

QUARTERLY REPORT

August 1, 2023 - October 31, 2023



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Quarter 1



**Red Deer Catholic
Regional Schools**

Inspired by Christ. Aspiring to Excellence.

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A Message from the Superintendent of Schools

Welcome to the new school year! The excitement of beginning anew. Education, from my perspective, is the only organization that provides us the opportunity to re-set, re-centre, and renew year after year. We learn from what we tried last year...the successes, the challenges, the risks, and then we adjust or give ourselves permission to walk away and try a different approach. We are thankful to the educators for being vulnerable, for taking risks, for trying something new, specifically:

- The Grade 1-3 teachers across the Division who implemented the new curriculum using a collective leadership approach. They leaned into their pedagogical expertise, the support from their team and administrators in collaborative meetings, and the learning from Dr. Georgiou. There was respect and curiosity in this approach where educators were getting to know each other and their craft in reciprocal ways.
- To our teachers who implemented Schoology both in elementary, middle, and online school, as well as just recently in RDCRS Summer School. A difficult transition but much needed as we continue to learn how to communicate with students and parents effectively on different platforms.
- To educators who continue to focus on trauma-informed practices. We are learning that everyone has a story and we need to meet our students and our teammates where they are without judgment, with hope, and support.

We recognize the blessings of Catholic Education and the shared responsibility of parents, educators, trustees, and clergy as stewards of faith-based education. Our role is to help all children develop their unique, individual capabilities to learn and to live while realizing their responsibility to transform the world by practicing the Catholic faith and values in a pluralistic society.

Together, we have the responsibility of helping students see the relevance of our faith in today's world and solving current problems within a Catholic world-view. We are thankful that we can provide quality inclusive education in our Catholic faith communities where we know every child deserves to be welcomed, respected, safe and cared for in the very best learning environments. We are proud of our success in this first quarter! This success is the result of a collaborative, collective effort from all of us to move Red Deer Catholic forward. As we continue our journey of encountering Christ, may we be open to being nurtured by Christ, and then serving others for Christ.

Dr. Kathleen Finnigan, Superintendent of Schools

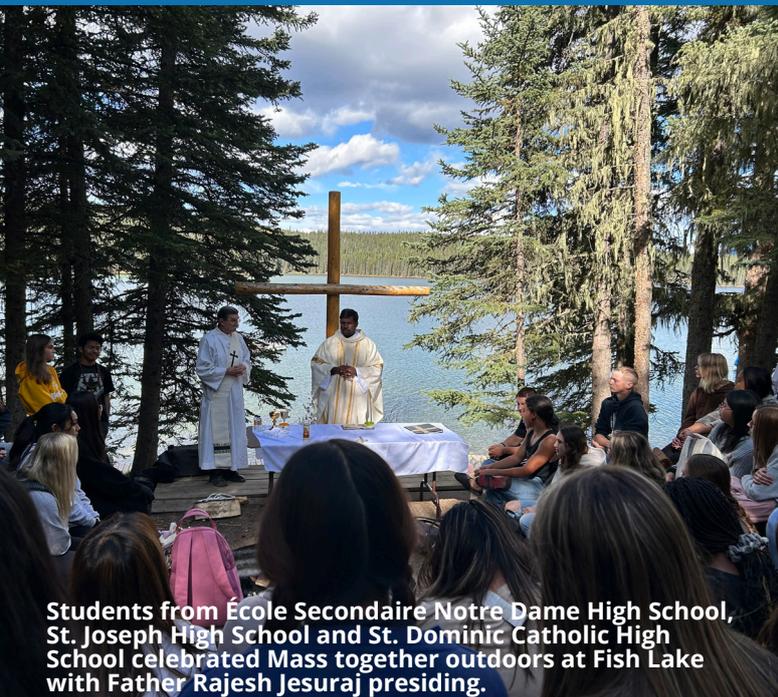
FAITH UPDATE

RDCRS Division Opening:

On August 28, Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools (RDCRS) staff gathered as a Division to celebrate the start of the new school year at St. Joseph High School. Father Curtis Berube celebrated Mass and delivered a homily on how staff can bring the Division theme of 'Inspired by Christ on a Journey to Encounter, Nurture and Serve' to life in classrooms and school communities, with a focus on nurturing their own faith and being authentic faith witnesses to students.



RDCRS staff attended the Division Opening Mass



Students from École Secondaire Notre Dame High School, St. Joseph High School and St. Dominic Catholic High School celebrated Mass together outdoors at Fish Lake with Father Rajesh Jesuraj presiding.

Faith Formation Program:

This year, RDCRS has 44 new teachers who are participating in the first year of Faith Formation, as well as 20 teachers in the second year of Faith Formation. The Faith Formation program began with Mass at St. Mary's Parish on September 19. All Division staff, along with administrators and Faith Coaches, senior administration, and trustees were invited to attend the Mass to join together in Communion and show their support for new teachers as they journey in their Faith.

Theology on Tap:

RDCRS hosted an evening of 'Theology on Tap' at the Craft Beer Commonwealth Tap Room on October 5. Father Paul Kavanagh, Divine Worship Lead for the Archdiocese of Edmonton, shared with Division staff his journey to the priesthood, the importance of the Eucharist, and Eucharistic miracles. Staff had an opportunity to ask questions, build community and be nurtured in their faith.



The Theology on Tap event that took place October 5, 2023.

RDCRS FAITH UPDATE



The RDCRS Faith Team will also be developing a Catholic professional learning curriculum rooted in foundational practices.

This endeavour aims to empower staff members to authentically exemplify their faith, thus enabling them to continue imparting the teachings of Christ to students as authentic faith witnesses. Administrator and teacher Faith Coaches will gather data and voices from their staff and determine the priorities for common professional development to be used throughout the Division.

The Faith Team will also be responsible for creating and delivering this professional development to all school staff in the near future.

New Faith Coach Model:

To support the Strategic Imperative focusing on “Purposefully, Tangible, and Visibly Demonstrate our Faith,” RDCRS has implemented a new Faith Coach Model to support schools in enhanced formation.

The RDCRS Faith Team includes Superintendent, Dr. Kathleen Finnigan, 20 administrator Faith Coaches, 22 teacher Faith Coaches, Youth Ministers, as well as the Religious Education Curriculum Support Lead Teacher and the Director of Early Learning. The RDCRS Faith Team met in October and reviewed their roles and responsibilities.

The Faith Team will focus on:

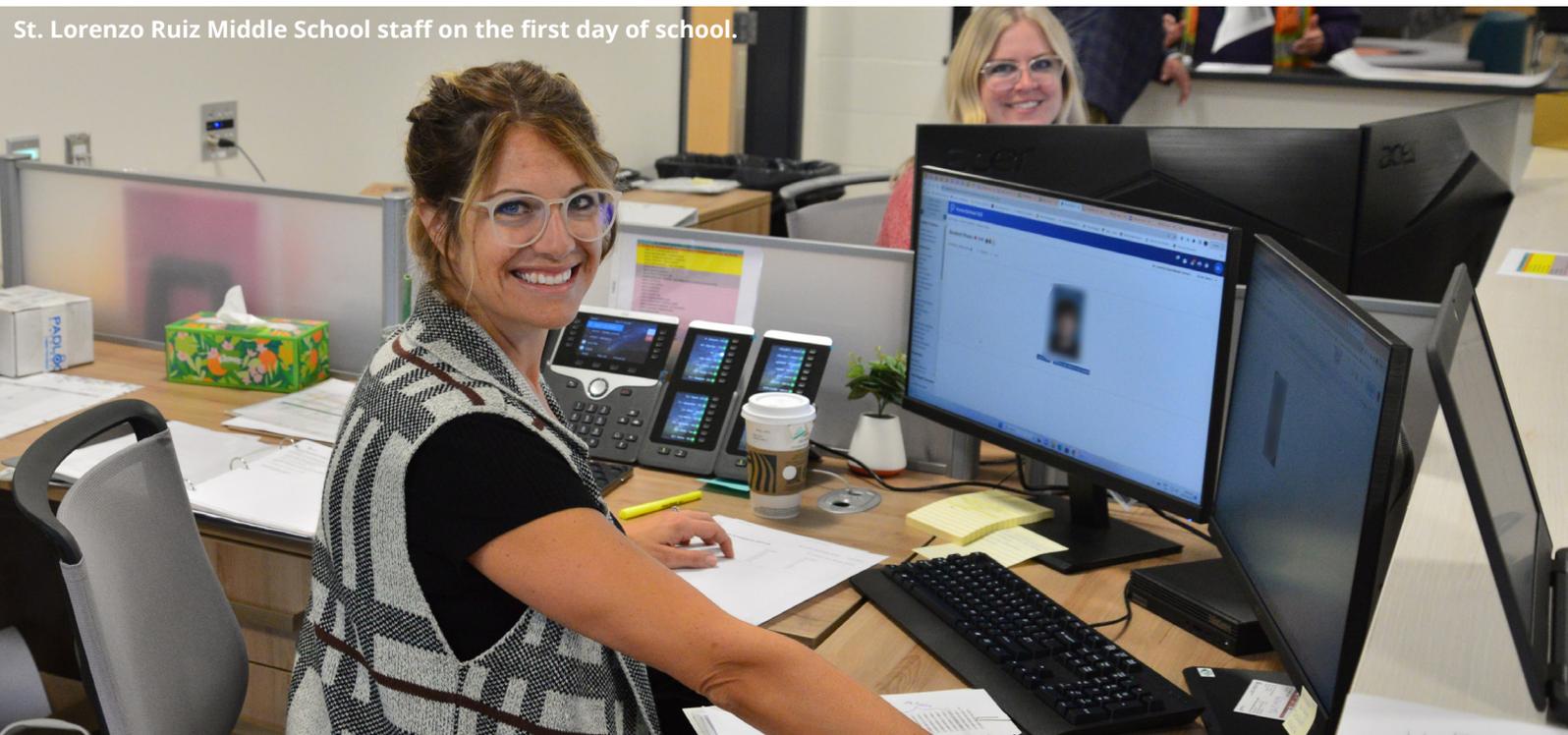
- ✓ Developing and implementing School Improvement Plan Faith Goals in alignment with Division priorities.
- ✓ Delivering professional development sessions to support the school’s faith vision.
- ✓ Facilitating learning about Catholic teachings and fostering prayer experiences within school communities.
- ✓ Cultivating an environment promoting faith sharing and mentorship.
- ✓ Providing curriculum support.
- ✓ Serving as a liaison with the parish and RDCRS Youth Ministers.
- ✓ Leading service initiatives and creating opportunities for social justice and charity.

RDCRS HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Key Highlights:

- 63 new teacher hires
- 112 new support staff hires
- 150 substitute teachers
- 72 support substitutes

St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School staff on the first day of school.



New Recognition Program for Teacher and Educational Assistant Substitutes:

Monthly Gift Card Draws:

- Implementation of monthly gift card draws to recognize outstanding teachers and support substitutes.
- Distribution of gift cards to honour devoted teacher and support substitutes during the month of March. This initiative coincides with Substitute Teacher Appreciation Week, to further highlighting their value.

Professional Development Opportunities for Substitute Teachers:

- Extending invitations to substitutes to participate in ATA Professional Development (PD) sessions.
- Providing opportunities for attendance at conventions, mass gatherings, and faith-based events to build community.

Monthly Gratitude Notes for Substitutes and Educational Assistants:

- Regularly posting thank-you notes on the AESOP platform to express gratitude towards Division teacher and support substitutes.
- Consistent recognition of their vital contributions to the Division's educational community.

Financial Services Update:

The Financial Services Department diligently completed the 2022-2023 financial statements in preparation for the audit, which commenced in mid-October. Schools and departments are working on 2023-24 fall budget updates.

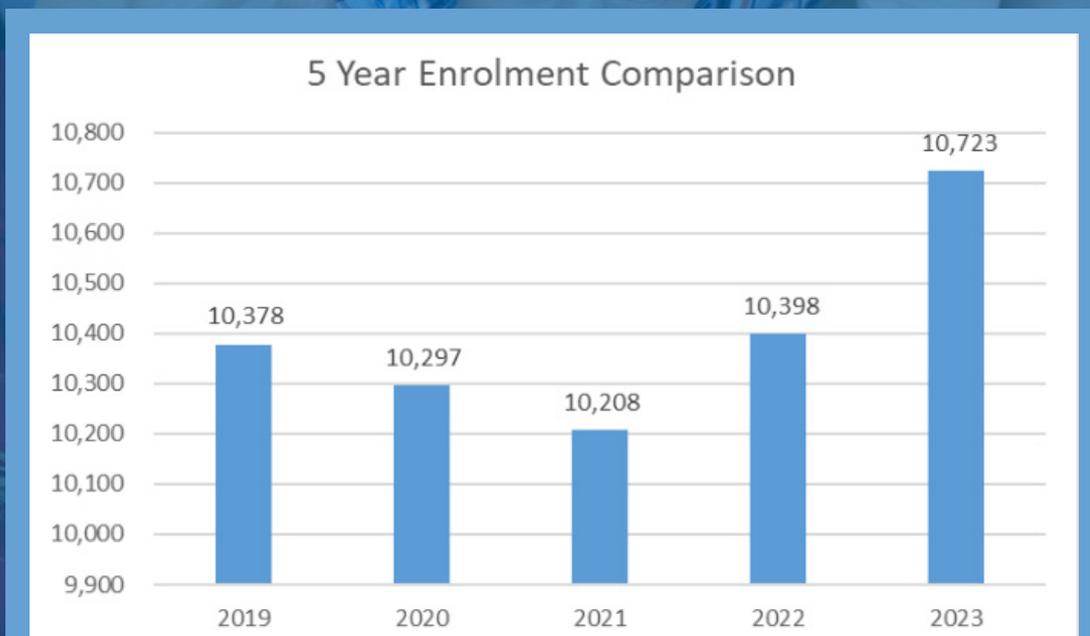
The 2022-2023 fiscal year is the first year that the maximum limit on operating reserves applies to Alberta School Jurisdictions. RDCRS budgeted a deficit in 2022-2023, in part to ensure that operating reserves will fall below the cap. We are on target in ensuring that we are under the operating reserves limit.

Student Population Update:

Prior to 2020, RDCRS experienced continual growth. In both 2020 and 2021, the overall student population declined slightly. In 2022, RDCRS experienced a modest increase of 1.9%, restoring the Division to pre-COVID enrolment levels.

In 2023, RDCRS experienced a notable 3.12% increase in enrolment, returning to pre-pandemic growth rates. However, Early Childhood Services (ECS) presents a unique scenario. In 2023, RDCRS experienced an enrolment increase of 2.78% but the Division has not yet returned to pre-COVID enrolment levels. RDCRS is currently 7.72% lower than 2019 figures.

The Division is also piloting Home Education Kindergarten in 2023/24 and currently has 66 students enrolled.



NEW TEACHER ORIENTATION Update:



New Division teachers and the Associate Superintendent of Curriculum on New Teacher Orientation day.

RDCRS was delighted to welcome 25 new teachers into the RDCRS family during the Division's New Teacher Orientation on August 25. The event began with warm greetings from both the Superintendent and the ATA Local President. The onboarding process included an introduction to the core values of RDCRS and key highlights from the Board of Trustees strategic plan.

During the orientation, staff were provided with a deeper understanding of the Division three-year faith theme. An overview of the Division's Faith Formation Program was also provided, ensuring that new teachers were well-versed in the Division's approach to faith education.

The Division's new teachers also received a comprehensive overview of the benefits available to them from the Human Resources Department. The session concluded with a discussion on strategies to connect with students and build relationships during the first week, as well as tips on preparing classrooms for the first day of school.

RDCRS feels incredibly blessed to have these enthusiastic new members as a part of our faith community. Their energy and dedication will undoubtedly enhance our educational journey at RDCRS.

A special highlight of the day, was hearing testimonials from last year's new teachers, who shared their experiences at RDCRS. Their comments spoke volumes:

"I appreciate the sense of community here. When someone faces hardships, our entire school community comes together, offering personal support, prayers, and a shared connection to God."

"Our Division is exceptionally welcoming and supportive of newcomers, prioritizing tolerance, support, and inclusion with both our students and our community."

"You'll find incredible strength within our community – it's truly a blessing!"

St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Catholic School Pre-Kindergarten students.



RDCRS PRE-KINDERGARTEN UPDATE

RDCRS' Pre-Kindergarten programs welcomed 256 eligible students out of 393 total registrations. RDCRS currently has 17 Pre-Kindergarten programs throughout the Division.

In total, 65 students have met the criteria for a severe/moderate disability, 30 students with a mild disability, and 84 students met the criteria for gifted and talented.

Teachers and staff working with the Division's Pre-Kindergarten students, continue to offer authentic learning experiences while honouring each child's uniqueness.



St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Catholic School Pre-Kindergarten students.

RDCRS has also been able to offer 62 community placements to students.

RDCRS SUMMER SCHOOL Update:

Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools (RDCRS) had another successful Summer School Program this year, providing learning opportunities to over 1,375 high school students across the province, employing a total of 24 full-time teachers. Teachers and students also learned to use RDCRS' new learning management system, Schoology.

RDCRS was able to request funding for 8,434 credits in total, spread throughout the 52 courses offered through the Summer School Program. This year, RDCRS was able to add two French Immersion courses to the courses offered, which will continue to grow in numbers in the upcoming years.

Over the course of the summer, RDCRS had approximately 46 credits dropped for 1 and 3 credit courses and 868 credits dropped for 45 credit courses. In addition to these credits, three students earned credits in their Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) over the summer, seven students earned dual credits, and 43 students earned credits through Work Experience.

RDCRS CAREER PATHWAYS UPDATE



Career Pathways refers to RDCRS programs for students to explore and advance their knowledge and experience in career-associated endeavours, skilled trades and technologies.

These off-campus programs encompass any learning opportunity that occurs outside of traditional school classroom settings.

All Career Pathways programs are connected to educational outcomes, and have a designated, certified teacher associated with the placement, assessment and reporting of the required outcomes.

Our Career Pathway programs include:

- Work Experience,
- Green Certification,
- Registered Apprenticeship, and
- Dual Credit.

RDCRS students taking part in their lab at Olds College.

Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools (RDCRS) continues to experience growth in the career pathways programming through various initiatives, partnerships and community internship opportunities. High school career teams meet regularly to support initiatives that promote success for every student both in high school and beyond.

RDCRS received a secondment opportunity for a part-time School Engagement Coordinator position with CAREERS the Next Generation. This position allows us to focus on students who will benefit from experiential learning through internships, Registered Apprenticeship Programming (RAP) and career awareness education. This three-year investment is focused on increased career readiness, pathway awareness and opportunities.

CAREERS the Next Generation is an integral part of connecting students to industry and industry to schools. Having a member of RDCRS staff within their system, strengthens our ability to ensure our students have authentic opportunities targeted to their needs and the needs of our community and local industry.

Below: The cohort group of students in the Veterinary Technical Assistant Program.



This semester, RDCRS has students enrolled in various dual credit areas including medical terminology, anatomy, physiology, business management, sports management, horticulture, accounting and animal health. After a successful pilot program last year, RDCRS has nine students enrolled in the Veterinary Technical Assistant Certificate program who will graduate from Olds College on June 2, 2024. This semester, RDCRS is partnered with Olds College and the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) in dual credit programming. Next semester, courses will be added in law and social sciences, in partnership with Lethbridge College and Red Deer Polytechnic (RDP).

RDCRS will also begin the pathway to the Healthcare Aide Certificate with RDP. RDCRS applied for and received a \$50,000 dual credit startup grant from Alberta Education for the development of a pre-health sciences certificate in partnership with RDP that we will begin work on for implementation next year.

RDCRS has also begun work with the Central Alberta Collegiate Institute (CACI) model and are solidifying spring offerings in the area of skilled trades with our partnership instructional institutes. Work in this area is expected to intensify as the Division begins to explore this new and exciting educational partnership.

RDCRS has:



students in the Green Certificate Program



students in work experience



students in the Registered Apprenticeship Training (RAP)

The skills learned in these environments serve our students well as they begin to identify their future career paths.

RDCRS

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

UPDATE

RDCRS is actively recruiting international students from Belgium, Brazil, Europe, Italy, Japan, Mexico, and the Netherlands.

As of September 2023, there are 84 students enrolled at RDCRS (including online).

To date, students have been placed at:

- St. Joseph High School (23 students)
- École Secondaire Notre Dame High School (24 students)
- St. Francis of Assisi Middle School (2 students)
- St. Thomas Aquinas Middle School (5 students)
- St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School (3 students)
- St. Dominic Catholic High School (1 student, 2 new students in February 2023)



RDCRS international students take part in a voyageur canoe trip on the North Saskatchewan River.