



News Release

RDCRS moves forward with construction of new middle school and stakeholder engagement sessions

For immediate release – January 26, 2022

As Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools (RDCRS) continues to prepare for the opening of St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School, reconfiguration of middle school boundaries will need to occur to ensure all schools are operating at a viable capacity with roughly the same utilization rate.

In addition to the guiding principles, RDCRS' administration considered the existing programs offered in each school, as well as the neighborhood's proximity to existing schools. The administration also took this opportunity to make minor adjustments to some elementary school boundaries to increase utilization rates and make the transition to middle school smoother. They developed and evaluated multiple scenarios, collected feedback from trustees and school-based administrators, and presented two viable options to RDCRS' Board of Trustees at the January 25 Regular Board Meeting.

"Our middle schools are currently operating at over 120 per cent capacity and we expect continued growth. The addition of St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School will help to alleviate the pressures and overcrowding of the middle school population in 2023," said Board Chair, Kim Pasula at Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools.

"We look forward to the upcoming stakeholder engagement sessions where we expect to gain constructive and meaningful feedback from our parent and staff community."

Parent and staff stakeholder engagement sessions are set to occur virtually on February 8 and February 10 for all Division schools, but specifically, those located within the City of Red Deer

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and impacted by potential boundary changes. Parents and staff from the following school communities are invited to attend virtually on the following dates:

- **Tuesday, February 8** - Father Henri Voisin School, St. Elizabeth Seton School, and current Grade 6 and 7 families from St. Francis of Assisi School.
- **Thursday, February 10** - St. Teresa of Avila School, Holy Family School and current Grade 6 and 7 families from St. Thomas Aquinas School.

Details about how to pre-register for the stakeholder engagement sessions will be sent out closer to the event date. An electronic feedback form will also be available for parents and staff to submit feedback.

The feedback from the stakeholder engagement sessions will be gathered and presented, along with a recommendation, to the Board of Trustees at the March Regular Board Meeting. Implementation of the new middle school boundaries for St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School, will take effect in September 2023.

The construction of St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School, which was originally scheduled to begin in fall 2021, is now slated to begin in early February, 2022. Construction activities will be limited daily, in order to minimize disruptions within the Kentwood community. Daily site activities will begin no earlier than 7:00 a.m. and will end at approximately 5:00 p.m.

St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School facts:

- The school will be a two-storey design to accommodate 700 middle school students.
- The school is planned to follow a traditional school year and will operate as a closed campus.
- The school site will provide parking for staff and visitors, with a student drop-off lane within the visitor parking lot.
- The current playground and skating rink will be retained on-site, and the retention pond will not be altered.
- Additional playground space is intended to be installed, including a proposed basketball pad.

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- Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools will provide the opportunity for user groups to rent the facility after-hours and on weekends.
- Construction will begin next month, with the school opening September 2023.

Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools serves over 10,368 students in 20 schools in Red Deer, Blackfalds, Sylvan Lake, Rocky Mountain House, Innisfail, and Olds. It also supports the learning of over 1,015 students in a Home Education Program. The Division is committed to serving children and parents with a complete offering of learning opportunities delivered within the context of Catholic teachings and within the means of the Division.

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