

# Rocky Mountain School District

## What We Heard 2025



### **A Reflection of Community & Staff Engagement in Rocky Mountain School District**

As part of the Rocky Mountain School District's commitment to continuous improvement, the district reviews, refreshes, and publishes an annual operational plan of important objectives for the upcoming school year. These objectives are guided by the Board of Education's Strategic Plan, The Ministry of Education and Child Care's legislation on Enhancing Student Learning, and by local feedback at schools, through staff and community engagement as well as school planning.

During the 2024-2025 school year, Rocky Mountain District Staff sought out feedback from staff and community members to better inform and guide goal setting for the upcoming school year. The district is thankful for all of the feedback offered through engagement opportunities. Much of the feedback was informative, insightful, and assisted the district team in refining the district operational plans. The purpose of this report is two-fold.

- To share themes associated with the feedback received. It is not possible to consider each piece of feedback on its own. However, much of the feedback could be grouped into themes related to a specific topic of interest.
- To show the reader how, and where, feedback was incorporated into the operational plan. Not all feedback can be included in the work of one school year. In some cases feedback was insightful and creative but for certain reasons could not be included in this year's plan. We have tried to describe where this feedback may fit in the future.

Here are general themes related to Rocky Mountain School District successes and challenges. There were also many new ideas for the district to consider

moving forward.

## **What's Going Well**

### **Caring & Inclusive Schools**

- Many people feel schools are welcoming and safe.
- Students are learning about different cultures, including Indigenous teachings.
- Clubs, student leadership, and wellness programs help students feel they belong.

### **Support for All Learners**

- Teachers and staff are working hard to help every student succeed.
- There are programs for students who need extra help with reading, writing, and math.
- Schools are using creative ways to keep students interested in learning.

### **Working Together**

- Staff are learning from each other and from community partners.
- There are strong connections with Elders, families, and local groups.
- Outdoor learning, food programs, and trades classes are helping students learn real-life skills.

### **Taking Care of the Environment**

- School gardens, recycling, and outdoor education are teaching students about sustainability.
- Many people support place-based learning and other sustainable practices such as using less paper and plastic and recycling when available.

## Challenges

### Too Much Focus on Certain Topics

- Some people feel there is too much focus on gender identity or Indigenous content.
- Others want more balance and to include all cultures and viewpoints.

### Classroom Challenges

- Many said classes are too big, and students with special needs don't get enough help.
- Some noted that teachers are feeling tired and need more support.

### Attendance & Engagement

- Some students are missing too much school.
- Families and staff want better ways to help students stay interested and come to school regularly.

### Technology Concerns

- Some people want more digital tools and AI learning.
- Others think there is too much screen time and not enough face-to-face learning.

## New Ideas & Suggestions

### More Life Skills

- Some people want classes that teach real-world skills like cooking, budgeting, and job prep.

### Better Support for Staff

- Some staff want more training in areas like mental health, Indigenous education, and leadership.
- Staff also want more time to plan and work together.

## **Improved Facilities**

- Some suggestions included better playgrounds, more outdoor spaces, and cleaner, safer bathrooms.
- Some students asked for gender-neutral bathrooms with more privacy.

## **Creative Learning**

- More arts, music, and hands-on learning were suggested.
- Students want more field trips, clubs, and fun ways to learn.

## **Community Connections**

- People want stronger ties between schools and the community.
- Ideas included student showcases, family events, and learning from Elders and local experts.

## **What We Heard & The Operational Plan**

District staff carefully considered all feedback. Areas where staff and community feedback figure prominently in the upcoming operational plan are:

1. The need to provide learning and professional development for Indigenous content is supported by goals in the plan to Advance Truth and Reconciliation by helping educators integrate Indigenous content into school environments and instruction.
2. To support employees of Rocky Mountain School District, the district continues its commitment to implementing the initiatives of the District Wellness Committee in the coming year. The district is also committing to supporting employees who are absent from work to be able to return to work healthy.
3. In response to the requests to provide “real-world” learning opportunities to students the district will continue its plan to increase the number of Dual-Credit learning opportunities with our local colleges.
4. The request to meet the educational pressures of a complex digital world is capture in the operational plan goal to emphasize teaching and learning about AI and cybersecurity.

5. In response to concerns about student attendance, the district will continue to implement strategies to improve student attendance in the 2025-2026 school year.
6. Staff have put forward numerous creative ideas about ways the district could teach sustainability to students as well as be sustainable in its own practices. To support these ideas, the district will implement climate healthy action grants in support of unique local initiatives.
7. With respect to some of the other feedback that is not included directly in the plan, the district would like to offer the following considerations:
  - The district has an enduring commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion as well as an unwavering commitment to continue to enhance our relationships with Indigenous people and local Indigenous partners. This work is challenging and ongoing.
  - The district is proud to announce that music programs at David Thompson Secondary and J. Alfred Laird continue to grow. There are now music programs supported in all three of the district's zones. As well, the district approved two new learning academies for the upcoming year: an Equine Studies Academy at DTSS, and an Outdoor Education Academy in Golden.
  - During the previous school year the district supported 819 school field trips across three communities. These are trips involving bus transportation and there are likely additional learning opportunities beyond school walls not captured in this number.