

# THE BRIEF

## BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS



ROCKY VIEW SCHOOLS

Nov. 24, 2022

### Student Showcase – Westbrook Students Get Back to Nature

- On Sept. 15, students from Westbrook School went on a field trip to the Des Crossley Demonstration Forest, 25 kilometres southwest of Rocky Mountain House. During their visit, the students engaged in experiential learning about science curriculum topics, including trees and forests for Grade 6 and interactions and ecosystems for Grade 7. The Des Crossley Demonstration Forest was once a research site used to learn about forest harvesting and regrowth.
- This field trip was an example of students engaging in real-world, hands-on learning experiences that matter to them – one of the outcomes of RVS' Four-Year Education Plan.

### 2023 Calendar Adjustment Required for Provincial Achievement Tests

- To accommodate a return to pre-set, fixed administration dates for all Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) instituted by the provincial government for the current school year, trustees approved a change to the 2022/23 operational calendar.
- Originally, Jan. 30, 2023, was allocated as a professional learning day across RVS; however, this is now an instructional day for all students and they will be in school.
- The professional development day will move to Feb. 10, 2023.

### Trustees Approve 2021/22 Audited Financial Statement

- For the 2021/22 year, revenues were \$293.0 million, and expenses were \$302.3 million resulting in a deficit of \$9.3 million; however, after adjustments for amortization and capital purchases the net reduction to operating reserves was \$8.8 million. The budgeted deficit and reduction of operating reserves were expected to be \$10.5 million. Operating reserves have a current balance of \$13.3 million.
- In 2021/22, the pandemic continued to impact RVS, resulting in fewer dollars being spent than anticipated and the division receiving incremental government funding to support learning disruption in grades 1 – 3. In addition, Alberta Education introduced a weighted moving average adjustment in 2020/21 which resulted in unbudgeted revenue. We focused these additional funds in schools by making one-time enhancements to schools through additional maintenance projects and purchasing required furniture and equipment.
- RVS was required to pay for relocating 10 modular classrooms around the division resulting in an unanticipated decrease to reserves of \$1.6 million. This was an unfortunate but necessary step as Alberta Education denied our initial request for modulars classrooms and our later request to fund relocation costs for existing units.
- Alberta school boards must have audited financial statements prepared each year and submitted to Alberta Education by Nov. 30.
- RVS' 2021-2022 Annual Financial Statement is available online at [rockyview.ab.ca](https://rockyview.ab.ca)

## Advocacy Resources Focus on RVS' Greatest Need, Space for Students

- RVS' greatest challenge, most critical need and the focus of our advocacy efforts is Space for Students. We urgently need more Space for Students in Airdrie, Cochrane and Chestermere.
- RVS has more than 27,600 students and welcomes another 750 to 1,000 each year – enough to fill one to two new schools, but no new schools have been approved for the division since 2019.
- Provincial government approval and funding for new schools, additions and modular classrooms, and ensuring municipalities prioritize school sites are critical to accommodate our fast-growing communities. Investing in space for students improves students' opportunity and ability to learn and achieve their absolute best. Without this approval, many of our students will learn in schools and classrooms without appropriate space for years to come.
- The Advocacy Committee has been very active on this critical priority and multiple resources have been developed to support advocacy efforts.
  - Infographics with data and facts have been created for the division overall and the communities of Airdrie, Cochrane and Chestermere.
  - Information for parents/guardians and other stakeholders has been created regarding how to Share Your Story with government and other decision-makers.
  - All these resources are available on our public website at - [rockyview.ab.ca/about\\_rvs/board\\_of\\_trustees/advocacy\\_priorities](https://rockyview.ab.ca/about_rvs/board_of_trustees/advocacy_priorities)
  - Additional materials will be developed and added to the website as part of the Board's ongoing advocacy efforts.
- The Board shared this information recently with school council chairs, all RVS staff and local media. Trustees also met with the Honourable Nathan Cooper, MLA for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills; the Honourable Pete Guthrie, MLA for Airdrie-Cochrane; Leela Aheer, MLA for Chestermere-Strathmore; Angela Pitt, MLA for Airdrie-East; Miranda Rosin, MLA for Banff-Kananaskis; and all but one of our local municipalities/regional governments serving RVS families to discuss the urgent situation. Most recently a letter was sent to the Honourable Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Education to provide an update on space needs and advocacy efforts.

## RVS Board Connects with School Boards Across Alberta at Association Fall General Meeting

- All RVS trustees attended the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Fall General Meeting (FGM) in Edmonton Nov. 21-22. The ASBA is the provincial organization representing all 61 Public, Separate and Francophone school boards in the province.
- The FGM provided trustees with the opportunity to connect with school boards and colleagues from across the province, discuss and debate provincial education policy and advocacy, as well as participate in governance and leadership professional learning sessions.
- Minister of Education Adriana LaGrange provided updates on government commitments to education and highlighted the mandate and focus of the Ministry of Education over the next few months as outlined in the mandate letter received from the Premier earlier this month. Premier Danielle Smith also addressed the membership.
- Attendance at the ASBA FGM is extremely valuable for the Board, and trustees are appreciative of the ASBA's efforts in supporting publicly elected school boards across the province in fulfilling the association's vision of inspiring exceptional school board governance.