

École Deer Meadow Middle School students gain access to new career related learning... on Olds College campus

École Deer Meadow School students are enjoying a new opportunity to explore skilled trades. Twenty-three students are riding the bus to the shared campus of Olds College of Agriculture & Technology and Ecole Olds High School to access the shop facilities - and a high school instructor - to take an Industrial Arts class.

"I am excited about this because it gives students more opportunities to experience and explore learning in the skilled trades," said Allan Whitehead, Principal, École Deer Meadow School. "Whether it's for a future or career, or just to find something they enjoy learning, this is great for students. Students love hands-on learning too, and the chance to make something they can keep or give away."

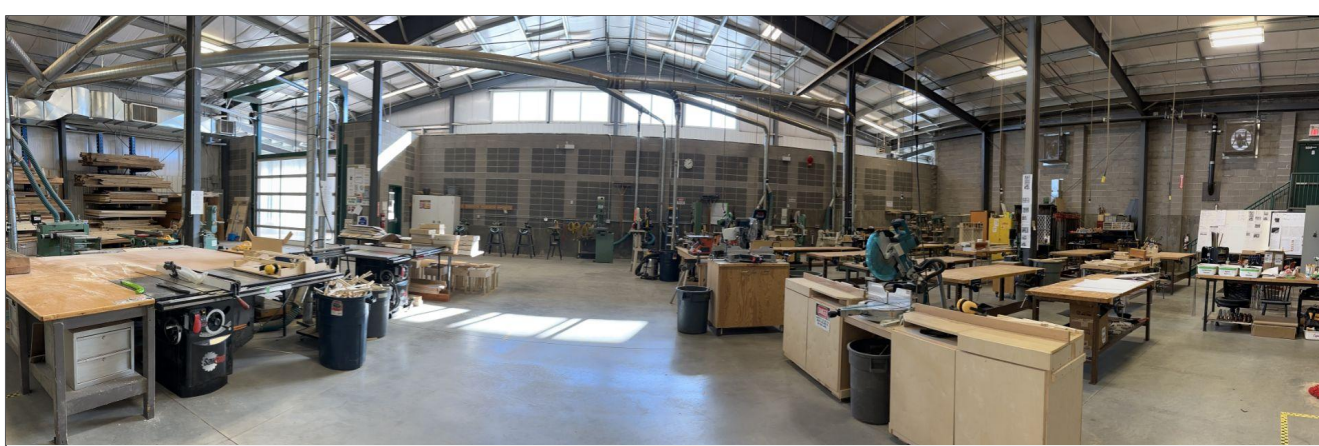
As a middle school, École Deer Meadow was not designed with a shop facility on site. In the last year, staff have transformed one room into a makerspace where students can do some construction work. The construction class can only be offered in the spring, because any staining or painting needs to be done outdoors, as the classroom doesn't have the required ventilation.

"We were looking to increase opportunities for our middle school aged students," said Whitehead. "Working with Chinook's Edge and École Olds High School, we were able to create this new opportunity."

This is the first time Deer Meadow students have had access to an Industrial Arts class. Students ride the bus to the shop facilities at Olds College campus every Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

"My Dad likes woodworking. I liked helping him build our deck, so this class seemed pretty fun," said Brendan Miller, a Grade 7 student.





Top left: the full shop facility at Olds College, which Deer Meadow students will get to use once they complete safety training.

Middle left: Deer Meadow students work on a project, in the shop classroom with teacher Mike Brown.



“I like making things,” said Jaina Douglas, a Grade 7 student. “I am excited to make the squirrel picnic table. Also, I am glad we get to learn about safety. To do something right, I need to know how to do it safely.”

Lexi Livingstone, a Grade 8 student, said she’s looking forward to the birdhouse project. “I took this class because I wanted to try something new. My Dad does woodworking and I like working with him.”

“I live on a farm and do shop work there,” said Cadence Witcher, a Grade 8 student. “I signed up for the class to learn more. It’s great the school is letting us have this class. If kids want to work in construction, then they can gain more experience, and possibly find something they like.”

Mike Brown is an Old High teacher, and is teaching the new Deer Meadow class. ***He said, “I’m really excited to team up with Deer Meadow. The more connections we make the better the transition for students when they make their way to high school.***

“I really hope this program makes students more eager to take shop as an option in Grade 9. Learning skilled trades is valuable for everyone,

even students that are not thinking of a career in woodworking. This is lifelong learning and these skills will always be valuable,” said Brown.

Brown is glad to see the students have access to the learning before they start high school. ***“I find that the earlier you experience a skill or trade, the greater the chance you will continue going forward in that skill. With the incredible demand for trades professionals currently and in the future, it is crucial to have more students learning about the skilled trades,” said Brown.***

