

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 31, 2024

RE: RVS Board Addresses Urgent Student Space Needs in Cochrane with Modular Classrooms and Advocates for New Schools

The Rocky View Schools (RVS) Board of Trustees is addressing Cochrane's immediate student space challenges by adding modular classrooms, while continuing to advocate for a new high school and additional school approvals to best support the community's needs.

"Cochrane is one of Alberta's fastest growing communities, with its population increasing by more than 34 per cent in the last five years," said Board Chair, Fiona Gilbert. "There is an urgent need for additional student spaces and the Board will not slow our advocacy efforts until the provincial government approves all our priority schools."

Cochrane will see some relief in the coming years thanks to advocacy efforts:

- The provincial Budget 2024 included funding for a new Kindergarten to Grade 8 school in Rivercrest, anticipated to open in fall 2028. While positive, this new school does not resolve the immediate space needs in Cochrane.
- The Board continues to request and advocate for government funding for new and relocated modular classrooms. Over the summer, the government approved 12 new modular classrooms and funding to relocate 12 existing modulars across RVS. Of these Cochrane will receive:
 - Six new modulars at Fireside School.
 - Two modulars at Cochrane Christian Academy.
- The previously approved expansion and modernization of Bow Valley High School is well underway. Anticipated to be complete in fall of 2026, the project will add 485 student spaces.

An additional high school is a critical project for the community to support the growing population and rising student enrolment in the town. RVS has secured the necessary land for the next high school north of Heritage Hills and off Horse Creek Road but cannot advance the project until the Town of Cochrane completes the required servicing of the site.

This new high school cannot be completed until 2030 at the earliest. The projected high school population at that time will be 2,913 and high school student spaces will be 2,465. This means Cochrane will have 448 more high school students than spaces that year alone.

"We are working with the Town to ensure they begin the important work on this site and prioritize getting suitable school sites ready in a timely manner to assist with future approvals," said Gilbert. "Once this school site is fully serviced by the Town of Cochrane the government can consider the project."

A thorough review of utilizations across Cochrane schools was conducted by an RVS staff working group last school year. The Board considered the information from the review and the additional modular classrooms deciding to support administration's recommendation to maintain the current boundaries and grade configurations for schools in Cochrane at this time. The Southbow Landing community will need to be designated to a school in Cochrane by spring or fall of 2025.

“A larger student accommodation review will likely be necessary in early 2027 as we determine the areas that will attend the new school in the Rivercrest community and to ensure we meet the needs of this growing community effectively,” said Gilbert. “Rather than make smaller student accommodation changes now and again a few years out, we believe we can manage high utilizations with temporary modular classrooms for now and reduce the number of transitions for our students, families and staff.”

Trustees will also be sharing this information and encouraging conversation at school council meetings and other opportunities to connect with families throughout the year. More information about Cochrane student spaces is available on [RVSEngage](#).

-30-

For more information contact:

Ben Sherick

Communications Officer

bsherick@rockyview.ab.ca