

May 31, 2022

Dear Parents, Caregivers, and Stakeholders,

As we approach the end of our boundary development process within our Division, the Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools (RDCRS) Board of Trustees and Senior Administration Team would like to thank our parents and stakeholders for their continued patience, engagement and feedback regarding the reconfiguration of our school boundaries.

At the May 24 Regular Board Meeting, the RDCRS Board of Trustees voted in favour of Option Six out of the six Boundary Development options presented to them by the RDCRS Boundary Development Team. A detailed map will be provided as these conditions are finalized.

Option Six was approved subject to the following conditions;

- That the Mackenzie Trails and Gaetz Lake Sanctuary areas be part of the Waskasoo Area and therefore part of the St. Thomas Aquinas Catchment Area;
- To direct Administration to investigate the feasibility and if deemed appropriate, move the area on the west side of Red Deer, south of Highway 11 and north of the Red Deer River, to become part of the St. Lorenzo Ruiz and St. Joseph High School catchment areas;
- And that the recommendations of changes within the transportation processes as presented in the May 24, 2022 Boundary Development Report be accepted and to commence at the start of the 2023-2024 school year.

As RDCRS continues to prepare for the opening of St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School, middle school boundaries reconfiguration needed to be examined to ensure all schools within the Division are operating at a viable capacity with roughly the same utilization rate. The RDCRS Boundary Development Team developed and evaluated multiple scenarios, collected feedback from stakeholders, trustees and school-based administrators, and presented six viable options to RDCRS' Board of Trustees since January.

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.

The Boundary Development process also provided us with an opportunity to identify ways to improve the overall student transportation system at RDCRS.

Transportation Changes - Implemented August 2023

Through the RDCRS Boundary Development process, it became apparent that we must review our Transportation plan in our Division. RDCRS remains committed to providing a quality service for our families, however, to ensure ride times remain reasonable as our Division grows, the following needs to be reviewed and adjusted. These changes will be implemented in August 2023 in order to provide families with time to make adjustments.

Transportation:

Moving forward we will make changes in four areas of transportation across our Division:

1. Strive to create more consolidated stops. All routes will be adjusted to consolidate stops where feasible. Students' walk times to their bus stops will increase due to moving to a system of consolidated stops. We will continue to examine the number of stops in order to ensure reasonable ride times.
2. Express routes will be utilized to reduce ride times. As we focus on an efficient transportation system, bell times will be examined in the future and adjusted Division-wide to support potential express routes.
3. For registered riders, only two addresses will be utilized; the primary address and one additional address with appropriate joint custody orders on file. Families may incur the costs of having students take an additional seat on a second route.
4. Non-registered bus students will not be permitted access to transportation, for example, to join a friend at their house after school, and bus-registered students must ride their designated routes only.

Grandfathering

1. It should be noted that any grandfathering will result in an increased cost for the Division, for example, transportation in the first year of grandfathering, staffing, and resource allocation.
2. Any students entering Grade 6 will be required to attend their designated school.
3. Students in grades 7, 8, and 9 can choose to remain at their current school if they fall out of catchment at the start of the 2023-2024 school year. Transportation will be provided for *one year only*. Following that year, transportation will be at the parents' expense and organization, for example, The City of Red Deer Transit system.

Please note, that the exception for grandfathering and transportation would be any students who are part of a congregated program, for example, the Blended Program at St. Francis of Assisi Middle School.

Implementation of the new middle school boundaries for St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School will take effect in September 2023.

We are grateful to all of our stakeholders who have been on this journey with us and who have provided their input, suggestions and ideas. Your feedback helped us shape our boundary decision and we appreciate the time and effort that went into providing this information, and look forward to continued collaboration in the future.

God bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Finnigan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'F'.

Kathleen Finnigan
Superintendent of Schools