

January 29, 2024

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The Senior Administration team and the Board of Trustees would like to thank you for your attendance at our public Engagement Forum that took place on January 10, 2024 and the input you provided in the subsequent online feedback form. The feedback is summarized in the [Blackfalds Engagement Report](#) and includes the investigation of new ideas that were identified in the feedback process.

Based on the availability of space in one of our own Division buildings that delivers programming at the middle school level and financial considerations, a recommendation was shared with the Board of Trustees at the January 26, 2024 Board Meeting. For more additional information please see the [Blackfalds Engagement Report](#). The Board of Trustees carefully reviewed all of the options outlined within the Board Report and a motion was passed to direct senior administration to create space at St. Gregory the Great Catholic School and temporarily move select middle school grade levels to St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School in September 2024. This temporary move of students would be in effect for three years until the new school being built in Blackfalds is ready for occupancy with an expected completion date of the fall of 2027.

The Board of Trustees agreed with the recommendation that before determining the exact grade configuration to move the following steps will be taken:

- *Offer an open house at St. Lorenzo Ruiz School specifically for all students and parents from St. Gregory the Great Catholic School who could be impacted by a middle school move.*
- *Offer parents and students the choice to remain at St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School for the remainder of their middle school years upon the opening of the new school and provide transportation equal to the parameters set for a 'school of choice'.*
- *Continue to deny non-resident student applications during the next three (3) years at St. Gregory the Great Catholic School.*
- *Develop a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document to help parents understand elements of the process and reasons for decisions.*
- *Provide a transportation document to explain the process and the logistics of transporting a contingent of middle school students to St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School including the plan for students with complex needs.*
- *Send an intention form for all students and parents impacted by a middle school move to indicate their expected enrollment choice if their child was moved during the three years.*
 - *Examine the data produced from the intent form to determine the necessary grade configuration to ensure space for the three years.*

Although the decision has been made to move a group of middle school students to St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School in Red Deer, our team feels it will be beneficial to work through the steps noted in the recommendation before deciding exactly which grades will move. This will help ensure that the appropriate amount of students are moved, no grades are moved needlessly and that no unnecessary pressure is put on the St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School community for this temporary influx of Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools students. These numbers can only be determined by examining the intention forms for all families in these communities.

Senior administration has been tasked to complete the steps outlined above so that a recommendation can be made to the Board at the February board meeting.

Senior administration would like to invite parents and students to an open house at St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School on Wednesday, February 7 at 6:30 pm. ([150 Kingston Drive, Red Deer](#)) Although it is still to be determined which grades will be moving, we will invite any family with children in grades 6-9 in the next three years. This would then include any St. Gregory the Great students who will be in grade 4 or higher for the 2024-25 school year.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kathleen Finnigan
Superintendent of Schools