

DATE: April 19, 2023

TO: CRPS Staff

FROM: Chris MacPhee, Superintendent of Schools

RE: 2023/24 Budget Approval

Tonight at the Board of Trustees regular meeting, Canadian Rockies Public Schools' (CRPS) 2023/24 budget was passed, offering good news for all staff and students! Targeting the board's strategic priorities of health and wellness, engaged learning, and student supports, the approved budget will bring the following changes in September:

Greater Focus on Wellness and Belonging

In line with the board's priority to support the well-being of staff and students, our upcoming budget will enable our division to maintain a wellness team made up of four counsellors, a school social worker, a divisional psychologist, a school and family wellness worker, a family school liaison worker and, five Right from the Start success coaches. Through a mental health grant, renowned wellness coach Dr. Lisa Belanger also will climb on board to work with the division to provide educators direction on best practice strategies and tools that can be used to support student wellness and belonging in schools. The funding also will bring Matt Sticksl into schools to train staff in Collaborative Problem Solving, which assists educators in identifying triggers to a child's challenging behaviour and the specific skills they need help developing.

Enhanced Programming

Advancing the division's pursuit to engage its students through a transformational education, monies were allocated to top up our staffing complement to offer culinary studies, cosmetology, fashion design, career exploration, Indigenous education, outdoor experiential learning, and STEM/STEAM programs, like Environmental Sustainability and Synthetic Biology. Given the size of our division, the breadth of student programming from K to 12 is commendable and not unlike that of larger boards.

Strong Wrap-Around Services and Learner Supports

Due to the generous donation of the Wim and Nancy Pauw Foundation and an increase in provincial funding, in September, our students and families will have access to a comprehensive wrap-around service team, which includes learning support teachers, five Right from the Start success coaches, an occupational therapist, speech and language pathologist, educational psychologist, divisional psychologist, and wellness and liaison workers. Our learners also will benefit from a dedicated literacy and numeracy specialist at each of their schools, as well as 7.5 additional educational assistants, bringing the total number to 42.

Smaller Class Size

Through a six percent increase to base funding, our class sizes will decrease due to the addition of 17.8 Full-Time Equivalent teachers across the division. In September, our class sizes will be: 19 students in Kindergarten to Gr. 6, 21 students in Gr. 7 to 9, and 20 students in Gr. 10 to 12 – a feat not many school boards are able to achieve.

Elimination of Lunchroom Supervision Fees

Based on the wishes of our Board of Trustees to see families benefit from the government's six percent increase in base funding, we have removed the cost of lunchroom supervision fees, which range from \$93 to \$166. Families will see this reduced fee, beginning September 2023.

Enhanced Facilities

With \$5,183,565 being allocated towards operations and maintenance, increased attention will be given towards facility upgrades to enhance learning environments. At Canmore Collegiate High School, projects already underway or being planned include a theatre and kitchen upgrade, washroom retrofit, aquaponic pond installation, and upgrades to the school's cosmetology and mechanics classroom. At Banff Community High School, a culinary kitchen is being installed, as well as upgrades to the home economic room for fashion design. Advancing our desire to decrease our footprint, solar panels will be installed in the division's central board office, making it the sixth of eight facilities to decrease energy costs and cut greenhouse gases in CRPS.

Increased Transportation Services

Based on the province's intention to lower student walking distances to 1 km and 2 km for students in Kindergarten to Gr. 6 and Gr. 7-12, respectively, it is anticipated that 25 additional families in Canmore and 45 in Banff will now qualify for transportation services. Our Transportation Department will be reaching out to impacted families shortly, encouraging them to sign up for student transportation services.

Overall, our picture for the 2023/24 school year is bright! We are delighted to see a significant increase in provincial education funding. When coupled with the tremendous financial support of local donors and educational partners, all areas of operations will see enhanced service levels, particularly in learning and teaching.