

## **January 2025 Ward Four Trustee Report to School Councils**

WGM, Tuesday Jan 28, 7 pm - zoom

### **Highlights from Jan 9 Board Meeting**

#### **Students Utilize Many Skills Through Involvement in the TELUS Spark Prototype Project**

Grade 6 students from Rainbow Creek Elementary School in Chestermere presented to the Board of Trustees about their participation in the TELUS Spark Prototype Project during which they created games, models and other science centre experience prototypes.

#### **Board Provided First Quarter Financial Update**

RVS' budget continues to feel significant pressure despite an increase in the base grant received from the provincial government of \$4.1 million announced in July 2024. Lower than expected enrolment leading to a reduction in instructional funding as well as an increase in funding for mental health and curriculum grants means RVS is expecting a higher than budgeted revenue of \$328.5 million for the 2024/25 school year. This is an increase of \$4.6 million above the original expected revenue of \$323.8 million; however, despite this increase RVS is anticipating a deficit of approximately \$2.5 million to be drawn from the division's reserves. This is an increase from the \$1.8 million draw from reserves outlined in the spring budget. RVS' reserves at the end of August 2025 will be \$5.6 million or 1.69 per cent of the total operating budget.

#### **Financial Support provided for Airdrie Turf Field**

RVS received a request from the City of Airdrie for financial support for the turf field at Ed Eggerer Athletic Park which opened in September 2024. The field is used by Bert Church High School and other Airdrie schools. The total cost of the turf field project is approximately \$6.6 million. The City requested funds from RVS and after consideration of a variety of ways financial support could be given, the Board is providing a one-time capital contribution of \$300,000 with funds drawn from the employee benefits reserve. The Board will ask the City to support RVS schools by providing expanded access to the field.

#### **Board Continues to Advocate for New Funding Model**

Letters were sent to the education minister as well as area MLAs in December 2024 advocating that any new funding model must be rooted on the principle that every student needs to be fully funded every year. Minister Nicolaidis has indicated the provincial government will have a new funding model in place for Budget 2025.

#### **Delegation - Prairie Springs Community Members**

A delegation shared feedback on the Balancing Airdrie Student Spaces accommodation plan with the Board.

#### **January 23, 2025 Board meeting highlights**

#### **Mechanics Training Program Celebrates 25th Anniversary**

Rocky View Schools' Mechanics Training Program was launched in 1999/2000 and celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. This unique program, located at Cam Clark Ford in Airdrie, allows high school students to work in a fully equipped shop while learning the mechanics trade through hands on instruction. Students also learn the theoretical side of the business and emerge equipped to pursue a career in the trade after they graduate if they desire. Staff and former students of the program presented to the Board about the history of the program and their experience. RVS highly values partners such as Cam Clark Ford that are instrumental in supporting longstanding programs connecting hundreds of students to career pathways and hands-on learning opportunities. This partnership supports RVS' Strategic Plan Priority: Connecting with our community and the goal to foster new partnerships and strengthen existing relationships that enhance learning.

### **Chestermere Grade Configuration and Attendance Areas Changes Better Balance Utilizations**

With a 262 per cent rise in population over the past two decades, RVS' schools in Chestermere are experiencing significant and sustained enrolment growth. Recognizing RVS' schools in Chestermere will continue to see increasing enrolment and high utilization rates, the community was invited in October/November 2024 to provide feedback on a proposed solution to balance utilizations within the constraints of the available student spaces until new schools can be approved and built. The feedback showed the majority of participants were in favour of the proposed changes.

At today's meeting, the Board approved changes to East Lake School's grade configuration, which adds a second school offering middle school to the city. The Christian and French Immersion programs for Kindergarten to Grade 6 will remain at East Lake School and the Christian and French Immersion programs for Grades 7 to 9 will continue to be offered at Chestermere Lake Middle School. Several communities will also be redesignated to different schools, resulting in more students learning closer to home. The changes will go into effect for September 2025. Families impacted by the changes will be notified and supported through the transition.

The Board thanks everyone who participated in the engagement and provided important feedback to inform its decision.

### **Muriel Clayton Middle School Designation Adjusted to Address Utilization**

Board of Trustees made an important decision regarding school designations for students residing in the Prairie Springs neighbourhood to help address higher projected utilization at Muriel Clayton Middle School.

As RVS works to implement changes made in the Balancing Airdrie Student Spaces decision in April 2024, the division has monitored utilization and projected enrolments for all schools. These updated numbers have indicated a need to change the designation decision for the Prairie Springs neighbourhood.

Beginning in the 2025/26 school year, students residing in Prairie Springs will attend:

- Kindergarten to Grade 9 at Windsong Heights School
- Grades 10 – 12 at W.H. Croxford High School

More information regarding the changes being implemented in September is available on the website.

**Trustee Orientation Ad Hoc Committee Created for Upcoming Trustee Election**

An ad hoc committee has been created by the Board to guide development and delivery of the orientation process for new trustees following the election in October. Trustees Burley, Hunter and Kinley were appointed to this committee.

**Response from Education Minister to Ongoing Board Advocacy**

The Board received a letter from Minister of Education, Demetrios Nicolaides in response to its letter regarding the need for a more equitable funding model. The Board will continue to advocate for a change to the current Weighted Moving Average funding model to one which provides funding for every student each year.

School council survey sent from the Board – open Jan 13-Feb 10

ASCA conference – April 26&27 – ½ day virtual conference and the AGM – all online

Superintendent Search underway –

Career Fair – looking for more employers – send your ideas to me or Chelsey - here is the event website:

<https://crossfieldchamber.ca/crossfield-regional-career-fair-2025/>