the end of June 2017. Information packages will be sent to Council members, and their parents or legal guardians, with more information to help prepare for the meetings.

2. Application Process for the Minister's Youth Council

How do I apply?

There is a link to the application package on the Alberta Education website at education.alberta.ca/myc.

The process includes 4 steps for you to complete:

1. **Read these Frequently Asked Questions carefully to understand the role and responsibilities of the Minister's Youth Council.**
2. **Share the information and discuss your interest to apply with your parents or legal guardians. If you are younger than 18 years old, your application must include signed parent/guardian consent.**
3. **Complete the application package.**
4. **Mail the completed package, to Alberta Education.**

Alberta Education Strategic Engagement Branch
Attention: Student Engagement
2nd Floor, 44 Capital Boulevard
10044 – 108 Street
Edmonton, AB T5J 5E6

What is the deadline to submit my application?

Application packages must be sent by mail and must be postmarked by **May 5, 2017**. Late applications will not be accepted.

Why can I only send in my application by mail?

The protection of your information is important to us and in order to reduce the risk of unauthorized interception of unencrypted email, we will not accept applications via email.

How long will it take me to fill out the application?

Please plan to spend a few hours to work on your application to ensure that it is the best possible, and most accurate, representation of yourself. This is the information that Alberta Education will use for the selection process.

Can I put forward someone else's name?

No. Each applicant must complete and submit their own application.

I need more space to answer the application questions. What should I do?

You are welcome to add additional pages to your application.

What happens if I need to withdraw from the Council?

If you feel you are unable to meet your obligations to the Council, contact us at 780-638-3153, or education.alberta.ca/studentengagement. We do not replace students who withdraw from the Council.

Can I apply again another year to become a member of the Minister's Youth Council?

If you have already applied and you were not selected, you are welcome to apply another year as long as you will be attending junior or senior high school.

3. Selection Process for the Minister's Youth Council

What happens to my application once I submit it?

After the application deadline of May 5, 2017, Alberta Education staff will review and evaluate the applications received.

How will you ensure an open, transparent and inclusive selection process?

The Minister is committed to a transparent process for selecting members to this Council. He wants you to know what he is looking for and to feel welcome to apply.

To ensure that the selection process is open, transparent and inclusive, students will be selected for the Council based on the principles set out in *Alberta's Public Agency's* selection criteria:

- **Diversity:** The recruitment and selection process will honour and promote diversity on the Council. If you are reading this, and you are a junior or senior high school student attending school in Alberta, you are eligible to apply.
- **Competency:** The criteria for selecting Council members will be based on creating a Council that collectively, has the skill-set and the mind-set needed to meet the needs and nature of the Council as a whole. If you can demonstrate a passion for education and a strong desire to share your voice, you are encouraged to apply. You can read more about the competencies the Minister is looking for below.
- **Consistency:** The recruitment and selection processes will be applied consistently for all individuals selected by the provincial selection team to the Council.
- **Transparent & Openness:** The recruitment and selection process will be clear, publicly available and communicated to students, parents, teachers and our education partners. The Minister will take steps to ensure that as many students as possible are invited to apply to the Council and that the final 32 students selected to the Council will be disclosed to the public by a public announcement and online publication.

How will Alberta Education select the members of the Minister's Youth Council?

For this council to be meaningful, the Minister needs a team of students who have a broad and diverse range of life experiences, knowledge, and skills. To make this happen, he will be using the competencies listed below to identify members for his Minister's Youth Council.

Competency Area	Critical Competencies	Brief Description
Your Experience and Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience with Alberta's education system• Demonstrated commitment to community• A unique perspective based on life experience	The applicant has experiences and knowledge that are relevant and valuable to the Council.
Personal Effectiveness Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrated experience leading others and or contributing to a team• Strategic thinking/planning• Critical and creative thinking/problem solving	The applicant has skills that will be of value to the Council.

To help with your application, some of the qualities, knowledge and skills are provided that the Minister hopes to see. You may also identify other qualities and the Minister is very interested in hearing about those, too. Remember, his goal is to have a well-rounded Minister's Youth Council that can provide him with advice and opinion about your education experience in Alberta.

Relevant Experience and Knowledge	
Your experience and knowledge	You have spoken out about things that matter and have worked to make a positive difference. You definitely have had some life experience that gives you insight into what it means to be human and can use that insight to influence others. You value people and ideas. You are curious about the world around you and you take action to learn more.
Commitment to community	You have experience contributing to the community. It could be your school community, or communities outside of school. You may have influenced students, parents, teachers, principals or community members to take positive action. You demonstrate the ability to build networks and foster trusting relationships with those you interact with.
Personal Effectiveness Skills	
Leadership and Teamwork Skills	You have a demonstrated ability to inspire, motivate, and offer direction and leadership to others. You can demonstrate an understanding of the importance of teamwork. This may include an ability to inspire a shared vision for a better world, the skill of recognizing and valuing the contributions of others and or a demonstrated ability to others to do great work. You might have some experience with leading a group, a club, or a team. You might lead a team at work or in a volunteer capacity.
Strategic Thinking and Planning Skills	You have an ability to think strategically about opportunities and challenges that face you. You can anticipate what might happen and plan accordingly. You may have managed a budget, planned for an event or organized a trip. You can demonstrate that people come to you for advice and suggestions for how to move forward.
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills	You can demonstrate the ability to apply critical thinking to creatively assess situations and to generate new or innovative solutions to challenges. This can include identifying potential risks and devising plans to minimize the impact of those risks.

What happens after the applications are reviewed?

The provincial selection team will select applicants to be interviewed. If you are chosen to proceed to this second stage of the selection process, you, and your parents or legal guardians, will be contacted by early June 2017.

What will the interview be like?

You will be asked more questions related to your relevant experience and knowledge, and personal effectiveness skills. The interview will be a phone or video conference, and be under 30 minutes in length.

How do I prepare for my interview if I am selected?

Most importantly, be yourself. Similar to your completed application, we want to learn as much as we can about your unique interests, identities, background and perspectives, so that we are able to create a diverse Minister’s Youth Council.

How will I be notified if I am selected for the Minister’s Youth Council?

The students chosen as Council members will be contacted by Alberta Education staff by the end of June 2017. All applicants will receive notification that the process has been completed and Council members have been selected.

Will I get paid to be a member of the Minister’s Youth Council?

No; however, all meal, accommodation and travel costs will be covered when you attend the meetings.

4. Information for Parents and Legal Guardians

How is the personal information in the application used?

As stated in the collection notice included at the bottom of each page of the application package, the personal information provided by students in this application will be used for two purposes:

1. Selecting members of the Minister's Youth Council.
2. Administering the Minister's Youth Council program, including communicating with members of the Minister's Youth Council about events.

If my child is selected for the Minister's Youth Council, will their personal information be publicized?

This information is included in the authorization and declaration form that is included in the application package. By signing, parents or guardians understand that if their child is selected to participate in the Minister's Youth Council a public profile limited to name, photo, and brief description of their child's skill set will be publicly disclosed by Alberta Education through department newsletters, websites, and social media accounts to promote and advertise the Minister's Youth Council and its activities.

Do I have to sign an authorization form in order for my child to travel and attend the Minister's Youth Council meetings?

Yes, you will be provided with detailed information prior to the first meeting. Your consent is required for your child to participate the meetings.

As a parent, can I accompany my child on their way to their meetings with the Minister's Youth Council? Can I stay for the meetings?

You can travel with your child before and after the Minister's Youth Council meetings; however, you will have to assume all of your own travel and accommodation costs (hotel, meals). Parents may not attend the meetings.

Do I have to pay anything for my child to attend the Minister's Youth Council meetings?

No, all costs associated with travel and accommodations (meal and transportation included) will be covered by the Government of Alberta.

Will there be adult supervision for my child at all times during the Minister's Youth Council meetings?

Yes, adult supervisors will be onsite throughout the meeting from Friday evening through to Monday afternoon. A ratio of supervisors to students will be 1 for every 6 students. Council members will be required to remain onsite at the Bennett Centre at all times.

Will students have unsupervised time or be able to leave the meeting site?

No, adult supervisors will be onsite from Friday evening through to Monday afternoon.

If my child has special accommodations/needs, will those be addressed?

Yes, we will accommodate youth with disabilities and work with individual situations.