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RDCRS New Curriculum Implementation and Staggered Entry Process

For immediate release – October 3, 2022

Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools (RDCRS) kicked off their school year with an optional staggered entry process as well as implementation of the new curriculum.

As RDCRS has experienced the benefits of a staggered entry approach over the past two years, school communities were given the option to utilize the approach whereby half of the student population begins the first day of school and the other half the second day.

Input from families and staff was gathered via surveys, with some of the Division's schools opting to employ this method of start up. The feedback from the staggered entry approach was very positive and worked well to support students as they transitioned back to school and into their classes. As this was optional, not all schools chose this route based on parent and staff responses yet also had a very successful school start up.

Implementation of the new curriculum is also in full swing with the Division using a measured approach that considers the demands placed on, and needs of, teachers and students as they move forward with this process.

The Division's elementary schools are aware that their key priority within their school improvement planning this year is new curriculum implementation, which allows them to narrow their focus and utilize professional development and collaborative time to support teachers with their implementation work.

Kindergarten to Grade Three teachers are implementing the Mathematics and English Language Arts and Literature new curriculums. Kindergarten to Grade Six are implementing the new

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Physical Education and Wellness curriculum. All but three schools at RDCRS are implementing some level of mandatory curriculum implementation; these would be our three high schools.

In addition to the mandatory implementation of subject areas, RDCRS also has teachers choosing to participate in the optional piloting of the next phase of the new curriculum. There are seven teachers choosing optional implementation for English Language Arts and Literature in Grades 4 to 6 and four teachers in Grades 4 to 5 Mathematics, four teachers in Grade 4 Science, three in Grade 5 Science, and one teacher piloting the Grade 6 French Immersion Language Arts.

“We believe strongly that classroom teachers are the instructional experts and implementing a plan to ensure this expertise is the strongest voice in our curriculum implementation. We will continue to focus on a measured collaborative approach that fosters innovation in our classrooms,” said Ryan Sawula, Associate Superintendent of Curriculum at Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools.

School leadership teams will continue to meet to collaborate on implementation plans and share strategies and best practices. Schools have also been provided the funds allocated from Alberta Education for curriculum implementation, professional development and collaboration, and have developed strong launch events to introduce the new curriculum and establish safe risk-taking environments for collaborating and examining instructional practices.

Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools serves over 10,480 students in 21 schools in Red Deer, Blackfalds, Sylvan Lake, Rocky Mountain House, Innisfail, and Olds. It also supports the learning of over 600 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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