



THE BRIEF

Canadian Rockies Public Schools' Board Meeting Digest
May 28, 2025

Inspiring the Joy of Learning - Music That Moves Us

Canadian Rockies Public Schools' (CRPS) music educators struck a heartfelt chord during their Spotlight on Learning at the board's May 28 meeting, where joy and gratitude echoed throughout the room. Led by Grace Gadon, Ryan Stelter, Nicole Kowalewski, and Amy Gnutel, the team shared how music programs across the division are bringing CRPS' Shared Vision of Learning to life. From dramatic play and musical coding, to outdoor note hopscotch, art-infused rhythm games, and a CBC Music Challenge entry, students at Banff Elementary, Elizabeth Rummel, and Exshaw schools are engaging deeply and joyfully. At Lawrence Grassi Middle School, band camps, guitar ensembles, and multi-school performances built confidence and connection. At Canmore Collegiate High and Banff Community High schools, students explored everything from jazz and metal drumming crossovers to music production, concert adjudications, and live theatre tech. Whether in a cozy practice room, on a festival stage, or coding beats on a Chromebook, CRPS students are finding their rhythm, their voice, and a deep appreciation for music. ■

A Plan Rooted in Community, Ready for Tomorrow

The joy of shared purpose echoed through CRPS May 28 board meeting, where trustees approved the [2025–2029 Four Year Education Plan - Year 1](#), an ambitious blueprint shaped by voices from across the Bow Valley. Over 18 months, students, families, staff, and partners leaned in through activities like Student Diaries, Parental Pulse, the Community Education Network and School Strategy Challenge, helping to define new goals, outcomes, and strategies. The result is a forward-looking plan built on equity, wellness, and real-world learning, with a strong emphasis on curiosity, collaboration, and connection. From early literacy growth and high school completion gains to enhanced supports for student wellness and Indigenous inclusion, the plan reflects the strength of local insight paired with a commitment to excellence. ■

Balancing Commitments, Facing Realities

At the May 28 public meeting, the Board of Trustees approved CRPS' 2025/26 operational budget - an open, transparent presentation of

CRPS' Board of Trustees (left to right): Dale Craig, Arlene Rheaume, Luke Sunderland, Carol Picard, Brian Callaghan

priorities, trade-offs, and community values. With projected revenues of \$38.8 million and expenditures of \$39.8 million, the \$916,330 deficit reflects a conscious decision to protect classroom supports, maintain staff positions, and remove lunchroom supervision fees, despite financial pressures. Board Chair **Brian Callaghan** and Treasurer **Cheryl Jensen** emphasized the division's responsibility to align spending with the Four Year Education Plan's goals: ensuring learners are ready, inspired, and future ready. Rising inflation, increases to staff salaries, and the costs associated with living in the Bow Valley all contributed to the squeeze, but careful planning and generous funding from the **Wim and Nancy Pauw Foundation** helped preserve

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key roles in student wellness and inclusive learning. Trustees acknowledged the risks, affirmed the budget's conservative approach, and celebrated funding allocations that keep instruction at nearly 70 per cent of all spending. ■

A Homegrown Win for Housing and Education

Shared by Board Chair **Brian Callaghan**, CRPS has received conditional approval for up to

\$2.5 million in provincial funding under Alberta's Affordable Housing Partnership Program—a major step forward in its plan to develop staff housing in Canmore. In a letter from Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services, Jason Nixon the division learned it was one of the few recipients in the region to secure funding through this highly competitive stream. The affordable housing project reflects a strategic collaboration between CRPS, the Town of Canmore, and multiple agencies.

With this contribution now part of its financial stack, the division is well positioned to leverage additional support from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and other partners. As Superintendent **Chris MacPhee** noted, affordable housing is key to attracting and retaining teachers, building strong schools, and helping educators live in the Bow Valley. Thanks to the team's seven years of persistence, that vision is now within reach. ■



Important Calendar Date:

The Board of Trustees' next regular meeting is set for June 17, 2025, from 7 to 9 p.m. at Central Board Office in Canmore.

Green Light for Collegiate EcoTourism Pathway

CRPS received word in late May from the Minister of Education and the Minister of Children and Family Services, confirming conditional approval of a new Canadian Rockies Collegiate Institute, which will operate out of Banff Community High School. The institute, funded under Alberta Education's Collegiate School model, will focus on delivering a new EcoTourism stream, focused on resource management, conservation enforcement, recreation leadership, and adventure tourism. Backed by strong labour market data, the successful application highlighted that over 90 per cent of Banff's workforce is connected to tourism, making the program a natural fit. The program will blend academic rigour with immersive, real-world experiential learning, preparing students to thrive in local and global sustainability careers. With operational and capital funding now on the table, CRPS will work alongside Alberta Education, community partners and post-secondary institutions to shape the next phase.

Try It for Five Months, Change a Life Forever

CRPS is inviting local families to open their homes - and hearts - as host families for international students this fall. With a five-month trial option from September to January, families can experience the rewards of cultural exchange without a long-term commitment. Monthly remuneration of \$1,375 helps ensure hosting is enriching rather than burdensome. In return, families gain a global perspective, new friendships, and the joy of supporting a student's Canadian journey. With several long-time hosts recently moving on, the division is seeking new homestay families to welcome students from across the globe. Each placement strengthens school communities, too, as

tuition from the program funds additional classroom staffing and resources that benefit all learners. Whether you're seeking a cultural connection, a sibling experience for your child, or a shared adventure, this could be your moment. Interested families are asked to complete [this form](#); it only takes a minute to complete.

Connecting to the Outdoors

OLC teacher, **Braeden Kelly**, recently presented at the Outdoor Learning Conference in Banff. His well-attended session was titled "Scavenger Hunts, Compass Courses, Maps and More: Engaging your Students with Curriculum-Connected Outdoor Exploration." With a hands-on approach, Braeden guided participants through a series of imaginative outdoor challenges that blended navigation tools with educational goals. From compass basics to creative course designs, educators explored ways to turn a simple scavenger hunt into a meaningful and curriculum-rich learning experience. The session also sparked thoughtful conversations about adapting activities for different grade levels and environments.

"Inspiring Hearts and Minds" - CRPS' Board of Trustees

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