

DATE: November 3, 2020

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Impact of Changes to the Regional Collaborative Service Delivery (RCSD)
(Response to Request for Information #079)

ORIGINATOR: Kathy Muhlethaler, Assistant Superintendent

**RESOURCE
STAFF:** Ann Parker, Natalie Prytuluk

REFERENCE: [September 22, 2020, Board meeting](#) (Trustee Dunn)

ISSUE

The following information was requested:

- Impact of changes: Provide information on the changes to RCSD, and how this has impacted the Division in terms of funding, services to students, and the ability for cross-ministry collaboration.
- Use of funds: How has administration used the re-allocated funds from RCSD for this school year? How has this impacted the number of mental health therapists and other health care professionals available to students in schools compared to the 2019-2020 school year?

BACKGROUND

At the September 22, 2020 public Board meeting, Trustee Dunn stated that the Board has received a significant amount of community advocacy about how the changes to the Regional Collaborative Service Delivery (RCSD) may impact children's mental health services.

CURRENT SITUATION

Impact of changes:

In spring 2020, Alberta Education released their new funding framework and articulated that their goals were to increase the share of funding going into classrooms, contain cost growth, allocate funding predictably, assure the long-term viability of rural schools, improve key performance data available to parents, and foster collaboration among school authorities to realize economies of scale, create centres of excellence and encourage best practices. Further intentions were to reduce red tape and duplication, increase local flexibility, simplify planning/reporting and direct funding to the classroom.

Although RCSD operated as a cross-ministry program, all funding was provided by the Education Ministry and was intended to support school-aged children and youth in accessing educational programming. The full portion of funds that had previously been allocated for use by Edmonton Public Schools under the Edmonton Regional Collaborative Delivery model (\$11,543,602) have been accounted for and redirected to our Specialized Learning Supports (formerly Inclusive Learning) department for the 2020-2021 school year. This redirection of RCSD funds has ensured the continuance of school-linked specialized service teams and allowed for the contracting of some highly specialized positions from Alberta Health Services. In addition, \$2.5 million will be directed to contracted services for external specialized assessment.

Previously, Home Care through Alberta Health Services provided services to Edmonton Public Schools for a respiratory therapist or registered nurse in partnership with Edmonton Regional Collaborative Service Delivery. This service provided training such as respiratory care, G-tube feeding or catheterization to Division staff to support the complex medical needs of students. For the 2020-2021 year, Home Care support for schools has been discontinued. Parents can continue to access Home Care services; however, schools cannot. The Division will contract external service providers to provide training to schools as needed. Funds received from RCSD have been allocated to support this contract agreement.

With the redirection of RCSD funds to the Specialized Learning Support (SLS) grant, we have increased flexibility to allocate these funds to target our supports where we need them to best serve students, families and schools.

Use of funds:

The redirection of RCSD funds to our school board, in combination with funding from the new specialized learning supports envelope, has allowed for the continuance of school-linked specialized service teams and the contracting of some highly specialized positions from Alberta Health Services. In addition, \$2.5 million will be directed to contracted services for external specialized assessment.

Nine school-linked specialized service teams are accessible to schools and provide direct service to Kindergarten to Grade 12 students across the Division. The complement of specialized consultant support consists of the following:

- 115 FTE for rehabilitation and low-incidence services (Speech-Language pathologists, Speech and Language Pathology Assistants, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Adapted Physical Education specialists, Assistive Technology for Learning specialists, Audiologists, Braillists, Deaf and Hard of Hearing consultants and Vision consultants)
- 78 FTE for psycho-social/mental health services (Diversity, SOGI and Comprehensive School Health Consultants, Education/Behavior specialists, Psychologists, Mental Health Consultants, Clinical Social Workers, Mental Health Nurse, Mental Health Therapy Assistants, School Family Liaisons and a Transition teacher).
- 28.6 FTE for learning and cultural services (Reading Specialists, English as a Second Language and Intercultural Consultants).

How has this impacted the number of mental health therapists and other health care professionals available to students in schools compared to the 2019-2020 school year?

Rehabilitation and Low Incidence Services	2019-2020	2020-2021
Speech-Language Pathology Consultant	46.8	46.6
Speech-Language Therapy Assistants (SLA) ¹	26.9	18.9
Occupational Therapy Consultants (OT) ¹	34.1	28.2
Physical Therapy Consultants (PT) ¹	5.4	4.4
Respiratory Therapists/ Nurse	0.6	0.4

Adapted Physical Education Consultant	3.2	3.2
Audiologists	2.7	2.8
Braillist and Braille Assistants	1.3	1.0
Deaf/Hard of Hearing consultants	3.5	3.5
Vision Consultants	3.0	3.0
Assistive Technology Consultants	3.0	3.0
Total	130.5	115.0
Psycho/Social, Mental Health Services	2019-2020	2020-2021
Diversity/SOGI consultants	1.6	1.6
Comprehensive School Health Consultants	1.9	1.9
Education Behavior Specialists	10.5	10.5
Psychologists	16.5	23.6
Mental Health Therapist (AHS)	15	6.0
Mental Health Consultants	0	9.0
Clinical Social Workers	10.8	10.8
Mental Health Nurse	1.0	1.0
Child Development Workers /Mental Health Therapy Assistants	1.7	2.0
School Family Liaisons	8.8	8.8
Mental Health Transition Teacher	1.0	1.0
Total	68.8	76.2
Learning and Cultural Services	2019-2020	2020-2021
Reading Specialists	11.8	10.8
ESL Consultant	9.0	9.0
Intercultural Consultants	6.8	6.8
Total	27.6	26.6

¹ Reductions to OT, SLA and PT staff are a result of changes to the coding criteria for speech and language eligibility which results in a narrower group of children meeting this criteria in Kindergarten.

Services through Specialized Learning Supports multidisciplinary teams continue to be provided to support student needs from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

KEY POINTS

Use bullet points to summarize the key information you are providing.

- In spring 2020, Alberta Education released their new funding framework and articulated that their goals were to increase the share of funding going into classrooms, contain cost growth, allocate funding predictably, assure the long-term viability of rural schools, improve key performance data available to parents, and foster collaboration among school authorities to realize economies of scale, create centres of excellence and encourage best practices.
- The full portion of funds that had previously been allocated for use by Edmonton Public Schools under the Edmonton Regional Collaborative Delivery model (\$11,543,602) have been accounted for and redirected to our Specialized Learning Supports (formerly Inclusive Learning) department for the 2020-2021 school year.
- The redirection of RCSD funds to our school board, in combination with funding from the new specialized learning supports envelope, has allowed for the continuance of school-linked specialized service teams and the contracting of some highly specialized positions from Alberta Health Services.

AP:lb