

Purpose/Background

Rocky View Schools is situated in Treaty 7 territory which includes the Niitsitapi (the Blackfoot, made up of the Siksika, Piikani, Kainai Nations), Stoney Nakoda (made up of the Goodstoney, Bearspaw, Chiniki nations), Tsuut'ina Nation, and the Otipemisiwak Métis Government of the Métis Nation within Alberta District 4.

The RVS land acknowledgement is an RVS action that is based upon the Government of Canada's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation final report. It is also supported through the commitment made by Alberta Education through the new Superintendent, Leadership, and Teaching Quality Standards (effective Sept 2019) that require a commitment to: 'Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit' and 'Fostering Relationships.'

RVS has created a Land Acknowledgement through a collaborative process with local Indigenous community members, elders, parents and students. Through the development of the land acknowledgement, our collaboration has been ongoing and based on reciprocity.

Why do we say a Land Acknowledgement? What is the purpose?

- The Land Acknowledgement is an act of reconciliation and is meant to honour and respect both the land and the Indigenous Peoples in our local area.
- The Land Acknowledgement recognizes a longer history reaching beyond introduction of settlers. Indigenous peoples are known as 'stewards of the land' and have a connectedness to the land and all things.
- The Land Acknowledgement is meant to be an expression of gratitude and appreciation. As settlers, we should consider how we situate ourselves on this land in order to understand our place in history.
- To honour the land allows us to acknowledge history, peoples, and the future.
- The Land Acknowledgement may start the conversations about Canadian history and may be one gesture to help us to move forward together with Indigenous peoples as equal partners.
- It is meant to create a more welcoming environment for Indigenous students and to provide a culture of safe and caring schools for everyone.

Understanding a Land Acknowledgement?

- The Land Acknowledgement is an opening acknowledgement (formal statement) to be used at RVS and school public events.
- It is a way to welcome visitors to our schools and to acknowledge the place (the land) on which we meet and to recognize the Indigenous Nations and First Peoples that have lived on these lands for tens of thousands of years.

Procedures

1. Land Acknowledgement will be made through the following statement in English and/or French:
 - In English:
Rocky View Schools would like to acknowledge the land and recognize all the Indigenous Peoples whose footprints have marked these lands from time immemorial. Together, we can learn and honour the ways of knowing of Indigenous Peoples for all future generations.
 - In French:
Rocky View Schools aimerait reconnaître le territoire sur laquelle nous sommes accueillis et tous les peuples autochtones dont les empreintes ont marqué ces terres des temps immémoriaux. Ensemble, nous pouvons apprendre et honorer les modes de connaissances des peuples autochtones pour toutes les générations futures.
2. All Rocky View Schools' administrators and staff are expected to understand the meaning and intent of the Land Acknowledgement. They should be prepared to answer any questions regarding this action. Teachers are expected to support students' understanding and knowledge of the RVS Land Acknowledgement.
3. RVS staff are encouraged to use the Land Acknowledgement at the beginning of events that are hosted for the public to welcome all guests.
 - 3.1. State the Land Acknowledgement clearly when welcoming and opening the event, then followed by the agenda of the gathering, or introductions of the events to take place.
 - 3.2. It can also be used at times when schools and staff are gathered together in reflection and celebration. Examples include:
 - Graduations
 - Assemblies
 - School council meetings
 - Board meetings
4. The Land Acknowledgement should be said by the emcee (host) of the event, for example: the principal, lead student, or teacher.
5. For more assistance or clarity regarding the Land Acknowledgement, please contact the Indigenous Learning Branch.

Please note: If the emcee (host) does not have a clear understanding or belief in using the Land Acknowledgement, please find a suitable person to make the statement. The Land Acknowledgement is only meaningful if it is understood and sincere in its delivery.

Reference:

- Truth and Reconciliation Final Report Executive Summary
- Alberta Education Leadership Quality Standards
- Alberta Education Teaching Quality Standards
- Alberta Education Superintendent Leadership Quality Standards