



**ROCKY  
MOUNTAIN**  
School District #6



## BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

June 2023

### STRATEGIC AND POLICY ISSUES

#### **Policies Under Review** • Karen Shipka, Superintendent

The Board of Education received an update on Policies Under Review webpage communication and engagement. The school communities told the District in the 2023-24 to 2026-27 Strategic Plan Engagement Survey that they want to be more engaged and have direct communication into the policy development process. In response to that feedback, the District created the Policies Under Review webpage, complete with a survey for each policy under consideration. The District communicated via the website, school apps, and Facebook which policies are under consideration and link to this page for further information. The District received 5 pieces of feedback prior to the May 26, 2023 deadline. On May 29, 2023, the Executive Assistant received a request from a principal to leave the engagement period open. The District received 29 pieces of feedback on policy 8600, field trips; one (1) on policy 2950, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy; and one (1) verbal piece of feedback on policy 2900, naming or renaming of schools. The majority of feedback that was received was on policy 8600, field trips. Follow link to read the [Board Report and feedback](#).

#### **Policy development** • Karen Shipka, Superintendent

Third and final reading – NIL

#### **Second reading – Policy 2900, Naming or Renaming Schools**

Ms. Shipka reported on the newly proposed [policy 2900, naming or renaming of schools](#). From time-to-time, the Board may be in a position to name a new school. There may also be times when the Board has reason to consider renaming existing schools, or when representatives of a school community will request that the Board dedicate part of a school building or property in memory of a person. The name of a school, or dedication of a portion thereof, will be decided by the Board following reasonable consultation with members of the school community. The District received one piece of feedback. The District is considering renaming the alternate schools and currently does not currently have a policy in place.

Visit the [Policies Under Review](#) webpage to view the proposed changes. Feedback can be provided until August 25, 2023.

# STRATEGIC AND POLICY ISSUES

## **Second reading – Policy 2950, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy**

The Board of Education is committed to ensuring the privacy, confidentiality, and security of all personal information that it collects, uses, discloses, and maintains in connection with its programs and activities. The Board complies with the *School Act* (“Act”) and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) in relation to the protection of privacy. This [draft policy](#) sets out the Board’s commitment, standards, and expectations regarding the appropriate practices for the collection, use and protection personal information. One piece of feedback was received regarding the retention of school psychologist records. The recommendation has been incorporated into the Records Retention Schedule.

Visit the [Policies Under Review](#) webpage to view the proposed changes. Feedback can be provided until August 25, 2023.

## **Second reading – Policy 4106, Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest**

It is essential that employees recognize their responsibility to ensure confidential information, received as a result of employment with the district, remains confidential. Confidential information is not divulged to anyone other than individuals authorized to receive such information. Disclosure of confidential information may put employees in a position of conflict of Rocky Mountain School District No. 6 policies and practices or may be a breach of the public’s expectation of privacy as described in legislation.

District employees have a duty of loyalty to the District as their employer. This duty requires employees to provide services to the best of their ability regardless of their own personal opinion of Board direction or policy. Honesty and integrity of District employees is above reproach and coupled with impartiality in the conduct of their duties. The actions and conduct of employees must be such as to maintain a high public trust and confidence in the District.

Visit the [Policies Under Review](#) webpage to view proposed [policy 4106, confidentiality and conflict of interest](#). Feedback can be provided until August 25, 2023.

## **Second reading – Policy 8600, Field Trips**

The Board of Education affirms the educational value of well-planned and supervised outdoor classroom activities, curricular, and extra-curricular field trips. The primary purpose of these trips should be to enhance the educational experiences of the participants. These experiences enrich the curriculum and provide opportunities for young people to develop their academic, intellectual, social, and physical capabilities. Such trips will supplement the curricular and extra-curricular programs in schools.

Rocky Mountain School District No. 6 wants to thank the many people who took time to complete the first reading [feedback](#) on policy 8600, field trips. Several themes emerged:

- 1) **Walking field trip supervision ratio** - Supervision ratios for walking field trips are at the discretion of the school principal. Several pieces of feedback quoted a 1:6 ratio for K-3. 1:6 ratios for K-3 are for low risk field trips. Walking field trips (typically within a 5km radius around the school) are an extension of the classroom and fall into a different category. Supervision ratios are at the discretion of the principal.
- 2) **Inclusive language** – The District received very articulate feedback about inclusive language. We thank our community for pointing out those pieces. The language has been removed and a revised version will be presented for second reading. It is the goal of the district to ensure that all students can participate in field trips.

- 3) **National parks and Nipika** - Schools are encouraged to take their students to those locations but due to their remoteness and access to emergency services, they meet the definition of backcountry therefore are deemed to be higher care. We heard that the language “excessive risk” is confusing about K-3 classes going to our National Parks and Nipika. Language and or further clarification of “excessive risk” is being contemplated. In addition, the decision was made to provide each school with a satellite communication device that would help mitigate the level of risk when going to locations where cellular service is unavailable. This will allow classes to visit National Parks and Nipika and have the ability to call emergency services if needed.
- 4) **Open bodies of water** – If the field trip is on an open body of water (ex. canoeing, kayaking, rafting) or in the open body of water (e.g. swimming) it is a higher care field trip. Being on shore, near a body of water does not make the trip higher care unless the field trip is more than 30 minutes from emergency services. Swimming in a pool with a lifeguard is a low risk activity. Classes who offer swimming lessons at a pool are subject to the rules and ratios of the facility especially when a lifeguard is not present.

Policy review goes through a three-reading process over several months. Amendments will be made based on feedback received. Public can continue to provide feedback on this policy and others currently under consideration by the Board of Education by visiting the [Policies Under Review](#) webpage. Feedback will be accepted until August 25, 2023.

#### All three reading – Policy 11700, Fees and Refunds

Ms. Shipka reported on proposed policy 11700, fees and refunds. These fees and dues are specifically required for JUSTB4 programming. The policy received all three readings at the meeting.

## OPERATIONAL ISSUES

#### Major and minor capital Program • Alan Rice

The *School Act* provides that the Minister of Education requires a Board of Education to prepare and submit a capital plan. Five-year capital plans have been established as the appropriate time period for Government capital planning purposes. The Ministry of Education and Child Care utilizes a web-based Capital Asset Planning System (CAPS) which school districts must use for their annual Five-Year Capital Plan Submissions. [View the 2024/25 – Five year major and minor capital plan summary.](#)

#### 2023-24 Annual Budget • Alan Rice

In accordance with section 113 of the *School Act* the Minister is requiring Annual Budgets to be prepared, adopted by bylaw, and submitted by June 30, 2023. The Board of Education approved the 2023-2024 Annual Budget Bylaw in the amount of \$63,871,510. [View the 2023-24 Annual Budget.](#)

## REPORTS

#### Budget Utilization • Alan Rice

Mr. Rice presented the Board of Education a report on year-to-date operating expenditures compared to budget and prior year. Expenditures to date are below budget by 1.53% and greater than the prior year by \$2,706,000 for the same timeframe. The operating variance of actual to budget for year-to-date is considered reasonable.

# REPORTS CONT'D

## **Accessibility Act • Sharon Collin**

In April 2022, the *Accessible British Columbia Regulation* required that all prescribed organizations within the education sector create an Accessibility Committee and Accessibility Plan to be approved by September 2023. The Accessibility Plan will outline how the district will find and remove barriers to accessibility for those with a disability. The Accessibility Plan for Rocky Mountain School District, in compliance with *Accessible British Columbia Regulation*, will be available in September 2023, with subsequent request for approval.

For more information, read the [Board Report](#).

## **Sexual orientation and gender identities (SOGI) • Sharon Collin**

In 2016, the B.C. Human Rights Code was amended to ensure that gender identity and expression are protected for all individuals. B.C.'s K – 12 curriculum includes a focus on valuing diversity and respecting differences, as well as human rights and responses to discrimination. All staff endeavor to make all students feel valued and safe in their classroom, sending a message of acceptance to students from different family structures, cultures and the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

There is no "SOGI curriculum". However, throughout the K-12 curriculum students and teachers explore the topic of human rights and what it means to value diversity and respect differences. Educators in RMSD are encouraged to consider developmentally appropriate topics and learning resources when planning instruction. For more information, read the [Board Report](#).

## **J. Alfred Laird Elementary School climbing wall • Alan Rice and Al Ure**

The climbing wall at J. Alfred Laird Elementary School has not been available for public use since community use was halted during COVID. The climbing has historically been available for use by the District as well as general members of the public.

The District's liability insurance provides coverage for school sanctioned events, which includes clubs, sports or other activities outside of regular school hours. The District requires proof of insurance for non-school sanctioned events for use by employees, other youth groups, community/non-profit groups or commercial users ([District Practice 6000, 2.1](#)). The District requires insurance to be in place for all non-school sanctioned events which is a prudent risk mitigation approach and consistent throughout the Province. For more information, read the [Board Report](#).