



Leaders in learning join forces to share unique programming for all students in Central Alberta

For Immediate Release, April 27, 2023: Educators focused on ensuring rich career path-way experiences for K-12 students are applauding the provincial government's investment into a multi-partner Central Alberta Collegiate Institute (CACI) programming model.

Currently the CACI partnership involves Chinook's Edge, Red Deer Public, Red Deer Catholic and Wolf Creek school divisions, along with Red Deer Polytechnic, Olds College of Agriculture & Technology, and CAREERS: The Next Generation with plans to involve additional Central Alberta school divisions as programming and facility is established.

The partnership has received an announcement from Alberta Education that it has been granted collegiate status, and that the partnership will receive \$8.7 million in funding for the first stage of CACI, beginning in the 2023-24 school year. The provincial criteria for approval included: partnership agreements, need for specialized programming, strength of post-secondary pathways, experiential learning opportunities, and cost effectiveness.

"This is a collaborative partnership of school divisions and post-secondaries, which has been forging strong links between high school students and their career connections for over a decade," said Kurt Sacher, Superintendent, Chinook's Edge School Division.

Sacher said, "Our history of success with career programming shows that when high school students have a deeper experience with a career pathway, they are more likely to follow it through to graduation and employment. A focus on strong career transitions is a priority for all of the school divisions who are involved. We begin extensive exploration and training with students long before they reach post-secondary age. CACI is a model that will provide career pathways programming to all Central Alberta students, including those who attend school outside of the four divisions that initiated the model, so we can provide career-ready experiences and maximize the potential for as many students as possible. This funding announcement is cause for celebration for everyone involved."

"Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools is extremely excited to learn about the approval of the Central Alberta Collegiate Institute. This is a highly-collaborative partnership between several school authorities, two post-secondaries, external partners, local government, and industry. We are

all committed to providing high-quality, career-specific experiences to Central Alberta's youth that will lead to meeting the critical trade skills needed in Alberta. This project will greatly enhance career education opportunities and assist in an increasingly successful career transition following high school graduation for Central Alberta students," said Dr. Kathleen Finnigan, Superintendent, Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools.

"Wolf Creek Public School Division is very proud to be joining our partnering school divisions in central Alberta in forming the Central Alberta Collegiate Institute. This cooperative Collegiate model will further enable students within the partnering divisions to strengthen pathways and success from high school to a variety of post-secondary pursuits. We appreciate the substantial allocation of resources provided by Alberta Education in order to make this initiative a reality, and we look forward to what I am sure will be a successful implementation with opportunity for future growth," Tim De Ruyck, Superintendent, Wolf Creek Public Schools.

"We are incredibly pleased with this announcement because of the opportunities it will provide to Red Deer Public students. One of the priorities for Red Deer Public Schools is student success and completion. The provincial funding that was announced and our CACI partnership will allow us to take additional steps forward in this key area, and to see students connect with careers in increasingly meaningful ways" said Chad Erickson, Superintendent, Red Deer Public Schools.

"Red Deer Polytechnic is very excited about the opportunities the expanded collegiate model will provide to students in Central Alberta," comments Dr. Paulette Hanna, Interim Vice President, Academic. "We have a proud history of collaborating with our partners to support high school learners' needs, providing valuable applied learning opportunities through various programming that prepares students for diverse careers in Alberta's labour force."

"Olds College of Agriculture & Technology is excited to be part of the Central Alberta Collegiate Institute partnership," comments Debbie Thompson, Vice President Academic, Olds College. "As a leader in dual credit programming, Olds College looks forward to continuing the work with our partners to enhance collegiate career pathways to Central Alberta high school students."

"CAREERS is very pleased to be a part of this collaboration. The structure of the collegiate model will increase opportunities for students to participate in internships throughout Central Alberta," says Stefan Rutkowski, Director of Operations, CAREERS: The Next Generation.

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MEDIA: For more information please contact

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Background:

- The CACI partnership group submitted a 43 page project abstract to the provincial government in February called 'Explore, Engage, Experience: Implementing Youth Career Readiness in Learning.' It outlines that CACI could potentially impact over 42,000 grade 7-12 students in a large geographical area across all of Central Alberta school divisions, with youth Skilled Trades programming set to begin as early as September 2023.
- CACI brings together an already established and highly collaborative partnership group of several school authorities, two post-secondaries, external partners, local government and industry - all committed to providing high quality career-specific experiences to Central Alberta's youth that will lead immediately to career placement following high school completion.
- CACI will develop a learning plan for career exposure and awareness for students in Grades 7-12. Lessons and resources will involve Grade 10-12 students in career readiness programming, while students in Grades 7-9 will be involved in various career learning experiences. Once developed, this detailed and multi-year career pathway model will be available for provincial use across all school authorities in Alberta.
- CACI partners share over a decade of extensive knowledge and high levels of experience in the areas of career education. Data tells us that when students participate in collegiate programming, they graduate from high school and successfully transition into their career training.
- The CACI partnership has a collaborative governance structure that will oversee the funding that will provide collegiate programming to students throughout the region.