

MEDIA RELEASE - March 22, 2023

Canadian Rockies Public Schools Forecasts Optimistic Picture of 2023/24

As Canadian Rockies Public Schools (CRPS) sifts through the fine details of Alberta Education's 2023 budget allocation to school boards, a picture of the 2023/24 school year has begun to emerge – and it's full of optimism.

"Our board is very pleased to see a significant increase in education funding for the upcoming school year," said Superintendent of Schools Chris MacPhee. "Across all areas of operations, we anticipate our division will be able to maintain or enhance service levels, particularly in learning."

On March 9, Alberta Education released its funding manual for school authorities to begin building their budgets for the 2023/24 school year. Reflected in the manual is the Alberta government's promise to increase base instructional funding by six per cent, a ten per cent increase to learning support funding, and a grant allocation for teachers to receive a two per cent salary increase starting September 2023.

Despite the elimination of bridge funding and near completion of Alberta's learning loss grant that helped CRPS face the challenges of the pandemic, MacPhee said the increase to base funding will allow the division to retain, if not add to, the number of literacy/numeracy specialists put in place to support its youngest learners.

"Through this team's efforts this past year, the percentage of Gr. 1 to 4 students identified as at risk has dropped between 27 to 34 per cent. This performance is significant, and a trend we believe will continue to climb."

MacPhee said he also foresees the division's current complement of learning support teachers, success teachers, Right from the Start staff, counsellors, and specialized wrap-around team, which includes an occupational therapist, speech and language pathologist, educational psychologist, divisional psychologist, and wellness and liaison workers, continuing to support the social-emotional and well-being of students, as well as providing the necessary expertise to effectively address the diverse and complex learning needs of learners.

"Through the infusion of new provincial monies, the generous financial support of the Wim and Nancy Pauw Foundation, our new Educational Service Agreement, and monies generated through the International Student Program, the student supports and program opportunities available in our division sets us apart. Our new experiential and STEM/STEAM programs, like Environmental Sustainability, Synthetic Biology, Culinary Studies, Cosmetology, and Fashion Studies, have attracted huge interest already.

“When coupled with our Indigenous Education, Outdoor Learning Centre, and health and wellness programming, I feel confident in saying, from K to 12 we are living our ‘Whole Child’ comprehensive approach to learning that nurtures students’ development physically, cognitively, emotionally, socially, and spiritually,” MacPhee stated.

And if that’s not good news for CRPS parents, MacPhee said that although the numbers are still being crunched, he believes the division’s class sizes will be at or close to Alberta Commission on Learning’s Class Size Guidelines – a feat not many public boards can achieve.

CRPS’ budget will be tabled with the Board of Trustees in April for approval.

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