

■ An Election Experience

Can you think of times when someone has represented you? Or you have represented others? When you are a group leader or spokesperson, you represent the members of your group. For example, when a classmate attends a school meeting, he or she represents your class. Representation in government works much the same way.

A student government represents the interests and voices of students when making decisions. These decisions affect everyone. A student government can also take responsibility for leadership tasks related to a school or classroom project or action plan.

The election experience you are about to have is based on processes in the *Election Act*, which is the legislation governing electoral procedure in Alberta.

vote **act** representation leadership
student government



Does your school already have a student government? How are you represented? What opportunities are there for students to show leadership?

As a class, decide what type of student election you will hold. Identify whether your election will be held in your school, with other classrooms or in your classroom only.

What should the responsibilities of your student government be? Think about this question as you prepare to hold a student election. Make a list and check it with other classmates.

Find Out More

The **Voting and Elections** section of the **Building Future Voters** elementary webpage provides some information about voting processes.

Go to www.buildingfuturevoters.ca and explore the information and examples.

People must meet conditions to be eligible to vote in a provincial election in Alberta. A person must be:

1. A Canadian citizen
2. 18 years old or older
3. Ordinarily resident in Alberta for at least six months prior to polling day

People who are guilty of corrupt practices during an election are excluded from voting. Section 45 of the *Election Act* identifies people who are not eligible to vote.



How will you establish voter eligibility in your election?

In some ways, your school is like an **electoral division**. Your classroom is like a **polling subdivision**. In a provincial election, each electoral division must elect a representative. In order to vote, each eligible voter must **register**, or identify themselves by adding their name to the List of Electors. Voting takes place in **polling places** within each polling subdivision.



Why do you think it is important that all voters register?

In most provincial elections, there are issues that people are concerned about. Your student election will be focused on issues that are important to your class. The issues may relate directly to your classroom or school. They may also be issues related to a project that your class or school is working on.



What issues do you think will be important in your election?



Make It Matter

Make your student election matter for your action project. What actions or policies are important for the candidates' election campaigns? Consider strategies like these, depending on your project.

- **Communicate and lobby for change** with your MLA or the government by making a presentation, sending a letter, sharing research and findings or sending an invitation to meet with the class.
- **Implement the project in the classroom or school** by holding a school awareness campaign, organizing student meetings or working groups or holding lunch hour take-action meetings.
- **Implement the project in the community** by preparing a community information night, holding a press conference, organizing a public service announcement or campaign or organizing a mini-conference.

Encourage your candidates to campaign on the basis of how they promote your action project.



Did You Know

The *Election Act* is the main legislation that guides elections in Alberta. It sets out the rules and procedures that must be followed to ensure that elections are fair and impartial. Elections Alberta is responsible for making sure the *Election Act* is followed. They must remain independent from any political party or government in power.