

# Media Release



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 2, 2011

**RE: Despite funding cutbacks, RVS plans to forge ahead**

Rocky View Schools' (RVS) 2011/12 budget reveals cuts across the board, but the jurisdiction is confident that its students will continue to receive a world class education.

Approved by the Board June 2, 2011, Rocky View's budget will reach an estimated \$160 million for the 2011/12 school year. Seventy-four point one (74.1) percent will be allocated to schools, up from 72.5 percent in 2010/11. Four point one (4.1) percent will be directed to centralized instructional support, .4 percent to governance, 3.1 percent to administration, 10.4 percent to Plant Operations and Maintenance and 7.5 percent to Transportation.

Cuts to jurisdictional services are required due to \$4.2 million in provincial grant cuts, which includes the loss of revenues for various grants including: Grade 4-6 Class Size Initiative, Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AIS), CTS, and Technology equipment.

"At the end of the day, schools on average will receive a 2.1 percent increase over the previous year. Within this increase, however, they will need to address a 5.1 percent increase for teaching salaries and a 4.9 percent increase for support staff," said Board Chair Dr. Bruce Pettigrew. "Given that we provide schools with maximum flexibility in allocating school funds, the impact from school to school will vary."

According to Pettigrew, staff attrition, retirements and an anticipated 400 student population growth will help maintain RVS' overall staffing complement at the school level. However, a number of reductions were made at the Education Centre, including four curriculum specialists and a psychologist redeployed to schools, the loss of a business development position, and a Learning Director position which will remain unfilled at this time.

"Support to schools in our transformation to 21st C learning environments will be limited with the loss of the central personnel," said Pettigrew. "A budget priority for our Board was to preserve school services, including AIS. I believe this budget reflects the best we could have hoped for."

Pettigrew said the Board is anticipating little changes to its Student Transportation services, as grade reconfigurations enabled RVS to achieve route efficiencies to offset the zero percent grant increase to this block. Plant Maintenance and Operations, he stated, is an entirely different story.

"In addition to leaving the Maintenance Director and a painter position vacant, we've had to reduce our caretaking staff by one percent, even though they'll be responsible for an additional 1,500 m2 of instructional space with 15 new modular classrooms in the fall. The Grounds Department, too, reduced expenditures by 12 percent.

"Not unlike other boards, this year's budget has been particularly hard," he said. "Regardless, we remain committed to maintaining our focus on the Inspiring Action agenda, and our transformation into a 21st C Learning organization," said Pettigrew.

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