

# THE BRIEF

## BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS



ROCKY VIEW SCHOOLS

March 20, 2025

### Grade 1s Enjoy Morning Literacy Skills Boost at Cooper's Crossing School

Students in Ashley Burndred's Grade 1 class at Cooper's Crossing School in Airdrie are improving their literacy skills through [working together on a daily morning message](#). Each morning, Burndred provides her students with bags containing sounds and sight words tailored to their individual needs. The students then read through the morning message together, using the sounds and sight words from their bags to fill in the missing words or letters. Using a flip chart to write out the morning message also creates print awareness, connecting the spoken language to the printed words.

Burndred presented to the Board of Trustees of Rocky View Schools (RVS) regarding how reading morning messages together is highly collaborative and interactive. It encourages students to share the strategies they are working on individually with the group. Burndred's use of the morning messages to teach makes literacy meaningful and personalized to every student in her classroom and helps to achieve Goal 1 of RVS' Education Plan: Advancing students' numeracy and literacy skills

### RVS' Edwin Parr Nominee Hits all the Right Notes

The Edwin Parr award was established in 1964 by the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) to recognize exceptional practice by first-year teachers. Named for a former president of the ASBA, the school division nominates an outstanding first-year teacher to be considered by the ASBA Zone 5 Edwin Parr Selection committee. This year's RVS nominee is [Connor Bensen](#), music teacher at Cochrane High School. Bensen leads the school's band and choir; with his direction, his students have excelled at various festivals. His leadership is marked by compassion, engagement, humour and grace. Bensen is known for building strong connections with his students, parents and colleagues and has become an integral part of the Cochrane High School community. His dedication, professionalism and passion for music make him an outstanding candidate for the Edwin Parr award. The Board congratulated Bensen on this nomination and expressed its appreciation for his outstanding work as a teacher.

### 2026 – 2029 Capital Plan Highlights Need for Steady Stream of New Schools

Each spring, RVS submits a Capital Plan to the provincial government, which highlights the need for new schools, school expansions and modular classrooms in the communities served by RVS and includes the division's top priorities. School projects approved through this process are announced by the government following the release of the provincial budget for the upcoming year. The Board reviewed and approved the priorities identified in the 2026 – 2029 Capital Plan which includes requests for funding to build six new schools and one expansion/modernization in communities across the division. The approved plan is available on the RVS website.

RVS appreciates the recognition by the government of its infrastructure needs on March 14 when planning funding for a Kindergarten – Grade 9 school in Airdrie and a high school in Chestermere was announced. With seven new school [projects](#), approved in 2023, 2024 and 2025 currently in various stages of development, expediting the process to have these projects built and open for learning is necessary to ensure they are ready to welcome students as quickly as possible.

## **RVS' Indigenous Learning Branch Provides Important Connections and Supports**

Established in 2022, RVS' Indigenous Learning branch supports staff and students in areas such as implementing Indigenous Ways of Knowing into practice, professional learning, protocol guidance, planning for recognition for significant events and calendar days. At full operation, the branch includes a director, three learning specialists, two Indigenous cultural liaisons and two Indigenous connectors who are tasked with providing support to division staff and students and creating connections with members of our Indigenous communities to foster new partnerships and strengthen existing relationships that enhance learning.

Some of the important work completed by the team this year includes significantly increasing the number of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit guests invited into schools to share their knowledge, developing the Indigenous learning self-reflection tool, leading professional learning opportunities for teaching and other staff and facilitating the RVS Indigenous Advisory Circle which provides guidance and knowledge to support the Board and division. The branch also launched an internal website providing a wealth of foundational knowledge and curricular resources for various grade levels in English and French.

## **Board Continues to Advocate for Space and Supports for Students**

The Board is committed to advocating to the government on [priorities](#) focused on providing students with an education and school experience that supports them in achieving their absolute best.

As part of those efforts, the Board sent a letter to the new Infrastructure Minister, Martin Long congratulating him on his appointment and asking for a meeting to discuss RVS' infrastructure needs.

A letter was also sent to Education Minister, Demetrios Nicolaides regarding the Board's concerns the current process to approve charter schools does not meaningfully engage public school boards in the decision-making process to allow for important input and feedback to be considered by Alberta Education. Minister Nicolaides responded sharing his recognition of the Board's feedback.

A second letter was sent to Minister Nicolaides expressing the Board's appreciation for the most recent capital plan project approvals and the change to the education funding model announced in Budget 2025. The Board will continue to advocate for a steady stream of new school approvals and a funding model that funds every student every year.