

# Media Release



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 14, 2019

RE: 2019 Budget

Dedicated to providing the best education Rocky View Schools (RVS) can afford its students, the Board of Trustees intends to minimize the impact of the jurisdiction's \$10 million budget shortfall on students by bringing down central and school reserves, reducing resources and adjusting service levels, while avoiding mid-year staffing cuts.

"Given we're mid-way into the school year, our board is committed to minimizing cuts to our classrooms by drawing down reserves to 3.5 per cent of our overall budget – a reasonable limit recognized by the Auditor General as sound fiscal management," said Board Chair Fiona Gilbert. "Based on administration's work with our budget committee, Trustees anticipate receiving a fall budget proposal that will draw down \$4.32 million from central reserves and \$1 million from school reserves, with Education Centre budgets reduced by \$1.53 million and school budgets by \$1.75 million.

Approved by the Board Nov. 14, 2019, RVS also will be introducing additional transportation fees to offset the loss of the government's Transportation Fee Replacement Grant.

"To balance our budget, effective immediately a transportation fee of \$308/student will be applicable to riders who attend their designated school and live 2.4 km or further from that school," said Gilbert. "We have asked that families impacted by the additional student transportation fees be informed by administration no later than the end of November."

If administration's fall budget proposal is approved, Associate Superintendent of Business and Operations Larry Paul said school administrators will be asked to reduce their spring budgets by \$40/student, generating \$1 million towards RVS' revenue shortfall. The remaining \$753,000 will be drawn from monies held back this fall in anticipation of potential provincial budget cuts. Based on his department's review of school budgets, the reduction of \$40/student by school will range from \$5,800 to \$43,300.

"School administrators should be able to achieve this budget reduction with minimal impact to students," said Paul.

In recognition that the use of reserves is not sustainable, Gilbert said Trustees plan to reach out to their school communities in coming months to help establish budget priorities for next year in preparation for a challenging 2020/21 budget.

"Our board will continue to advocate to government that school authorities be engaged in the evaluation and redesign of Alberta Education's new funding framework to ensure equitable access to funding for RVS students," stated Gilbert. "Our Board extends its gratitude to the learning community for its patience as RVS works through this difficult process of adjusting its budget mid-year to address grant changes made by government."

RVS' fall budget will be tabled with the Board of Trustees, Nov. 28, 2019, for consideration.

Following the release of provincial grant rates with the Alberta government's 2019 budget, Oct. 24, 2019, RVS identified a \$10 million budget shortfall for the 2019/20 school year due to the reallocation of Alberta's class size grants and school fee/transportation fee replacement grants to fund student enrolment growth.