

# THE BRIEF

## BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS



ROCKY VIEW SCHOOLS

Sept. 5, 2024

### Exemplary Practice – Innovative Initiative Aims to Increase Literacy

An approach to increase student literacy skills has been introduced at Bow Valley High School (BVHS). Word Walls have been created throughout the school and provide staff across all disciplines with an accessible strategy to engage in literacy instruction that can easily be implemented in all learning spaces. The strategy models the importance of vocabulary acquisition, and the strategies used to decode and make meaning. A school-wide focus on common vocabulary increases students' abilities to comprehend what they are reading and being asked to do in all subject areas.

During this presentation, Principal Shane Dempster and English teachers Sara Douglas and Jenisse Galloway told the Board of Trustees (the Board) of Rocky View Schools (RVS) about how the program improved students' literacy skills. They believe partnering with other high schools to create and compare shared vocabulary and best practices in strategic and specific instruction in reading with adolescents would be beneficial to both teaching staff and students.

### Year Two Report – Strategic Plan

In December 2022, in alignment with Board Policy 9, the Board approved a multi-year strategic plan for the division which includes goals, objectives and measures. The goals of the Strategic Plan are:

- Improving our students' learning;
- Strengthening our workforce;
- Bolstering our infrastructure; and
- Connecting with our community.

The 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan year two report was presented to the Board. Progress has been made on each goal, yet challenges remain in literacy and numeracy results with similar or slightly lower results in these areas. A high percentage of staff continue to find value in centrally organized professional learning, and RVS welcomed the approval for construction of three new schools and many modular units to assist with RVS' rapid student enrolment growth. Additionally, the Board participated in 564 community and school events throughout the 2023/24 school year.

The Strategic Plan will be reviewed by the Board this fall to update priorities, goals, outcomes and/or performance measures where necessary.

### New Guidelines for Use of Mobile Devices and Social Media

In the spring of 2024, the Government of Alberta consulted with parents, teachers and the public regarding their beliefs on the use of personal mobile devices and social media in schools. The results of the survey indicated respondents believed use of cell phones should be reduced or eliminated in schools. As a result, RVS was required to develop and implement policies for the elimination of the use of social media in schools as well as standards regarding the use of personal mobile devices such as cellphones, tablets and smart watches. These standards are intended to focus students on instruction and learning.

Administrative Procedure 148 and Administrative Form 148A were developed to meet the standards required by the provincial government and have been posted on the RVS website. Information about the new policy was communicated to staff, parents/guardians and students via social media, parent letters and directed emails. A toolkit of resources, including talking points for front office staff, newsletter items and a poster to hang in schools was developed by the Communications and Engagement team to assist school administration with implementation of these new regulations.

## **Important Maintenance Projects Ensure Safety and Comfort for Students and Staff**

Maintenance work to ensure the safety of our students at staff at schools throughout RVS has been ongoing over the summer break. These projects include an upgrade to washrooms at Glenbow Elementary School in Cochrane, mechanical upgrades at Airdrie's Meadowbrook School and roofing replacements at Kathryn School, École Edwards Elementary School in Airdrie and Mitford School in Cochrane. To help mitigate the enrolment pressures being felt at many schools throughout the division, modular classroom units have been added to schools in Airdrie, Chestermere and Cochrane with an additional 30 units to be added by September 2025. Other maintenance and renewal projects, including upgrades to sidewalks, parking lots and sports facilities as well as electrical and plumbing upgrades have also been completed.

## **Preliminary Numbers Indicate RVS' Enrolment Will Continue to Grow**

While official enrolment numbers will not be submitted to Alberta Education until Sept. 30, preliminary enrolment numbers indicate RVS' student population is expected to grow to 29,350 by Sept. 30, and increase from last year of approximately 750 students for the 2024/25 school year. This enrolment growth is being driven by population growth in many of the communities served by RVS. As of Sept. 4, RVS enrolment is 29,307 students, an increase of 700 students from September of 2023. Enrolment numbers fluctuate almost daily with students entering and exiting RVS and these are only preliminary numbers.

## **Board Self-Evaluation Completed**

Each year, the Board participates in a third-party facilitated self-evaluation process aligned with Board Policy 2 – Role of the Board, to measure and reflect on its effectiveness and determine areas of growth and focus. The self-evaluation is a means of accountability and assurance for the public and the results of this year's report indicate the Board continues to meet or exceed all quality indicators and is committed to strengthening and improving its practice. The Board approved the report as developed at the facilitated workshop on June 13 and has identified priority areas of focus going forward.

## **Board Organizational Meeting Date**

The organizational meeting of the Board will take place Sept. 19 at 9:30 a.m. at the Education Centre. The Board Chair and Vice-Chair as well as committee appointments for the 2024/25 school year are determined at this annually held meeting.