

# THE BRIEF

## BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS



ROCKY VIEW SCHOOLS

January 20, 2022

### RancheView School's StudioXP Class Uses Innovator Mindset to Overcome Pandemic Challenges

- The Rocky View Schools (RVS) Board of Trustees heard an Exemplary Practice presentation about StudioXP, a combined Grade 7 and 8 class at RancheView School in Cochrane that started in 2019. The goal of the class is to provide learning that integrates Career and Technology Foundation skills with core curriculum objectives.
- Teacher Amanda Klager discussed how an “Innovators Mindset” helped students and teachers overcome the challenges presented during the COVID-19 pandemic. The class also implemented Leverage, Engage, Appreciate, Reflect and Nurture (LEARN) principles to drive students’ ability to connect their learning to the world around them.

### Board Invests Additional \$8.63 Million in Schools and Supports

- The Board received an update on the 2021/22 budget and approved \$8.63 million of additional spending. Highlights of the new spending include:
  - \$3.55 million in additional resources for schools (Career and Technology Studies/Career and Technology Foundations equipment replacement and enhancement, home reading resources, public address system upgrades, updated Wi-Fi, staff and student technology devices, classroom projectors, phone system replacement).
  - \$500,000 for teacher release time for curriculum implementation support and instructional practices, literacy kits for schools.
  - \$3.65 million in facilities enhancements (targeted window replacements, radon remediation at Glenbow School, roofing project, stormwater lift station upgrade, lagoon reclamation, modernization/repurposing of a few school spaces).
  - \$300,000 for enhancing the division’s cybersecurity position.
  - \$650,000 for efficiency improvements (school website migration support, community engagement tool, digitization of records, development of training resources for compliance, privacy impact assessments, human resources department supports).
- The current budget adjustment is the result of changes to funding related to weighted moving average in 2020/21, additional revenue and government funding balanced with changes to expenditures caused by higher enrolment and the COVID-19 pandemic. The adjustment reduces projected operating reserves to just under four per cent of operating expenses.

## Trustees Updated on Return to School and Changes to Operational Plan

- On Jan. 7, RVS updated its Return to School Operational Plan to reflect recent announcements made by the Government of Alberta. Changes included diploma exam cancellations and delays to some January Grade 9 Provincial Achievement Tests, ceasing of alert/outbreak declarations by the government and information about criteria to temporarily shift classes to at-home learning.
- The Operational Plan was again updated on Jan. 11, following updated guidance from Alberta Education. Under these changes, RVS suspended COVID-19 notifications, which are no longer being supported by Alberta Health Services. Off-site field trips and sports tournaments were also paused.
- During the first week back to school, RVS saw some staff shortages and has been working hard to hire additional substitutes to fill absences, redeploying some central staff to schools to support staff absences, and canceling meetings and professional learning activities. Absences are also being reported for support staff – learning assistants, caretakers, office staff, etc.
- Attendance data for students in the first four days after winter break was about five to six per cent lower than the first week of December 2021.
- While delayed, most schools are now receiving their medical grade masks and rapid tests kits from the province. Once schools move as quickly as possible to safely break up these packages individually for students and staff and distribute them as they are ready. Many schools are shorter on staff than normal and are working hard to balance the need to provide these items quickly with the need to focus on teaching students. We thank our school staff for the extra time spent supporting the sorting and distribution of masks and rapid test kits and for students, staff and families' understanding and patience.

## RVS Participates in ASBA Engagement on New Draft K-6 Curriculum Implementation

- On Jan. 17, Board Chair Fiona Gilbert participated in an Alberta School Board Association's (ASBA) curriculum engagement session. This is part of Alberta Education's process to collect input from education partners on K-6 curriculum implementation.
- The Board and RVS administration look forward to further discussions and opportunities to share our thoughts on implementation as the division prepares to support school administrators and teaching staff in transitioning to the new curriculum in the 2022/23 school year.

## Board Appoints Additional Community Member to Audit Committee

- The Board welcomes Dorothy Farncombe to the Audit Committee. This appointment fills a recent vacancy created after a long-serving public member was unable to continue to volunteer on the committee.
- Boards across Alberta must have an Audit Committee with a minimum of two non-trustee, public members.
- RVS will seek a third public member through advertisements in the spring of 2022.

## Rapid Testing for RVS Staff Discussed by Board

- Following debate, the Board voted against the motion to reimburse the cost of testing to staff who have chosen the testing pathway in Administrative Procedure 173 – COVID-19 Hazard Reduction.