

The Chinook's Edge School Board thanked the provincial government for [\\$1.1 million dollars](#) announced in July to address [enrollment growth pressures](#). At its [September meeting](#), [trustees approved](#) spending it on:

- hiring of additional staff to address specific pressure points in schools
- release time for kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers so they can complete testing that Alberta Education has asked divisions to complete for the first time
- the purchase of Chromebooks to support the provincial direction of no smart devices in school and to accommodate the provincial direction of moving achievement tests and diploma exams online
- increased time of the safety coordinator to implement Hour Zero, an emergency management program adopted by Chinook's Edge this year

The Board has [begun its search](#) for a new Superintendent. Kurt Sacher, who has served as Superintendent for 14 years has announced he will retire at the end of the school year. The Board [hopes to announce](#) its selection early in 2025.

[Advocacy](#) for a new high school in the growing community of Sylvan Lake is a focus for the Board. The Board's top request on its capital plan is a new high school, which would be a collegiate model school in partnership with Red Deer Catholic, the Town of Sylvan Lake, and other partners including post secondary institutions and CAREERS. The Board plans to [share advocacy efforts](#) with Red Deer Catholic School Division.

The Board was pleased to learn that the number of students learning in summer time programs was [up this year](#). Summer school participation rose from 163 students in 2023 to 191 in 2024. In the off-campus work-experience program, there was an increase from 164 students in 2023 to 236 students in 2024. The Jumpstart program allows students to learn about the Google operating environment. In total 186 students participated, while 142 completed six credits earning themselves a Chromebook. The number of credits earned in Jumpstart increased by 32 per cent when comparing 2023 to 2024.

Trustees learned that the [division hired 48 new teachers](#) this fall, [up from 38 new teachers in 2023-24](#) and 37 new teachers at the start of the 2022-23 school year. Administration shared the [increase was due](#) to a slight increase in enrolment and was also due to teacher retirements at the end of last school year.

The Westglen Bike Mechanics program [pedaled into high gear](#) this fall, with the donation of 18 high end, extra light alloy bikes. The bikes came from Texas, and due to the collaboration of a number of organizations and individuals to transport the donation and get it across the border, the bikes arrived in Didsbury a few weeks ago. The Bike Mechanics program got its start after the Board provided a \$5,000 innovation grant to the school last year.