

ALBERTA SCHOOL
Counsellor

Fall 2021



**Skills Canada Alberta inspires, develops and
elevates Alberta's youth**

Start your day with a healthy breakfast

**Alberta Career Development
Conference highlights**

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OUR INNOVATIVE
PROGRAMMING AND
SEE IT IN ACTION
AT OPEN HOUSE ON
OCTOBER 28.

DETAILS AT

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Skills Canada Alberta is staying connected to inspire, develop and elevate Alberta's youth

By Victoria Anderson



Connecting students to innovative and motivating career exploration opportunities is the driving force behind the various Skills Canada Alberta (SCA) programs. SCA aims to inspire students to explore their passions and interests, and to develop their skills. We work to elevate and showcase the extraordinary talents of Alberta's future workforce and to provide a platform where they can discover the career opportunities available to them in the trades and technologies.

Through our diverse programs, SCA has built a reputation for effectively inspiring Alberta's youth to pursue trade and technology courses in junior high and high school, and to become masters of their chosen trade and technology career with their post-secondary education.

Just like the rest of Alberta, we have faced nearly two years of

challenges while navigating the unknown in the midst of this global pandemic. In 2020-21, we delivered a full programming calendar and maintained participation numbers similar to an average year. Thanks to the dedication of our volunteers, teachers and partners, we reached nearly 16,000 students across the province with our unique platforms for skill development and career exploration.

A key challenge in this environment was the transformation of hands-on and experiential programs to virtual or in-classroom delivery. Our community of industry and education volunteers worked together to make this a reality.

"Our volunteers are the backbone of our organization, providing the expertise and passion needed to create unparalleled opportunities for students to develop their skills and showcase their talents. This year was no different; our

volunteers went above and beyond having the bravery to try something new and host our programs virtually,” explains Chris Browton, executive director of Skills Canada Alberta.

Some of the highlights of our 2020-21 year were:

- Launching Try-A-Trade® Takeout, reaching 9200 students with 34 hands-on activities.
- Hosting virtual Regional & Provincial Skills Canada competitions for 431 secondary and 67 post-secondary students.
- Team Alberta earning medals in 45 of the 49 contest areas at the Skills Canada Virtual National Competition.

For the upcoming school year SCA pledges to continue pushing boundaries in our program delivery, making it as accessible as possible to Alberta’s youth and educators. While we hope to deliver our programs in person this year, we will continue to plan for all scenarios and are ready to do whatever it takes to provide opportunity and impact.

Our calendar of programming for 2021-22 includes:

- Cardboard Chariot Races – October 28 and 29, 2021
- Skills Exploration Days – December 1, 2021
- Skills in the Classroom



- Try-A-Trade® Takeout
- Girls Exploring Trades & Technologies
- Qualifying, Regional & Provincial Skills Canada Competitions
- Team Alberta at the Skills Canada National Competition

Unsure where to start or what programs are the best fit for your students? Kick things off with Skills in the Classroom! Our education facilitator, Randi Cox, can come to your classroom with workshops and more detailed information on the rest of our programs – she’ll help you find the perfect fit!

Contact Randi to bring Skills to your classroom, and check out our full calendar of programming at skillsalberta.com. ■

30 years of inspiring, developing and elevating Alberta’s skilled youth.

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Business Aviation program soaring to new heights

Over the next 10 years, there is an expected need for over 260,000 new pilots to enter the industry, due to retirement, attrition and post-COVID recovery demand.

Keyano College, based in Fort McMurray, is meeting this demand in a unique way: students can earn their commercial and private pilot's licence, as well as a business diploma with absolutely no previous training.

The program

Keyano's program is a cut above the rest as it doesn't require any previous training or qualifications; you can start having never set foot into a cockpit. Most programs in Canada require students to have taken basic flight theory and hold their private pilot's license. This can set students back around \$20,000 before they have even started. With Keyano's Business Aviation program, this is all included.

Many similar programs require students to complete the programs separately, which incurs additional cost. This is where the Keyano program stands out. Students who complete this program leave with their commercial and private pilot's license and a business diploma, so graduates are well-equipped to start their career as a pilot or explore aviation business operations.

In addition to the pilot's licenses and training, the program includes a business diploma specialized for graduates who want to pursue career specializations in northern aviation operations or airline operations.

The future of aviation

With the post-COVID world expected to experience a travel boom, the industry is crying out for pilots. Graduating with a business diploma gives students flexibility. This program is open for fall registration; Keyano College is hoping to see an increase in female applicants.

Based on statistics, the number of female pilots and co-pilots has been steadily rising in Canada, and Keyano College hopes to see more women graduate from the program.

McMurray Aviation

Keyano College has partnered with local flight academy, McMurray Aviation, based in Fort McMurray, to deliver the flight training. Over the years, McMurray has developed a reputation for offering quality instruction, a friendly atmosphere and good value as a flight training academy which benefits our students.

The flight training is set in a unique environment where students get the experience of bush flying, and also the busy atmosphere of a high-density airport.

We have years of experience teaching pilots, managing an aviation company and, of course, thousands of hours of flying. ■



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How to prepare your students for Virtual Open House

Submitted by MacEwan University



Friendly MacEwan University staff and faculty will be online to answer questions during Virtual Open House on November 6. (Photo taken before COVID-19.)



MacEwan University welcomes all prospective students to check out the Virtual Open House on November 6.

Virtual Open House is the perfect opportunity for prospective students to get a feel for their post-secondary future at MacEwan University. Each year, MacEwan hosts a one-day event that features information sessions about programs and the full university experience.

Because Open House is a welcoming opportunity to get to know MacEwan, ask questions and learn more about programs and services, here are several ways your students can prepare for Virtual Open House on November 6.

1. Make sure to register

Students are encouraged to register for Virtual Open House by visiting MacEwan.ca/OpenHouse. That way, MacEwan can send reminders so they don't miss this important day. It's also a wise idea for students to put a reminder in their calendars so they don't double-book themselves.

2. Check your tech

This year's Open House is virtual, so students should check their technology (charge their primary devices) and internet connections to keep the technical difficulties at bay.

3. Research programs in advance

Information about programs, admissions, how to apply and more can be found on MacEwan's website. Students should visit MacEwan.ca to research some of the programs they're

Students should visit MacEwan.ca to research some of the programs they're curious about and come up with questions they can ask during Open House.

curious about and come up with questions they can ask during Open House.

4. Bring questions

Of course students are welcome to drop in and listen to the information sessions and meet professors without preparing some questions or researching programs they may be interested in — but since Open House is about planning for the future, they should aim to make the most of this event.

Professors and advisors will be available throughout to answer questions, so it will benefit students to consider what it is they want or need to know about the programs they're interested in, and be prepared to ask their questions during that program's info session.

“And write down the answers,” recommends David Fischer,

team lead, Student Recruitment. “They can use the answers to their questions to see how different programs at MacEwan and other post-secondary institutions stack up against each other.”

5. Keep an open mind

Isn't that what university is all about? Your students should take the time to explore different programs (even ones they may be on the fence about) and check out some of the services MacEwan provides.

“Open House can feel a bit like an information overload,” says Fischer. “If students still have questions afterwards, that's okay. We'll be here to answer them.”

And when students are ready to apply, they can visit MacEwan.ca/Apply. ■



VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, November 6, 2021
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Take a virtual tour, attend online info sessions and **enter to win \$5,000 toward your tuition!**

Find out more: MacEwan.ca/OpenHouse



Start your day with a healthy breakfast



There are many good reasons to start the day with a healthy breakfast. Eating breakfast and other meals and snacks throughout the day can help you and your family have more energy for school, work and play. It may also help you and your family stay healthy and lower your risk of developing chronic diseases. People who skip breakfast often have lower intakes of calcium, iron and fibre. These are nutrients for growth and health. Breakfast can be simple and still meet your nutrition needs.

Eat together

Parents and caregivers are role models for children. Enjoy meals and snacks with your family as often as you can. Breakfast can be a good chance to share a healthy meal. Eating together can help kids:

- Explore new healthy foods;
- Establish healthy eating routines;
- Improve their overall eating pattern;
- Explore cultural and traditional foods.

As kids become more independent they may begin to prepare meals on their own.

Great breakfast ideas

Try to prepare breakfast or set the breakfast table the night before, to save time in the morning. Here are some quick breakfast ideas:

- Whole grain hot or cold cereal with fruit and low-fat milk (skim, one per cent or two per cent milk fat);
- Whole grain toast, bagel or English muffin topped with nut butter and sliced banana;
- Whole grain waffle or pancake topped with fruit and low-fat yogurt (fat-free, one per cent or two per cent milk fat);
- Whole grain crackers, lower fat cheese (less than 20 per cent milk fat) and an apple
- Unsalted nuts mixed with dry whole grain cereal and a piece of fruit;

- Leftovers: homemade pizza, soup, pasta or casserole;
- Whole grain toast and a smoothie.

More great breakfast ideas

- Scramble eggs with vegetables and cook in the microwave for one to 1.5 minutes.
- Top a small whole-grain tortilla with scrambled eggs and lower fat cheese;
- Stuff a whole-grain pita with cottage cheese and chopped fruit. Or try tuna, chopped tomatoes and lettuce;
- Spread nut butter on a whole grain tortilla and roll it up with a banana;
- Have sardines or baked beans on whole grain toast with a glass of milk or fortified soy beverage;
- Mix canned peaches or frozen blueberries with low-fat yogurt. Top with whole grain cereal.

Not a breakfast eater?

If you don't eat much for breakfast, add healthy foods as a morning snack. You may be able to eat more later. If you are not used to eating early in the morning, try waiting an hour before you eat. Or try having one or two of the following foods:

- Piece of fruit;
- Hardboiled egg;
- Half a whole grain bagel with cheese or nut butter;
- Small bran muffin;
- Lower fat cheese;
- Whole grain cereal;
- Low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage;
- Low-fat yogurt;
- Unsweetened applesauce;
- Toasted whole grain English muffin;
- Unsalted nuts;
- Fruit and nut bar. ■



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Financial empowerment for the family



Learning about money is important for students to learn, not only so they can be better prepared as adults, but also to reduce stress while in school. At Momentum, we believe Financial Empowerment can also be a strategy for families looking to reduce financial stress, particularly now after COVID-19 has drastically altered our way of life.

Momentum is a non-profit organization that has been working with people living on lower incomes in Calgary for 30 years. Since 1999, we've provided Financial Empowerment programming.

We work within the Sustainable Livelihoods model, which means we believe everyone has assets they can meaningfully build on to do more than get by; they can get ahead. These assets may be personal attributes such as confidence and motivation, something more tangible like a home or transportation or financial, such as person's credit ratings and savings. Increasing these asset areas can make a big impact on someone's ability to get ahead.

"We find that sometimes people think a sustainable livelihood is having a \$100K income," says Rupi Bergamin, manager of Momentum's Financial Empowerment team. "But we know we can make a difference for people of all income levels, particularly those on a fixed income – if they have the skills to manage their money. Having a sustainable livelihood is not about saving large amounts of money, it's about building habits that include saving money when you can."

Financial empowerment goes beyond simply saving, and other opportunities to increase financial assets are uncovered in through participation in our programs. These include understanding why filing taxes is essential even if someone is living on a low income, or how to get free money from the government for a child's RESP.

"This knowledge can make all the difference for someone on the journey toward a sustainable livelihood," says Bergamin.



Our programs are operated by compassionate and knowledgeable professionals and are designed with lower-income savers in mind.

For students living in families with lower incomes in Calgary looking for some financial independence once they graduate, our Youth Fair Gains program can help. Students learn about money and are encouraged to save as Momentum matches their savings by a four to one ratio! If students save the maximum amount for the program, \$50 per month for nine months, with matched money from Momentum, they will have \$2,250 to use for tuition, textbooks, tools for work or another asset that would lead them toward a sustainable livelihood.

But we know financial literacy isn't just up to the students. Parents have a role to play in financial empowerment as well. We have similar matched savings programs for adults, as well as an innovative app-based savings incentives program for both adults and youth.

The Momentum Savings Challenge on the QUBER app is designed for those who can only contribute small amounts at a time, but with the bonuses offered it helps incentivize building that all important savings habit. After saving \$40 a month for 10 months and getting rewards for hitting their goals, savers can finish with \$500 in savings.

People across Alberta, and the country even, can also hone their financial literacy skills with our award-winning on-demand financial empowerment programs easily accessible at courses.momentum.org. Each year hundreds of individuals take these programs whenever is convenient for them so they can continue building their knowledge assets.

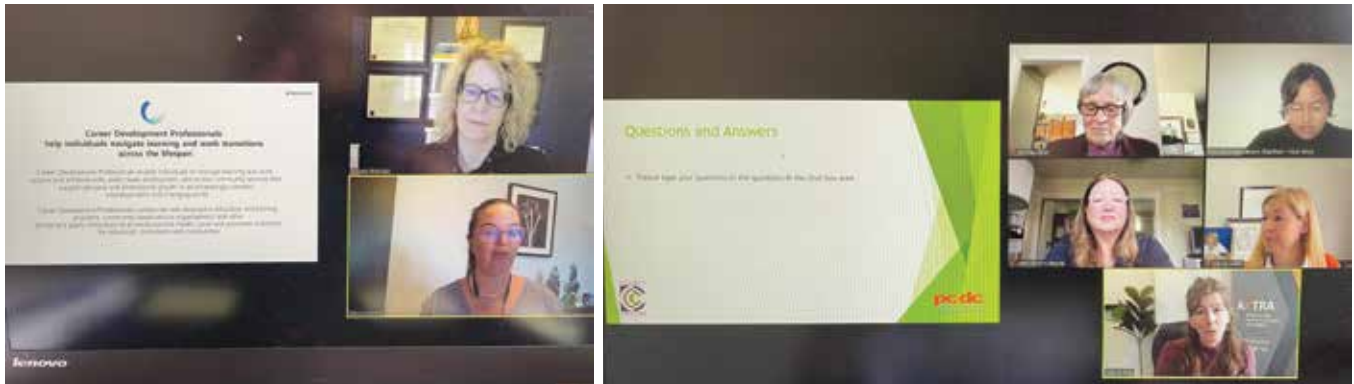
"Parents can learn about financial literacy and then teach their children about it," says Bergamin. "If somebody doesn't have that background, what are they going to tell their children? They can't teach what they don't know. We need to talk about money and it's never too late to learn about your managing money."

Learning about money is only one component of having a sustainable livelihood and Momentum offers Calgarians program options in other areas to meet their needs. People can reskill for a career in the trades or technology, or those with the soul of an entrepreneur can launch their own small business with the support of Momentum.

For more information on our programs and how they may be helpful to the students or families of students you work with, please visit www.momentum.org. ■

ALBERTA CAREER DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE: Extending the access

By Cindy Chan



For the first time ever, the Career Development Association of Alberta (CDAА) took its annual Alberta Career Development Conference completely online.

The two-day event, on May 4 and 5, 2021, has been an in-person event for almost seven years, according to Paula Wischoff Yerama, executive director for the CDAА. Last year would have been the seventh official conference, which had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, they are making up for lost time with a new format and also renewed enthusiasm.

“The conference was a two-day professional development event, with keynote speakers, panel discussions, concurrent speaker sessions and an exhibitor fair, with opportunities to network and connect with practitioners across the province and beyond,” Wischoff Yerama says.

This year’s conference included all of the same offerings as previous years – but virtually and safely.

“It was a really big change for us and also for our practitioners who look forward to the in-person conference and networking opportunities it presents,” Wischoff Yerama says.

During the planning stages, the association was preparing for an in-person conference but pivoted to an online experience due to the pandemic. While they knew a lot of people would be disappointed by the decision, the event was surprisingly well-received.

“It was really interesting to hear from participants who said things like, ‘We expected it to be awful because we don’t like online stuff, but it was really good,’” Wischoff Yerama recalls with a laugh.

The virtual conference schedule remained the same as the previously planned in-person conference with keynotes, panel discussions and concurrent sessions taking place during their allotted times. Coffee breaks and lunch breaks were built in to allow participants to visit the exhibitors, network or take a break.

“As all of the sessions were recorded those who didn’t get a chance to attend a specific session, or were interested in a number of sessions happening at the same time, were provided with links to the recordings to access after the conference was over,” Wischoff Yerama says.

The sessions covered a variety of topics, including career services across Canada, in which representatives from different organizations representing career

and development service providers talked about things happening in their respective provinces. Another session discussed a national certification program for career development practitioners, which generated a lot of excitement among participants.

“There were two great keynote speakers, and 18 concurrent sessions, which covered everything from strategies for working with particular types of clients, to labour market considerations, to different assessment tools,” Wischoff Yerama lists, adding that around 150 people had attended the conference in total.

While the CDAА – and most of the world – doesn’t know what the future holds, COVID-19-wise, they are planning for the possibility of a hybrid conference and what that might look like. They want to honour and provide for those who prefer the in-person format, while also understanding that the online format is perhaps the only way some people can attend.

“We want to provide quality, affordable professional development to as many people as we can, so we are looking at options to incorporate some of the technology into an in-person conference to extend the access,” Wischoff Yerama says. ■

EECOM goes virtual, becoming the largest bilingual conference for educators and environmentalists in North America



The Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication (EECOM) is Canada's only national and bilingual network for environmental learning that works strategically and collaboratively to advance environmental learning. This year, over 800 delegates across Canada explored "The Nature of Cities: Urban Environmental Education in Action", listening to engaging educators and community leaders speaking to the conference's four key themes: EcoJustice Education, Indigenous Education, Water Education and City as Classroom.

The 2021 EECOM conference was co-hosted by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE), EcoSchools Canada, the Toronto District School Board's Sustainability Office, Natural Curiosity, and dozens of grassroots organizations and academic institutions across Canada who supported the planning and delivery of the online event. This year's conference featured:

- A full-day research symposium to establish an ESE in Teacher Education national agenda;
- A Youth Forum showcasing Grade 7 to 12 students' climate action projects hosted by Learning for a Sustainable Future (LSF);
- An EcoExpo with over 30 partner organizations;
- 'Nuit Verte', an evening of green social events;
- 70-plus workshops; and
- Powerful keynotes by Dr. Julian Agyeman (Tufts), Indigenous artists Christi Belcourt and Isaac Murdoch and youth activist Larissa Crawford.

Keynote speakers highlighted the importance of land-based learning and people-centred urban planning. Activist Larissa Crawford invited attendees to think about how they were contributing to a sustainable future and being aware of their

own relationship to natural spaces — who has access to parks and green spaces in Canada, and how we affect the natural environment when we occupy these spaces. The joint keynote between Indigenous artists and activists Christi Belcourt and Bombgiizhik (Isaac Murdoch) focused on the significance of outdoor experiential learning, building a relationship between the environment and students as future caretakers of the land. Dr. Julian Agyeman elaborated on access to urban green spaces based on socioeconomic factors, how "greenlining" is reshaping cities and why diversity of lived experiences is crucial to informing future urban planning.

EECOM 2021 explored environmental and social justice through examined relationships between the Land and Water. As the effects of climate change become more severe each year, it is clear that educators and environmental advocates need a space where they can come together to engage and learn from each other on how to bring classroom learning outdoors, where future sustainability leaders can nurture their relationships with the natural world.

This year, EcoSchools Canada has partnered with the Alberta Council for Environmental Education in supporting schools and their communities to take climate action. Free for all publicly funded schools, educators can register online and choose from over 40 environmental actions that foster youth leadership, environmental stewardship and community building. To learn more about the program and how your school can become an EcoSchool, visit ecoschools.ca.

About

EcoSchools Canada is a national bilingual environmental education non-profit supporting students and their communities for over 15 years. Their program connects 40-plus environmental actions to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This is EcoSchools' first year co-hosting EECOM. ■



ADMISSIONS TO ALUMNI

Empowering, invested, caring: Discover the Bredin College difference

Submitted by Bredin College

Since 1976, our parent company, Bredin Centre for Career Advancement, started providing high-quality training and skills students are seeking. The Bredin team maintains strong ties to the professional world and constantly adapts our course material to meet job requirements. Bredin College has campuses in Edmonton, Spruce Grove, Red Deer, Calgary and, now, a strong virtual campus, bringing the college experience to you in all areas of Alberta.

We believe in a “student first” environment through a diverse learning community where you feel welcomed and cared for throughout the program. Our college provides an alternative to the big colleges for students ranging from the ages of 17 to 65, from single

parents to individuals wanting to start a new career, as well as high school students wanting to further their education. Our business and health-related programs can get you into the workforce in less than 45 weeks. All our courses are offered online, in person or self-paced – learn how you want to learn!

We provide innovative and adaptive programming to meet current job market trends. Our interactive small classes provide lots of opportunities to pick up skills quickly through one-on-one and personalized care. We ensure we have industry-experienced instructors that specialize in teaching adults.

As part of our programs, we provide four-week practicum placements so you can secure a great job in your field

once you graduate. We provide support every step of the way through skilled career placement staff that supports you throughout your program, including after graduation. Student success and personal support professionals help you become successful in and out of the classroom. We have helped thousands of people get the tools and support required to secure rewarding professional positions. As a Bredin student and alumnus, you will benefit from the resources and rich network of employer connections Bredin has developed.

Check out our website at www.bredincollege.ca for more information on the programs and services that we offer. Our admissions team is ready to answer any questions you might have. ■

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Curriculum draft cannot be salvaged

By Heather Ganshorn, Research Director, Support Our Students Alberta
(<https://www.supportourstudents.ca/>)



The United Conservative Party (UCP) government's draft K-6 curriculum has been roundly rejected by a wide swath of Albertans, including 57 of the province's 61 school boards, the Alberta Teachers Association (ATA), various Indigenous groups and the 40,000-plus members of the Albertans Reject Curriculum Draft Facebook group. This draft was developed in haste after the UCP scrapped a previous draft, the product of years of work by hundreds of teachers and other experts under the previous NDP and PC governments.

My organization, Support Our Students Alberta (SOS), advocates for inclusive and equitable public education. We have partnered with the Albertans Reject Curriculum Draft Facebook Group to create a website, Students Deserve Better, where we call on the government to take the following actions:

1. Reconvene the curriculum working groups from the previous rewrite that began under previous governments (and was scrapped by the UCP despite being almost ready to pilot) and to fully respect the professional expertise of these groups.
2. Commit to the longstanding, apolitical curriculum development process, and dissolve the appointments of advisors selected at the recommendation of UCP politicians.
3. Restore the curriculum development partnership with the ATA, as without

the expertise and engagement of teachers, successful curriculum development and implementation is impossible.

SOS has many concerns about the draft curriculum. There is almost no involvement of teachers and curriculum experts in the development of the draft; the K-6 advisory committee does not appear to have any elementary education experts on it. The ATA has called for the draft curriculum to be halted, and for teachers to be involved in future planning. Instead, the government has called back many of the same advisors to begin work on a draft curriculum for higher grades.

The draft curriculum contains many examples of plagiarism, incorrect facts and shoddy writing across subjects, and appears to have been compiled without an understanding of where elementary-age children are in terms of their development. Many of these issues are detailed on the Alberta Curriculum Analysis web site (<https://alberta-curriculum-analysis.ca/>), created by education scholars in the province to compile expert opinion on the curriculum.

We are concerned that this curriculum draft attempts to return our children to an era where rote learning was prioritized over skill development and

critical thinking; where history was presented as a simplistic narrative of the deeds of great (mostly white) men; and where children are seen as empty vessels to be filled up with facts, rather than as diverse and complex individuals who may bring different strengths, challenges, and life experiences to the classroom. Our children are developing humans and citizens, not merely future contributors to the economy.

We are also concerned with the open racism displayed by social studies curriculum advisor Chris Champion, who has referred to reconciliation as “a fad,” and who, as editor-in-chief of his self-published history periodical *The Dorchester Review*, is the presumed author of that journal’s many tweets minimizing residential schools and insisting they were largely beneficial. The UCP has insisted that reconciliation will be taught, but they have not repudiated Champion or his views, nor have they taken the opportunity to implement the Calls to Action 62-65 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. These calls to action include making age-appropriate education on residential schools, treaties, and Indigenous people’s past and present contributions to Canada a mandatory part of the curriculum.

Many of us are parents, and we are frustrated by the lack of meaningful



engagement with parents and school councils. We are concerned that the latest move by the UCP to create a hand-picked 40-person Parent Advisory Council is an attempt to manufacture consent and massage feedback, while ignoring the valid concerns already put forth by thousands of parents.

In short, this curriculum has too many problems to be salvaged. This government needs to go back to the drawing board, remove politics from the process, and let the experts at Alberta Education engage the experts within the education community to continue the tradition of excellence that has made Alberta a world leader in education. ■



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Dual credit program inspires success for high school student

By Devendra Kumar, Black Gold School Division



Tanda Garrett is the first Black Gold student to complete the entire Dual Credit Educational Assistant Certificate through Northern Lakes College.

Tanda Garrett was eager to get started on her future and pursue her career passion – childhood education. She knew she loved working with children and wanted to make a difference in young lives.

“I’ve always wanted to go into the educational field, but I would prefer to work one-on-one with children as an educational assistant,” explains Tanda. “I needed an EA for some of my own educational journey, so I know firsthand how much of an impact they can have on a child’s success. I want to give back and be for others what someone was for me.”

As a student at Warburg School in the Village of Warburg, located around 60 kilometres west of Leduc, her access to post-secondary education was fairly limited. Enter the Black Gold School

Division’s dual credit program and Northern Lakes College. Dual credit allows high school students to earn credits from both a post-secondary institution and their high school by completing college-level coursework.

Tanda acknowledges that her rural location and financial barriers would have prohibited access to post-secondary training if her school had not offered dual credit courses. When she found out about the dual credit program, she jumped at the chance.

“I chose the dual credit program because it was accessible, easier because of proximity, and a wise financial decision,” says Tanda. “I am so glad I took the plunge. The experience was great, and the teachers were all helpful and supportive.”

Now, with the encouragement and support of her teachers and school administration, Tanda Garrett is the first Black Gold student to complete the entire Dual Credit Educational Assistant Certificate through Northern Lakes College, while gaining invaluable work experience at her high school.

Tanda enjoyed the online classes and the flexibility provided by Northern Lakes College. Both the high school and college staff were super-supportive, setting up local practicums and Zoom calls whenever she needed help.

Tanda completed the practicum portion of the program at Warburg School. “The courses have helped me not only

read about scenarios but see them for myself during the practicum,” says Tanda. “Learning hands-on and seeing how theoretical concepts are actually applied to real-life scenarios is how I learn best. It has given me a lot of confidence in myself and my abilities to make a difference.”

Tanda is convinced that the dual credit program was instrumental in preparing her for a career in education. “I am super-excited about graduating this year,” she exclaims. “I can hardly wait to get started in the classroom.”

“I would definitely recommend the program to others,” she adds. “It is affordable, flexible and accessible, especially for students in rural communities who might not otherwise have the chance to go to college.”

Tanda’s parents, siblings, and grandmothers were excited to attend her virtual graduation ceremony at Northern Lakes College on June 4, 2021.

Warburg school principal Wendy Maltias comments, “We want to empower our students to make good choices, take charge of their future and set them up for success in the larger world. This program allows our students to explore beyond high school, get a taste of the outside educational world all within the comfort and familiarity of the school they’ve called home for many years.”

Learn more about dual credit opportunities at Northern Lakes College at northernlakescollege.ca. ■

Creating opportunities.

At Northern Lakes College, we open doors to opportunities for high school students, creating excitement for their future.



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SELF-DIRECTED EDUCATION: How unschooling and consent can ignite a disengaged learner

By Judy Arnall



Jenny is sitting on the couch reading a book on alligators. She needs to research alligators for her school's Grade 6 science project, even though she has no interest in alligators. Her friend, Jared, is also sitting on the couch reading another book on alligators. He is self-directed under a home education program and so is not required to read it, but he is fascinated by alligators and wants to know everything about them.

The difference in the educational approach between Jenny and Jared is very large. Jenny is forced to learn about a subject that someone else chose for her. Her learning is extrinsically motivated as she did not give consent, and often coaxed along with carrots (marks) and sticks (detentions). Jared, on the other hand, is intrinsically motivated to learn, driven by his own interest to know more. The payoff for him is satisfaction of his own curiosity. Jenny's education is owned by the government, school, principal and teacher. Jared owns his education.

Self-directed education has been around for 100 years, ever since Summerhill, the first "self-directed education school", was established in the United Kingdom in 1921. Today, at least 500 schools in North America are "Sudbury Valley Schools," a type of self-directed school. Self-directed education, or SDE, really came into fashion in the 1970s when the term "unschooling" was invented by John Holt, a prominent leader of the secular home education movement. The term is a misnomer, in that it doesn't necessarily mean anti-school, but it embraces the philosophy of learner self-determination, whether the learner is a child or an adult. The learner can choose to learn whatever they are interested in. Self-directed education allows the child to control more than just the pace of taking a course, which is often called self-directed learning. By taking control of their whole entire education in life and subject matter, children can choose what they want to learn, when they want to learn, where they want to learn and how they learn in addition to pace of learning.

SDE is usually undertaken under the provincial home education jurisdiction but can be implemented into a classroom environment. People choose SDE as an educational philosophy

because they trust in the science that all humans know what they need to learn, when they need it, children included. Children are always learning. If we breathe, we learn. We never need to learn “how to learn.” We just do it. We begin learning from the moment of brain consciousness in the womb, and we never stop learning until we are in our graves. We learn to walk, talk, read and do arithmetic without direct instruction when the brain is developmentally ready to do so.

A common objection to SDE is that it is perceived as handing too much control over to a child, but children already control their learning. If they don't like what they are learning in school, young children act out, older children tune out and teens drop out.

The benefits of SDE are many. Motivation, one of schoolteachers' greatest challenges, is never a problem, because the learning agenda is never forced on a child. Another benefit is that children are always developmentally ready for the material they choose. Absorption of learning is high when the learner is interested, and the child can delve into an interest as deep as possible. With a lot of unstructured time, children can explore their passions and interests and may find a career path sooner than institutionally educated children. It has never been a better time in history to be under a self-directed education because the Internet has made information universally accessible. Self-directed education is stress-free learning, free from comparisons, forced curriculum, bullies and pressure.

Is SDE evidence-based? In the absence of standardized test results in home education, it is very difficult to provide systemic evidence that SDE works. Anecdotal evidence is plentiful. If one talks to families of SDE, one will hear how well the children have grown in confidence, direction and education. Many self-directed learners don't experience their first classroom environment until university or community college, and they do just fine. In fact, they thrive, because they have had the practice of owning their learning all their lives, unlike their cohorts who have just been released from 12 years of being strictly monitored, directed and spoon-fed education by their parents and teachers.

How do you educate with a SDE approach? It's pretty simple. Live your life, but be attentive to what your learner wants to do. Let the child lead and you follow. If your child wants you to read a book, read her a book. If she wants to play a game, play a game. If she wants to build a dollhouse, help her get the materials and build it together. If she wants to do it herself, let her. If she wants to see a movie, buy tickets and go. Travel, play, explore, build, work, volunteer, get outside and point out things you find exciting. Share your love of knowledge and curiosity.



What would a typical SDE day look like? Imagine a Saturday morning in July. Where the day takes the family members depends on what has been planned and what gets sidetracked. Every day is different. Younger children learn through play, older children through projects and teens through self-directed investigation. It would involve a lot of free play, board games, working on a family project, cleaning the house and/or socializing with their friends. The day unfolds and the learning fits with whatever meandering comes of it. Outcomes are not pre-determined, but can be recorded in retrospect. Many families take photos, notes and videos in order to keep a permanent record of learning. SDE may seem new, but it is how children learned for many thousands of years and may be the future where learning is everywhere.

About

Judy Arnall, BA, CCFE, DTM, is a certified brain and child development specialist and master of non-punitive parenting and education practices. She is the founder of Unschooling Canada Association and is the bestselling author of five print books translated into five languages, including *Discipline Without Distress* and *Parenting With Patience*. She has also compiled a handy tips book titled *Attachment Parenting Tips Raising Toddlers To Teens*. Her latest book, *Unschooling To University: Relationships matter most in a world crammed with content*, is becoming a bestseller in an age of parents seeking educational options. She is the parent of five self-directed educated children of which three have already graduated university, one is halfway through, and one is enjoying a master's program. She can be reached at www.unschoolingtouniversity.com. ■

COVID-19 and mental health in Alberta

Suggestions and services to support your mental health as we continue to navigate the pandemic



Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Albertans have experienced mental health and wellness challenges.

Albertans' mental health ranked the lowest among Canadians, and many in our province continue to struggle as we move towards recovery (Franklin, 2021).

A study conducted by the University of British Columbia (UBC) and the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) during COVID-19's third wave found mental health had deteriorated since the onset of the pandemic by 45 per cent – up from 40 per cent since the second wave. Albertans continue to feel anxious, bored, stressed, lonely, sad and angry.

“Although the pandemic has posed many challenges, Albertans' strength never waivers. As we continue to navigate the uncertainty of the pandemic, remember to take time to care for yourself and your loved ones. The importance of staying connected, maintaining healthy habits and mental health check-ins will ensure we build healthier and happier Albertan communities,” says David Grauwiler, CMHA, Alberta Division's executive director.

Many in our province have experienced job losses, financial stress, isolation from loved ones and juggling work and school from home. This has resulted in a prolonged period of stress and anxiety that has taken a significant

“The importance of staying connected, maintaining healthy habits and mental health check-ins will ensure we build healthier and happier Albertan communities.”



toll on our collective mental health. As we move forward with reopening and returning to ‘normal’, many people are experiencing increased concern around lifting restrictions.

Here are suggestions to help you cope:

- Focus on what you can control
- Acknowledge your feelings – anxiety around change and uncertainty is normal
- Talk about your concerns frequently and let loved ones know your comfort level
- Ease back into activities and try not to overschedule yourself – take it at your own pace
- Recognize everyone is on their own journey and adjust your expectations when it comes to making plans
- Take time for self-care activities – exercise and get outside, allow yourself proper sleep and engage in hobbies you enjoy
- Limit time spent on social media and news sites – put a cap on how often you check your accounts to

avoid becoming overloaded with overwhelming information

- Seek help if you experience anxiety affecting your quality of life. Reach out to your employee assistance plan, find a counsellor or access free virtual mental help services such as:
 - Togetherall – A peer-to-peer online community that allows Alberta residents to connect with others in an environment monitored 24-7 by mental health practitioners. The platform offers free monitored courses and other mental health resources available to Albertans age 16 and over
 - BounceBack – A free program from the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) designed to help adults and youth 15+ manage low moods, mild to moderate depression, anxiety, stress or worry

For additional mental health resources and information, please visit www.alberta.cmha.ca.

If you or someone you know needs mental health support, please call 211 (in Alberta) or your local distress line.

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Lethbridge College's high-tech, hyflex classrooms help build community – wherever the learning takes place

Lethbridge College instructors Cherie Bowker and Darcy Wall don't deny the many challenges the pandemic has posed – including in the college classroom.

But in evaluating last year's experience with online teaching, both Bowker and Wall realized there were some benefits to the virtual classroom. That's why they and several other Lethbridge College instructors have embraced "hyflex" learning this fall, giving students multiple pathways to connect with their curriculum and build community.

"I don't want to minimize how traumatic COVID has been," says Bowker, who is chair of Spatial Design Technologies at the college. "But we also saw there is a whole group of students who maybe aren't ready or can't afford to move, or who want the flexibility of learning from home, wherever that might be." For them, the option to go online for some of their learning was welcome – and Lethbridge College was ready to respond.

Hyflex learning at Lethbridge College is the result of an innovative collaborative partnership between the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Innovation (CTLI) and the institution's academic centres. Hyflex learning gives students the choice of learning in real time – either in person or online – or learning online at a time chosen by the student, allowing instructors to meet students where they are at. Students may choose a pathway because of illness, childcare considerations, distance to campus or simply personal preference.

With insights gained in the 2020-21 school year, Bowker and her colleagues are now offering hyflex learning in courses in the Interior Design Technology, Architectural Animation Technology and Virtual Reality programs. "With hyflex learning, last year our students were able to never miss a class," says Bowker. "We invited people in from all over the world – architects from Poland, teachers from other post-secondary institutions, and more. There are so many possibilities."

This year, hyflex learning means Bowker's students will take theory courses online, and then have the choice for their labs to continue their learning from home or come to campus.

A similar option will be available to students in some Parts Apprenticeship courses, says Wall. "The key is flexibility," he says. "There are definite benefits being face-to-face, but hyflex and learning from home can work really well for other parts of the program, especially the theory components."

Wall teaches as part of the Weekly Apprenticeship Training System program, which brings students to campus one day a week, allowing them to work nearly full-time as they complete their education. "In our Parts program, the first and third year are more theory-based, and the second is more focused on mechanical systems. Those second-year students will likely be in person whenever they can." But if roads are bad or a family member is ill, those same students can still participate in their learning from home.



“But we also saw there is a whole group of students who maybe aren’t ready or can’t afford to move, or who want the flexibility of learning from home, wherever that might be.”



To accommodate hyflex learning in some lecture rooms and active learning labs, the CTLI team installed pan-tilt-zoom, or PTZ, cameras, for fully flexible views of the space. Soundbars and microphones capture audio from the entire room, and a large screen shows remote students on a Zoom gallery view. For classrooms where hyflex might only be used occasionally,

instructors can access mobile hyflex carts, which include equipment needed to show the instructor or the full classroom.

“The Lethbridge College advantage has always been our community,” says Dr. Samantha Lenci, Provost and Vice President Academic. “With hyflex learning, we’ve created community through computers, connected

students to their curriculum and brought our community to campus in a way that works for them.”

To learn more about the flexible and innovative people and programs at Lethbridge College, go to lethbridgecollege.ca or connect with the Recruitment Services team by email (futurestudent@lethbridgecollege.ca) or by calling (403) 320-3322. ■



ALBERTA'S FORESTS: A place for students to grow

By Emma Kniel

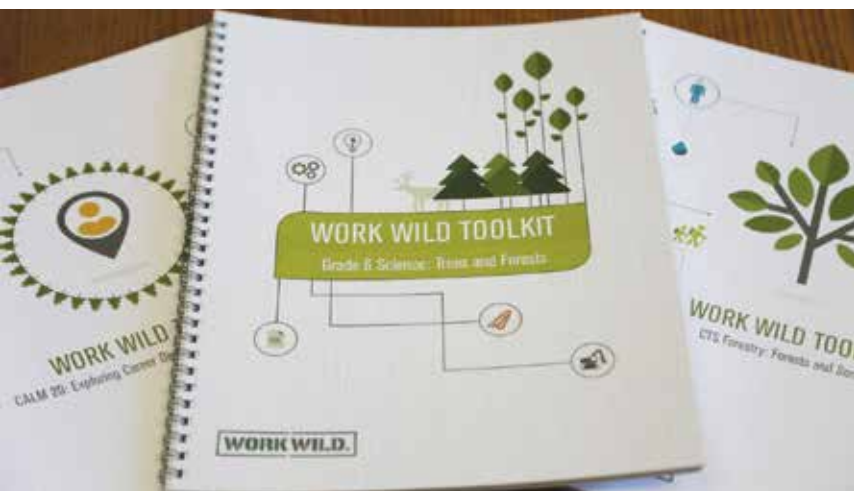
In Alberta, the word “forestry” often evokes specific images: lumberjacks, plaid, chainsaws and large logging equipment. What is often missed are the countless other pieces to one of Alberta’s largest resource industries. Currently, the forest industry is a massive source of career opportunities for youth.

The Alberta Forest Products Association launched the Work Wild campaign in 2011 in response to an industry-wide labour shortage. The campaign informs youth on sustainable forest management practices and provides resources on the variety of rewarding career opportunities in Alberta’s forest industry.

Before any harvesting happens in Alberta, professionals must create complex management plans which span 200 years into the future. These plans do not just account for wood supply; they must also plan for healthy water systems, robust

wildlife habitats, natural forest disturbances and prosperous communities. These experts have a deep understanding of how our ecosystems work and dedicate their lives to our forests’ care. Not quite the stereotypical lumberjack!

During the Work Wild program’s inception, it was clear that additional misconceptions were surrounding the industry. Many students believed forestry jobs were low-tech, and there was no innovation keeping the sector relevant. However, this is not the case. Technology is being utilized from the initial planning, including computer models equipped with artificial intelligence and drones to monitor hazardous or inaccessible forest areas through high-efficiency mills that have virtually eliminated waste from milling. Even wood products themselves are being innovated and are used far more in our daily lives than ever before. Of course, we use lumber in our homes and paper at work; but even the food



One of the largest demographic changes seen in post-secondary forestry programs over the past 10 years has been a dramatic increase in female applicants from urban centres.

you eat, clothing you wear, and so much more are made from wood products. Did you know the toothpaste you use daily is often made with wood pulp?

We should not solely present careers in this sector to outdoor enthusiasts or students within forestry communities. While there are many options for those students, roles in technology, sciences, and the trades are just as vast. One of the largest demographic changes seen in post-secondary forestry programs over the past 10 years has been a dramatic increase in female applicants from urban centres.

Work Wild has three toolkits available online to help share these opportunities with your students in Grade 6 science, CALM 20 and CTS forestry. These toolkits come complete with fully laid out lesson plans and interactive resources for students to explore. Take a trip back in Alberta's history with a

forest-use timeline to see how land management has changed over 100 years. Learn how diverse our forest landscape is and how human impacts and natural disturbances create these variations with an interactive map. Or deep dive into the balance forestry professionals must create between forests and society with an infographic.

If your students want to discover even more about these opportunities and how they can plan their future career path, Work Wild also offers free of cost virtual presentations with one of our forestry educators. Bring the forest directly to your classroom!

To view these resources, book a presentation, or learn more about Alberta's forests and current career opportunities, please visit workwild.ca or reach out to the team directly at info@workwild.ca. ■



Education opportunities continue to grow at Red Deer Polytechnic

recognizing the needs of learners, industry and community. The Polytechnic will continue to offer an impressive breadth of program options in apprenticeships, certificates, diplomas, micro-credentials and collaborative degrees with partner post-secondary institutions, along with more of Red Deer Polytechnic's own degrees in a community-focused environment.

The ability to offer more of Red Deer Polytechnic's own degrees has not only garnered interest from a growing number of international learners, but the developing program options will allow central Alberta students to complete their post-secondary education at home. The ability for these learners to study near family and friends will provide a supportive framework as they pursue their academic goals.

Along with the Polytechnic's scope of offering more than 100 programs, several new options are available to students. In September 2021, more than 150 post-secondary learners started classes in a variety of new programs: Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences, Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Bachelor of Science in Psychology, University Arts Diploma, and University Sciences Diploma. Approved by Alberta's Ministry of Advanced Education, these exciting new programs signal Red Deer Polytechnic's willingness and ability to further diversify the range of opportunities and credentials offered.

Students continue to benefit from the state-of-the-art teaching, learning, living and wellness facilities on campus. These include the Alternative Energy Lab, barrier-free and energy-efficient Residences and the Gary W. Harris Canada Games Centre, among others.

Red Deer Polytechnic (formerly College) has a rich history in central Alberta, proudly serving students and communities since 1964.

On May 4, 2021, the post-secondary institution started a new chapter when the Honourable Demitrios Nicolaides, Minister of Advanced Education, shared his vision for Red Deer College to become a polytechnic.

This modern higher education model opens a host of academic, applied research, work integrated learning and collaborative opportunities for students and a variety of stakeholders.

The framework of the institution's polytechnic model is anchored in applied, hands-on learning that is industry responsive. Students and faculty will be able to work with employers to solve current industry challenges while building innovation-enabling, adaptable skills for a rapidly changing world.

Operating as Red Deer Polytechnic since June 2021, the range of programming and credentials will continue to expand,

Along with the Polytechnic's scope of offering more than 100 programs, several new options are available to students.

Each year, approximately 1,000 students from different programs learn in the Alternative Energy Lab, which is a dynamic learning and research space with a range of technology to support alternative energy innovation.

In addition to offering vibrant teaching and learning spaces, the Gary W. Harris Canada Games Centre provides fitness and wellness opportunities for students, staff, and community members. The Centre acts as a training facility for all 15 Red Deer Polytechnic athletic teams and is a host venue for Kings and Queens Basketball, Hockey, and Volleyball.

Launched in June 2021, Red Deer Polytechnic's virtual tour is a convenient way to see all that its beautiful campuses have to offer. Showcasing 100 different areas and 360-degree views,



prospective students will be able to imagine themselves learning, living, and growing here.

As an additional resource, Red Deer Polytechnic's YouTube channel provides further information about the post-secondary institution's campuses, modern facilities, programs, and much more.

For more information about Red Deer Polytechnic programs, application procedures, and other areas of interest please visit: rdpolytech.ca. ■

Our future together, is bright.

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A well-rounded student experience

There are many opportunities for students to boost their skills and confidence at the Alberta School of Business



Bianca Dumonceaux.

When Bri Thompson was in her first year in the Alberta School of Business, she signed up as a cohort representative with the Business Students' Association (BSA).

She didn't know it at the time, but that experience was the best decision she could have made and set in motion the trajectory of her undergraduate student experience.

"Everyone's probably heard it a million times, but being involved in the faculty makes your experience," said Thompson, fourth-year strategy, entrepreneurship and management student and current president of the BSA.

Building a safe and supportive community for Indigenous students and raising awareness about Indigenous representation within the business industry.

“My cohort became my community; they were a group of people that would always applaud and hype me up.”

The BSA represents students’ needs and advocates for those needs by creating a strong community with services ranging from wellness and mental health to academic services and mentorship.

To support the school’s commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI), as president, Thompson said she’ll hold faculty accountable as community leaders and role models and mandate anti-racism and anti-bias training for club executives (Thompson was involved in implementing the training for the first time last year).

“I always knew that I wanted to be president because I’m really passionate about advocating for grassroots (in this case, grassroots being the students) and leading and creating a team that I would want to be a part of,” said Thompson.

Indigenous Business Students Association

As the newest club in the Alberta School of Business, Madeleine Durocher and



Bri Thompson.



Madeleine Durocher.

Bianca Dumonceaux, co-chairs and co-founders of the Indigenous Business Students Association (IBSA) know what they want to accomplish this year.

At the forefront of that list? Building a safe and supportive community for Indigenous students and raising awareness about Indigenous

representation within the business industry.

“We want to raise awareness that business is an added post-secondary option for Indigenous youth to consider and want to encourage more Indigenous youth to apply, and in turn, increase representation,” said Dumonceaux.

Durocher and Dumonceaux, who identify as Métis and Cree respectively, were approached last year by Michelle Inness, the assistant dean of EDI, on ways to address issues of representation among Indigenous students within the school.

“The Indigenous communities are quite marginalized and it would be really great to bridge that gap and create a decolonization approach where Indigenous peoples are able to share their ways of doing business,” said Durocher.

The association isn’t exclusive to Indigenous students — it’s also valuable for the broader business community to learn from Indigenous business leaders and think critically about other people’s

perspectives and experiences.

Offering direct admission from high school

Last year, the University of Alberta’s Academic Planning Committee approved the School of Business’ proposal to introduce direct high school entry to the bachelor of commerce degree program starting in Fall 2022.

Moving to direct admission allows the School of Business to more effectively compete with other top-ranked undergraduate business programs and reduces a student’s uncertainty about their admission to the business school.

“Having business students in the Business program from day one is really important to us, especially given the

School’s commitment to EDI and our understanding of how critical it is to retention and academic success to build an early relationship with students from historically underrepresented groups,” said Leo Wong, associate dean of the undergraduate office.

Wong notes that direct admission will also allow faculty and staff to interact and support students earlier in their academic career, from course completion and mental health support to career counselling and experiential learning opportunities through the school’s career services and co-operative education programs.

Visit uab.ca/WhyBCom for more information on the University of Alberta bachelor of commerce program. ■



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