



News Release

RDCRS expands online learning platform to the middle school level

For immediate release – April 6, 2022

RDCRS will be launching their new online middle school program this spring, replacing the Division's At-Home Learning (AHL) Program, and will be housed at St. Thomas Aquinas Middle School.

RDCRS recognizes that online learning is a viable option for students and a strong practice to personalize learning for students. The new online middle school program, which is similar to the current Division high school program, is designed to provide students an opportunity to choose online learning and will be designated as a program-of-choice within Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools. Given the lower enrollment in the AHL Program in elementary grades, no online programming will be offered in elementary at this time.

"Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools is committed to delivering quality Catholic education where innovation and inquiry drive learning. The new online learning community being formed at St. Thomas Aquinas Middle School will meet students where they are and develop and support them in their personal journey to where they need and want to be. This development is yet one more example of how technology and our innovative people at RDCRS are continuing to advance our mission, inspired by Christ and aspiring to excellence, where all are welcome and all belong," says Kim Pasula, Board Chair at Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools.

In examining the future of the At-Home Learning Program, RDCRS saw that enrollment steadily decreased and the funding model established by Alberta Education did not allow for sustainable staffing. As a result, RDCRS will not be operating the AHL Program next year. The AHL Program

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was always intended to be a response to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and provide choice with COVID-19 response for RDCRS families.

“We want to ensure families continue to have a choice to learn online and we look forward to the expansion of the Division’s successful high school online model to the middle school level, where we hope to continue to offer students significant ways to personalize their learning path,” said Ryan Sawula, Associate Superintendent of Curriculum at Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools.

Families interested in learning more about the online middle school program are encouraged to attend the upcoming virtual open house on Tuesday, May 3rd starting at 6:30 p.m. More information about the open house and how to enroll for the 2022/23 school year will be released in the coming weeks.

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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