

Media Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 21, 2020

RE: School Nutrition Program Funding Redirected for Community Use

To help students and their families in need gain access to healthy meals while learning at-home, Rocky View Schools (RVS) will redirect \$90,000 of its School Nutrition Program (SNP) funding to the Airdrie, Cochrane and Chestermere Food Banks. An additional \$37,500 of SNP funding has been earmarked for rural schools to ensure equitable access for vulnerable families in the community.

“It was a welcome announcement from Alberta Education that school boards would be given the flexibility to determine how best to use their remaining school nutrition funding during the pandemic,” said Board Chair Fiona Gilbert. “The freedom to allocate funds differently across our unique communities will have a substantial impact on our ability to reach those students who may be experiencing food insecurities during this particularly challenging time.”

Following the government’s announcement, RVS has committed to donating \$10,000 to each of the three food banks in April, May and June. The jurisdiction, too, will be providing rural schools already offering breakfast programs or on the waitlist for funding with a stipend of \$2,500 each month, to support their students through locally-identified distribution processes.

“We felt it was important that schools maintain a level of autonomy in terms of being able to allocate funding to help meet the needs of their most vulnerable families,” explained Gilbert. “School-based staff has established trusted relationships with their students and as such, can discreetly identify families in need who may not have access to the supports being provided by the local food banks.”

Schools operating breakfast programs also have been given the greenlight to repurpose any remaining funds donated by the Breakfast Clubs of Canada and the President’s Choice Children Charity as they see fit. Staff was quick to mobilize upon school closures to dispense pre-purchased food to RVS’ high-needs families.

At the direction of Alberta Education, RVS will reassess its School Nutrition Program funding levels in June, with an eye on ensuring that all its 2019/20 funding is expended before the end of the school year.

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