
Purpose/Background

The opening of a new school is a significant event. It is important that appropriate recognition be given in the form of a New School Grand Opening Ceremony.

Procedures

1. Date and Time

- 1.1. As a general rule, a new school will be in operation at the beginning of a new school year. The Principal of the new school is to liaise with the Director of Facility Planning to establish the date and time of the ceremony. Consideration should be given to government and RVS' Board calendars.

2. Venue

- 2.1. In most cases, the venue will be the gymnasium of the new school. Special Areas, for instance the Student Gathering Area, could be taken into consideration for use in the New School Opening Ceremonies. The decision will be made by the Director of Facility Planning in consultation with the Principal. Items for consideration:

- 2.1.1. Fire Regulations

- 2.1.2. Sound system

- 2.1.3. Seating

- 2.1.4. Media Area

- 2.1.5. Beverage Facilities

- 2.1.6. Private area for dignitaries

- 2.1.7. Host/hostess to meet and lead the dignitaries from the front door to the private area, and then from the private area to the gymnasium.

- 2.1.8. Host/Hostess to welcome and direct the public

- 2.1.9. Podium

- 2.1.10. Risers

3. Invitations

- 3.1. To be coordinated by the School:

- 3.1.1. School Council Chair and Council

- 3.1.2. Special Friends of the School

- 3.1.3. Community Groups

- 3.1.4. Parents (schools to invite parents through their regular newsletter)

3.2. To be coordinated by the Office of the Superintendent:

- 3.2.1. Minister of Education or the Minister of Infrastructure
- 3.2.2. Local M.L.A.
- 3.2.3. ADM of Infrastructure
- 3.2.4. Regional Director
- 3.2.5. Board Chair and Trustees
- 3.2.6. Superintendent and Division Senior Executive
- 3.2.7. Local Mayor/Council
- 3.2.8. Local Reeve of the Rocky View County (if school is within the County)
- 3.2.9. Architect
- 3.2.10. Contractor
- 3.2.11. Media (to be handled by the Director of Communications)

3.3. Sample Invitations

3.3.1. Invitation to be sent to all on the invitation list but parents and media:

- 3.3.1.1. *You are cordially invited to join staff and students of (school name) as they celebrate the Official Opening of (school name). Include Date, Time, Location and RSVP*

3.3.2. Invitation to be sent to parents via the school's regular newsletter:

- 3.3.2.1. *“(Name of new school) is preparing an Official Opening Ceremony in the school's gymnasium (or area selected) on (date) at (time). We would be pleased to have all our parents attend this special event to show our pride in our new facility. Please phone our office at (phone number) so we can plan to have enough space available for everyone. We hope to see you here.”*

4. Committees - The Principal may organize committees to aid in the development of the Official School Opening.

4.1. Decoration Committee - A Committee may be formed to plan and implement decorations. Special attention is to be given to decorating the stage/show area.

4.2. Refreshment Committee - A Committee may be formed to handle the planning and serving of light refreshments. The Superintendent will provide an amount of two hundred dollars (\$200) for the Principal to use to cover the expense of refreshments.

4.3. Stage Set-Up - A Committee may be formed to coordinate the stage set-up and take-down. The Committee is to liaise with the Principal to organize the set-up required. The Committee is also to liaise with the Decorating Committee. It is important to ensure there is a convenient seating area for all dignitaries.

4.4. Entertainment - A Committee may be formed to organize entertainment for this special event.

4.5. Welcoming Committee - A Welcoming Committee may be formed. The purpose is to ensure that all visitors to the school for this special event are welcomed in an appropriate manner and

directed to the event. Special consideration is to be given to attending dignitaries. They are quickly and efficiently welcomed and led to the private area set aside for dignitaries. Efforts are to be made to keep any of the attending public from engaging in issues.

4.6. Parking Committee - Because of the anticipated large crowd attending this event, special attention is to be given to parking. Coordination may be required for arrivals and departures. Carpooling is to be encouraged. If it is anticipated that there will be problems in parking, the following may be considered:

4.6.1. Staff volunteers may be utilized as parking attendants.

4.6.2. Keep several reserved parking spots close to the doors for dignitaries.

4.6.3. All persons coordinating traffic should wear vests and carry flashlights.

4.6.4. If there are parking spaces near the school, permission is to be sought to have school overflow parking directed there.

4.7. Master/Mistress of Ceremonies

4.7.1. The Principal is often the Master/Mistress of Ceremonies, but may suggest another person(s) as Master/Mistress of Ceremonies. Occasionally, students have filled this position.

5. Plaques and Presentations - Two plaques are presented to the school at the Official Opening Ceremony. They are as follows:

5.1. Alberta Education Plaque

This plaque is ordered by the Director of Facility Planning at least 4 weeks before the ceremony. This plaque is to be presented by someone who is representing Alberta Education, i.e. the Minister or a bureaucrat attending in his/her place.

5.2. Jurisdiction Plaque

A plaque will be created containing the name of the trustees, key administration, initial principal, architect, and general contractor.

6. Program

6.1. The program below is a sample guideline. An individual program will need to be adapted as appropriate. Order of speakers may be changed depending on attendance and individual school.

6.1.1. Opening and preamble by Master/Mistress of Ceremonies. - *Welcoming of Provincial and Civic Officials, Board Chair, Trustees, the Superintendent, Municipal District of Rocky View Reeve and/or Councillors, Mayor and City Council, Architect, Builder, School Council Chair and School Council, and any special friends of the School, Community groups and Parents as follows:*

6.1.1.1. Introduction of Minister - *Minister's remarks and presentation of plaque from the Department of Education*

6.1.1.2. Introduction of M.L.A - *M.L.A.'s remarks*

6.1.1.3. Introduction of Board Chair - *Board Chair's remarks*

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- 6.1.1.4. Introduction of Reeve, and/or M.D. Council or Mayor, and/or City Council - *(These representatives may or may not speak)*
 - 6.1.1.5. Introduction of Superintendent - *Superintendent's remarks*
 - 6.1.1.6. Introduction of Name the School Contest Winner - *Plaque shown to audience.*
 - 6.1.1.7. Introduction/Remarks of Principal - *Remarks by Principal if he/she is not the Master/Mistress of Ceremonies*
 - 6.1.1.8. School Program - *Student Performance, Video, Choir, Band, etc.*
 - 6.1.1.9. Closing Remarks - *Master/Mistress of Ceremonies concludes Program*

Reference:

- Section 33, 52, 53, 197, 222 Education Act
- Provincial Government Protocol
- Federal Government Protocol