



Board of Trustees Advocacy Positions

2018/2019



As publicly elected officials to Rocky View Schools' (RVS) Board of Trustees, we are advocates for public education and are entrusted with the role of ensuring that appropriate supports are in place to meet the individual needs of students, whether they be teaching and learning resources, staffing, or facilities. Our service to the public requires that we identify, address, and seek resolution to educational issues, as well as work with the government to continually improve Alberta's K-12 system.

Our Board understands that enrolment growth and the increasing diversity of our classrooms and communities pose many opportunities and challenges for policy makers and educators alike. To nurture community ownership and enhance the value of public education, we are firm proponents that current investments reflect a balance between local needs and government priorities, thereby ensuring future growth and prosperity across Alberta.

Encouraged by the direction of government and its collaborative approach in working with all Albertans, we ask you to join our Board in advocating for our top three priorities:

Equitable Access to Funding

Identified as one of the lowest per student funded jurisdictions in the province, our Board believes that the Ministry should engage school authorities in a collaborative process to evaluate and redesign Alberta Education's funding formula to ensure equitable access to funding.

Alberta Education's renewed funding framework was introduced in 1998, with the promise that school boards would have greater flexibility to allocate existing funds. At the time and over the past 20 years, a number of funding envelopes have been rolled into one basic grant, with few increases, and without analysis of spiraling costs in certain areas. Many other supplemental grants are based on outdated jurisdictional profiles and/or three-year averages, that do not reflect current enrolment levels. From the viewpoint that today's landscape and classrooms look very different than they did when the framework was built in the mid-90s, Alberta Education needs to work with boards in building a new model that reflects current educational practices, supports actual student enrolment levels and recognizes the real cost of operations.

New Schools for Growing Jurisdictions

As one of the fastest growing and fifth largest school boards in the province, our Board calls for capital approvals that are transparent, predictable and in alignment with a provincial four-year strategic program that clearly articulates the priorities in which school projects will be approved.

With an annual enrolment growth of approximately 1000 students, RVS needs two new schools opening each and every year to ensure the jurisdiction has the space for students to learn. While appreciative to have received approval for new schools over the last decade, the reality is that student growth is rapidly outpacing the construction of new space. As the sole funder and decision-maker of capital projects, the Alberta Government should employ a transparent school and modernization approval process. This process would see predictable capital funds flow in accordance with a set of capital planning priorities for new schools and modernization projects to address growth. These priorities would be the main driver in the creation of a provincial four-year strategic program for new infrastructure. This plan would be updated annually to align with school boards' current capital plans and would allow for emergent issues to be addressed, while giving school boards a tool to use to develop student accommodation strategies.

Provincial Review on Inclusion

With an increasingly diverse student population, our Board advocates for a provincial review of funding and supports afforded for the implementation of inclusive education.

Since Alberta moved to an inclusive education system in 2010, as called for in *Setting the Direction Framework: Government of Alberta Response*, the complexity of today's classrooms has dramatically changed. Disability rates for children have risen. Mental health issues in children and youth, too, have increased, as have the number of students and families who do not speak English. Although supportive of inclusion, our Board believes the additional pressure placed on today's inclusive classroom has made program planning and instruction more complex; in fact without corresponding increases in supports and services, students with complex needs are at-risk of falling through the cracks. Given that Alberta Education has not formally reviewed the success of its inclusive education system to-date, nor have funding increases strategically kept pace with the increased demands placed on teachers, the ministry should launch a formal review process in consultation with school authorities to ensure adequate funding and supports are in place for these vulnerable students.

Ward One – Shali Baziuk

403.850.5758
sbaziuk@rockyview.ab.ca
Represents: Chestermere

Ward Two – Patty Sproule

403.936.2385
psroule@rockyview.ab.ca
Represents: Langdon, Indus
and SE Rocky View County

Ward Three – Melyssa Bowen

403.835.6673
mbowen@rockyview.ab.ca
Represents: Airdrie

Ward Three – Todd Brand

Board Chair
403.408.2710
tbrand@rockyview.ab.ca
Represents: Airdrie

Ward Three – Jim Forrest

587.216.3224
jforrest@rockyview.ab.ca
Represents: Airdrie

Ward Four – Norma Lang

403.921.0303
nlang@rockyview.ab.ca
Represents: Crossfield, Irricana, Beiseker,
Kathryn and NE Rocky View County

Ward Five – Judi Hunter

403.888.1831
jhunter@rockyview.ab.ca
Represents: Redwood Meadows and
West Rocky View County, including Springbank,
Bragg Creek, Bearspaw and the eastern edges
of the MD of Bighorn

Ward Six – Fiona Gilbert

Board Vice-Chair
403.200.8968
fgilbert@rockyview.ab.ca
Represents: Cochrane