

THE BRIEF

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS



ROCKY VIEW SCHOOLS

April 28, 2022

Prairie Waters Students Create Outdoor Learning Space for their School

- Student leaders from Prairie Waters Elementary School presented information about the school's new Outdoor Learning Space to trustees. After identifying an opportunity to repurpose unused outdoor space, the students initiated and developed a plan to better use the space as a learning environment with each student taking responsibility for an aspect of the project.
- Creating the space was a school-wide team effort bringing all grades together to move materials, build garden boxes, and plant and nurture the garden.
- Fundraising for future enhancement of the space is ongoing as the students continue to dream big and imagine how else they might create engaging and fun ways to take the classroom outside.
- Students also played a video they had created about their experience that was shared at the Shaping the Future conference they attended in Kananaskis in April.

Board Receives Funding Profile from Alberta Government

- On March 24, the provincial government released funding profiles for school divisions in Alberta.
- Total funding for RVS in 2022/23 is \$244.1 million, compared with \$236.8 million in 2021/22. While this slight increase aligns with the government's budget commitment to maintain or increase funding provided to the education system, there are some areas that are reduced from previous years.
- As part of their work to develop the RVS 2022/23 budget proposal, Administration and the Board Budget Committee will engage in deeper conversation and exploration of how the government has allocated funding and the needs of the division to support schools and student success. This proposal will come forward for the Board's consideration by the end of May 2022.
- As the fifth largest school board in Alberta that continues to experience rapid student enrolment increases due to significant growth in RVS communities, it is critical RVS continues to see increases in funding from the province.
- Administration continues to work with the Board's Budget Committee to develop the 2022/23 budget proposal.

RVS Prepares Teachers and Administrators for New Curriculum

- With the final new curriculum for limited grades and subject areas recently released by government, RVS' implementation plans are underway to support teachers and school administrators as they prepare to teach the new mandatory curriculum beginning in September 2022. Professional learning, resources and other supports have been developed by both RVS and the provincial government and will be provided to administrators and teachers responsible for Kindergarten – Grade 3 English Language Arts & Literature (ELA&L), Kindergarten – Grade 3 Mathematics and Kindergarten – Grade 6 Physical

Education & Wellness (PE&W). Instructional and assessment practices will be the focus during learning sessions as RVS prepares to implement new curriculum.

- The Board continues to express concern about the availability of resources and supports for teachers, administrators and students during and after implementation of the new curriculum. While government has set aside some funding province-wide for school divisions, it is not clear if this will be sufficient.
- The division thanks the families and staff who participated in RVS and/or government-led engagements on the draft curriculum this past year. This important feedback, along with input from school authorities and other stakeholders across the province, helped to influence changes to the drafts and the government's decision to stagger curriculum implementation.

Board Continues to Advocate for Review of Provincial High School Diploma Exams

- In response to disruptions caused by the pandemic, and with feedback from RVS communities, the Board wrote to the Minister of Education advocating for diploma exams to be optional in 2020/21 and 2021/22 and has supported the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) advocacy efforts on this important topic.
- The Board voted in favour of advancing the following position statement through the Alberta School Boards Association:
 - *ASBA advocate to the Ministry of Education to review provincial high school diploma exams and assessment with the goal of improving how assessment is conducted and what outcomes are measured.*
- If the position statement gains majority support at the Zone 5 meeting May 6, it will be submitted to ASBA at their Fall General Meeting for consideration.

Province Denies Requests for New Modulars and Funding to Relocate Units

- In November 2021, a request for 18 new modulars was made to government and in March 2022, having not received a response, the Board requested funding of \$1.6 million to move 10 modular units within the division as a necessary and short-term solution to help alleviate the overcrowding in schools in Airdrie and Cochrane. A letter was received April 21 in which the Minister denied both requests, citing a lack of funding for what it considers to be new projects in budget 2022/23.
- The Board is extremely disappointed in this response from government. Investing in space for students improves students' opportunity and ability to learn and be successful. While the Board has no other choice but to use division funds to relocate the modular units, this further highlights the need to build awareness and support of the growing critical need for more space for students as enrolment increases across the division.