

Media Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 17, 2018

RE: 2018/19 Budget

Resources for direct classroom instruction, classroom supports for learners with complex needs, mental health supports, and literacy and numeracy skill development are key priorities of Rocky View Schools' 2018/19 budget, approved by the Board of Trustees, May 17, 2018.

At about \$280 million for the 2018/19 school year, 78 percent will be directed towards instruction, 13 percent to plant operations and maintenance, 6 percent to transportation, 3 percent to governance and administration.

"The budget will see new teachers added to serve over 1000 new students next year," said Board Chair Todd Brand. "Of the total revenues available for instruction, 90 percent will be directed to schools."

"A variable that is to be determined is how the \$2.7 million in Classroom Improvement Funding just announced for another year by Alberta Education will be used to support the classroom. Administration is currently working on the allocation and use of this grant," he said.

Brand noted that in alignment with the Board's key priorities, the budget also added \$500 K for inclusive education directly to schools to support the complex needs of learners and \$700 K for social-emotional and mental health needs. A new Numeracy Learning Specialist also will be hired, bring the total to two, to target math competencies across the jurisdiction; the cost for which was funded within the Learning Department's current budget.

According to Larry Paul, Associate Superintendent of Business and Operations, Education Centre Departments were directed to build their 2018/19 budgets with zero percent increases, resulting in costs for administration and governance to remain at 2.9 percent, well below the government's cap of 3.6 percent.

Paul said challenges to be faced next year are seen in RVS' maintenance and transportation budget, where over \$500 K in maintenance services needs to be reduced to match a reduction in funding and over \$1 million in transportation efficiencies need to be made, as guided by the Board's transportation consultation process.

"Schools across our jurisdiction continue to struggle to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population, as well as the mental well-being of both students and staff," said Paul. "Despite these challenges, Rocky View students continue to flourish and succeed, due to the commitment of our staff."

Rocky View Schools' complete budget will be posted to the jurisdiction's website under Publications.

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Budget Backgrounder

BUDGET PRIORITIES

Rocky View Schools' annual budget is centred on ensuring learners are successful, engaged and supported, while addressing the operational needs of the Division. Recognizing that the Superintendent will demonstrate fiscal responsibility by continuing to pursue efficient and effective services, the Board of Trustees has identified the following key priorities to guide the 2018-2019 budget process:

- Direct classroom instruction;
- Direct classroom support for learners with complex needs;
- Mental health supports; and
- Literacy and numeracy skill development.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- Alberta Education per pupil grants remained virtually the same as the previous year.
- Projected enrolments are anticipated to increase by 1,057 FTE students or 4.45 percent.
- Based on student growth, revenues are projected to be \$279.8 million, which is a 3.1 percent increase compared to last year.
- Education Minister recently announced that Classroom Improvement Fund (CIF) will be reinstated for 2018-19, amounting to an additional \$2.5 million in revenue and expenditures.
- At the K-8/9 grade levels, the equivalent of 25 new classes will be added (approximately 26.9 teacher FTE), which will maintain the divisional K-8/9 class size average.
- High Schools are anticipating adding approximately 5.9 teacher FTE during the year.
- Phase 2 of the multi-year undertaking to review High School and K-8/9 allocations, resulting in the reduction of \$1.4 million from High School budgets. This \$1.4 million was used to:
 - Provide \$700K to elementary schools for targeted social-emotional/mental health supports
 - Provide \$500K to fund increased teacher medical, personal and compassionate leaves
 - Hold \$200K as a contingency for Inclusive Education (IES)/Mental Health Support/Teachers for grade configuration challenges in the fall.
- Inclusive education funding provided to schools was increased by \$500,000, which is slightly more than RVS received in additional IES grants from Alberta Education.
- Rather than a general increase to all budget areas, Education Centre (EC) based departments were directed to establish a budget with zero percent increase. In some cases, this was not achievable due to inflationary, contractual or operational issues, but generally EC based departments will be receiving no more money in 2018-19 than they received in 2017-18.
- The budget will use \$768,000 of reserves to help achieve a balanced budget.