

Media Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 20, 2019

RE: 2019/20 Budget

For the third year in a row, resources for direct classroom instruction, classroom supports for learners with complex needs, mental health supports, and literacy and numeracy skill development remain the key priorities of Rocky View Schools' 2019/20 budget, approved by the Board of Trustees, June 20, 2019.

With revenues rising to \$278 million for the 2019/20 school year, 78 per cent will be directed towards instruction, 13 per cent to plant operations and maintenance, 6 per cent to transportation, 3 per cent to governance and administration.

"Approximately 24 new teachers will be added to our classrooms to serve the 655 new students expected this September," said Board Chair Todd Brand. "Of the total revenues available for instruction, 86 per cent will be directed to schools."

"We are grateful that the provincial government has committed to funding enrolment growth for next year," he said. "As one of the fastest growing boards in the province, new dollars for new students will help to ensure we continue to provide the high-quality education our parents and families have come to expect."

Although many funding variables will remain unknown until Alberta's budget is tabled in the fall, Brand noted that in alignment with the Board's key priorities, RVS' spring budget also added \$360,000 for inclusive education to support the complex needs of learners in addition to maintaining \$13.4 million that supports RVS' most vulnerable students through a specialized, targeted service delivery model.

According to Karyn Golem, Director of Finance, Education Centre Departments were directed to build their 2019/20 budgets with zero percent increases, resulting in costs for administration and governance to remain at 2.9 per cent, well below the government's cap of 3.6 per cent.

While significant uncertainty is being felt across the province by all boards, a known challenge lies in RVS' transportation budget. Having depleted transportation reserves to zero and cutting over \$1 million in services in 2018/19, the department will further adjust services in the upcoming school year in response to continued cost pressures.

"As in previous years, schools across our jurisdiction are working hard with limited resources to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population, with higher incidences of medically fragile and complex learners," said Golem.

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

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For more information, contact:

Erlene Gococo
Communications Officer
403.945.4146

Budget Backgrounder

BUDGET PRIORITIES

Rocky View Schools' annual budget is driven by the goals and strategies of its Four-Year Plan to foster innovators in their learning journey, while addressing the operational needs of the jurisdiction. 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 2019-2020 budget process:

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

Highlights of the 2019/20 Budget include:

- Projected enrolments are anticipated to climb to 25,300 – an increase of 2.6 per cent or 655 students over prior years budgeted enrolments.
- Alberta Education per pupil grants are assumed to remain virtually the same as the previous year, with funding for enrolment growth maintained.
- Overall revenue is projected to be \$279.4 million, 1.2 percent higher than prior year's budget.
- Average teaching salary is \$101,242, slightly higher than what is currently trending for the 2018/19 school year at \$101,125
- At the K-8/9 grade levels, the equivalent of 16 new classes will be added (approximately 17.2 teacher FTE), which will maintain the divisional K-8/9 class size average.
- At the Gr.9-12 level, high schools anticipating adding approximately 6.3 teacher FTE during the year.
- Inclusive education funding to schools was increased by \$360,000, an increase equal to the 2.6 per cent enrolment growth.
- Education Centre (EC) based departments budgets reflect a zero per cent increase, with the exception of mandatory OHS training.
- Approximately \$750,000 will be taken from reserves in 2019-20 to help achieve a balanced budget. All expenditures from reserves are one-time in nature.