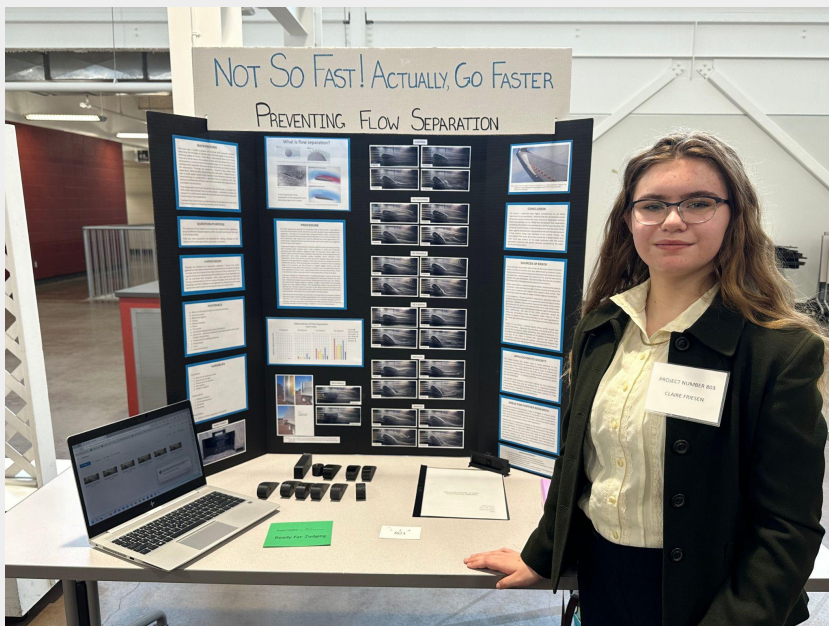


Three Chinook's Edge students qualify to attend national science fair

Three Chinook's Edge students have qualified to attend the Canada Wide Science Fair, due to their success at the Central Alberta Rotary Science Fair, held at Red Deer Polytechnic on April 6, 2024.

Claire Friesen, a Grade 8 student from Cremona School, Jules Owen Pole, a Grade 12 student from Hugh Sutherland School, and Jillian Reid, a Grade 7 student from Cremona School, were among the five students who were selected to attend the national event. It will be held in Ottawa, Ontario from May 25 to June 1, 2024.

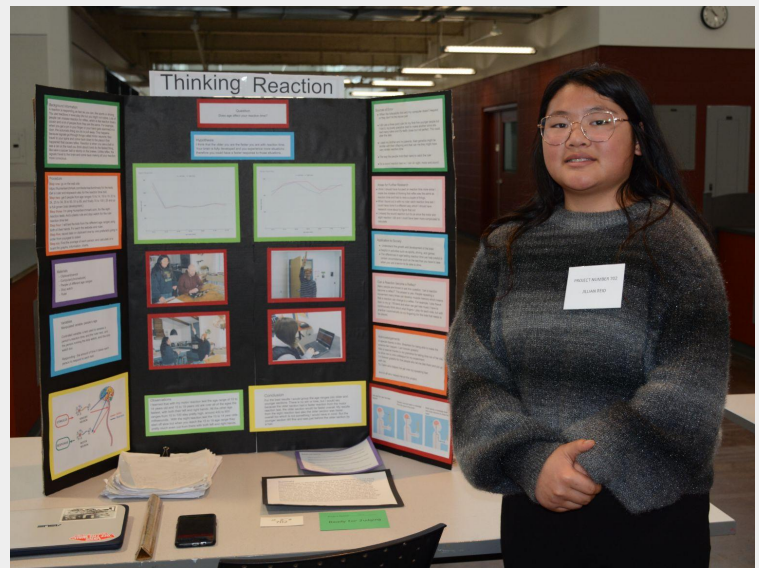
Also, a number of Chinook's Edge students placed well in their categories. Congratulations to all students who participated! #CESDAcademicExcellence



Claire Friesen (left)
Grade 8 - Cremona School
Gold award, and "Best of Fair" in the secondary category.
"Preventing Flow Separation."

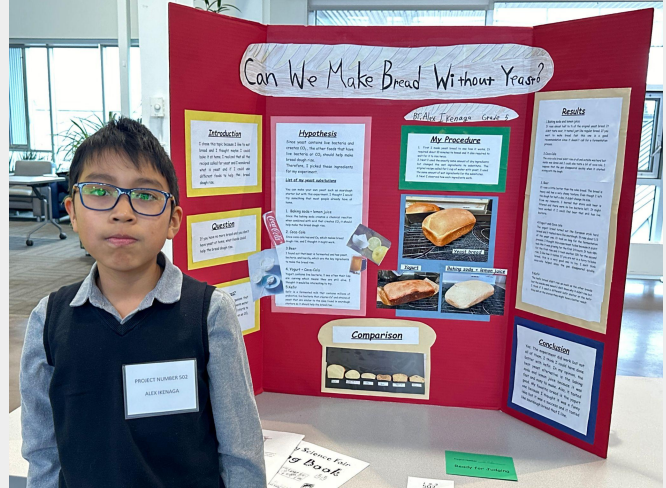
Jules Owen-Pole (bottom left),
Grade 12 - Hugh Sutherland School
Silver award, and 2nd runner up in the secondary category
"Whiskers to Wisdom".

Jillian Reid (bottom right)
Grade 7 - Cremona School
Silver award in the secondary category
Special Award from the Psychologists' Association of Alberta
"Thinking Reaction"

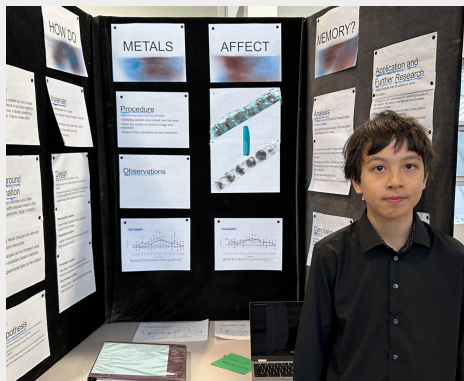




Ayaan Hossain
Grade 6 - Ecole Deer Meadow School
Gold, and "Best of Fair" in the elementary category
"Hot Ice Experiment"



Alex Ikega
Grade 5 - Ecole Deer Meadow School
Silver and 2nd runner up in the elementary category
"Can We Make Bread Without Yeast?"



Eli Bird (far left)
Grade 5 - Cremona School
Bronze award in the elementary category
Special award from the Alberta
Psychologists' Association
"How Do Metals Affect Memory"



Hailey Sikstrom (left)
Grade 5 - Hugh Sutherland School
Bronze award in the elementary category
"Narwhals and Arctic Climate Change"

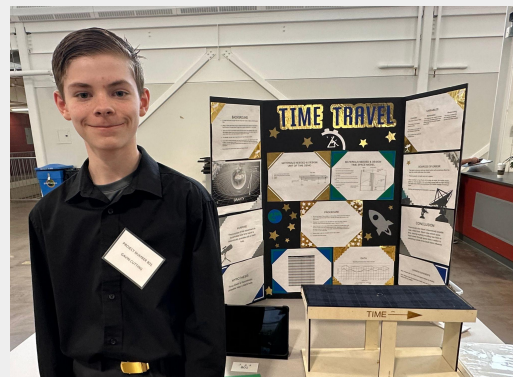
Kyla Ball (right)
Grade 6 - Hugh Sutherland School
Bronze award in the elementary category,
"The Five Second Rule"



Natalie Conrad (far right)
Grade 5 - Olds Koinonia Christian School
Bronze in the elementary category
"LEGO Bridges"



Abby Fisher (far left)
Grade 5 - River Valley School
Special Award from the Kerry Wood
Nature Centre
"Invisible Ink"



Gavin Cutting (left)
Grade 8 - Cremona School
Special Award from Discovery Wild
Life Centre
"Time Travel in Theory"



École Olds High School students prepare to attend climate action conference in Toronto



EOHS Students attending the UNESCO conference (left to right): Ashton Bird, Keianna Aubin, Lorelai Smith, Shelby Schekk. Not pictured: Ross Saddlemyer

Five students from École Olds High School are getting ready to attend the UNESCO student conference this week. The 2024 UNESCO Schools National Conference is being held on April 9 - 11 in Toronto, and is focused on “Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Change”.

UNESCO stands for: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. École Olds High School has been a UNESCO affiliated school for 19 years. The relationship began with a school project that staff undertook to build stronger connections between students and the community. When staff learned that the Canadian Commission for UNESCO was creating a pilot project that would see about 10 schools from each Canadian province become affiliated schools, École High School put its name forward and was accepted.

UNESCO wanted to work with associated schools to “encourage schools worldwide to educate students on issues related to UNESCO’s overarching goals of promoting peace and international understanding.”

According to Bev Toews, an Academic Coach and Indigenous Liaison at Olds High, the values of UNESCO appealed to the school. ***“UNESCO values inter-cultural education, global citizenship, education for sustainable development, and reconciliation”, as well as other United Nations priorities, Toews said. “We especially appreciate the work of breaking down barriers that stand between people, in an effort to create a culture of peace in our school, community and the world.”***

Usually about 200 to 250 students from across Canada attend the national conference. Participating students from ÉOHS pay \$200 to attend; the rest of the cost, including travel and hotel, is covered by sponsoring organizations. Students were invited based on interest they have expressed.

The 2024 national conference is focused on climate change and sustainable development. Participating students will be asked to create a project to impact their community on their return.

“Students tend to come home from this conference ready to get to work and help others,” said Toews. “The experience gives them power to do something about an issue of concern, and they see how they can make a difference.”



Looking at the conference descriptions, Ashton Bird, a Grade 9 EOHS student, said they were looking forward to attending the session “The Cost of Fast Fashion”. Bird said, ***“We are constantly inundated with brands and companies that want us to buy clothes all the time. It would be great if we could go back to buying more intentionally. I’m interested to see how the current trend in retro fashion will influence this.”***

Ross Sadlemyer, a Grade 10 student from EOHS, said, ***“I am looking forward to the session about responsibility and action from an Indigenous perspective. And I want to learn more about what other students are doing in their schools.”***

École Olds High students who are attending include: Ross Saddlemeyer, Lorelai Smith, Shelby Schekk, Keianna Aubin, and Ashton Bird. Toews and one other staff member will go with the students.

“We are excited for our students to have this experience,” said Meaghan Reist, Principal, EOHS. “Whenever students can connect with an area of passion, school becomes more engaging and relevant. We anticipate some great ideas from our students on their return.”

Chinook’s Edge students utilize opportunities to prepare for future careers in the skilled trades

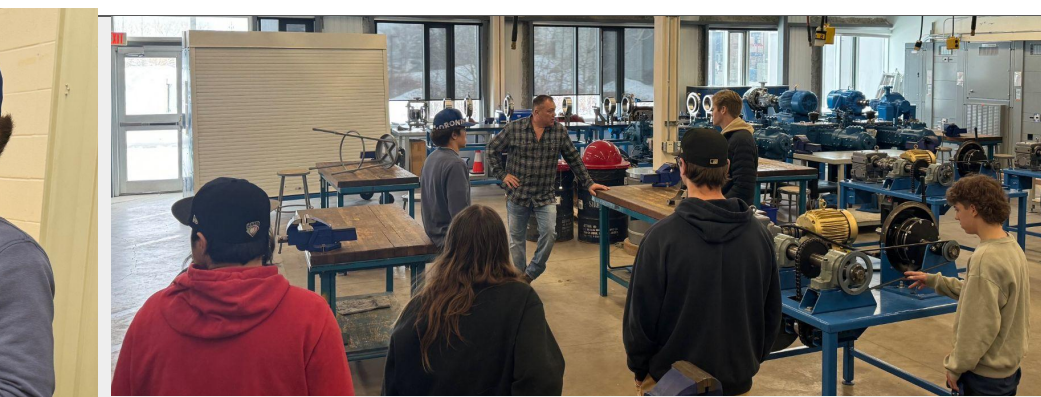
Chinook’s Edge students have begun another semester of pre-employment skilled trades training. In total, 15 students are participating in pre-employment welding and 12 are currently enrolled in pre-employment heavy equipment.

Also, one student - Zaland Murad Ali from Ecole H.J. Cody School in Sylvan Lake - is participating in the first ever pre-employment training for Industrial Mechanics, also known

as Millwrights, at Red Deer Polytechnic. The program runs for 12 weeks.

“I’ve always wanted to work in fields that are hands-on,” said Murad Ali. “The reason I chose millwright specifically is because I get to learn about dealing with precision machinery and fabrication. I like that I will get my hands dirty.”





Murad Ali said he has realized, “Things don’t seem hard when you enjoy doing it. I really came into the course thinking that this was going to be challenging, but the more I get into this course, the more I enjoy it, and the harder I work, which is probably why I find it not as hard. It’s just something you gotta do - you need to work for what you want.”

Murad Ali said participation in previous dual credit opportunities helped him narrow his interests. He said he liked pipe trades courses, but realized he enjoyed welding the most. Taking TEC 1000 helped him see he liked metal fabrication best. **“I really am thankful for the courses the school provided me with because they played a major role in narrowing my future,”** he said.

If students maintain a 65 per cent average in any pre-employment certification, they are eligible to write the provincial Apprenticeship Industry Training exam. If students achieve 70 per cent on the exam, they can be credited for their theory learning in year one apprenticeship.

“Pre-employment certifications allow students to enter in the workforce with basic, industry required skills, ready for further apprenticeship training and growth,” said Brianne Fletcher, Chinook’s Edge Career Connections Coordinator.

“When students are successful in this programming, it reduces the time required for apprenticeship training. The division’s data shows that the transition into the industry is happening successfully for

Chinook’s Edge students at a significantly younger age than the provincial average,” said Fletcher.



Top left: Zaland Murad Ali, an Ecole H.J. Cody student, who is participating in the first group of students enrolled in a pre-employment opportunity for Millwrights at Red Deer Polytechnic.

Bottom left: Students participating in pre-employment, in heavy equipment.

Previous page: Students participating In welding pre-employment



C.P. Blakely's 17th annual Indigenous Celebration Day continues to grow

A 17-year-old and valued tradition at C.P. Blakely Elementary School in Sylvan Lake continues to grow and gain strength. The school's annual Indigenous Celebration was underway last week, and staff and students say its impact continues to be felt.

"We are grateful to learn from Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Elders. We are celebrating today what we've learned and the knowledge we have gained on this journey, and continue to build on that," said Jen Pfaff, a C.P. Blakely teacher and the school's Indigenous lead teacher.

"The knowledge we've gained was evident today with the quality of questions students are asking our presenters," said Pfaff. For instance, one student noticed the paintings on a drum and asked the meaning of it, and another question asked about a presenter's spirit animal. ***"These questions show me that our students come to this day with an awareness and openness to learn more."***

In the morning, students got to hear from Elder John Sinclair who shared stories about Indigenous culture and heritage. Sinclair shared how each student is important in the school, and that in a community, ***"everyone has a place; everyone has value."***

Also, students played Indigenous games in the gym with Dashayne Morin. And, Patrick Mitsuing, an Indigenous helper - as well as dancer and drummer, taught students about the Cree language.



Clare Butterfly, a Cree knowledge keeper and dancer, sat with students around the school's tipi and shared tipi teachings.

"I love giving people that don't know about Indigenous history, traditions and culture, a glimpse into it. That's truth and reconciliation for me," said Butterfly. ***"Tipi teachings are really life teachings, and about strengthening connections between people."***

Butterfly is a former C.P. Blakely student, so sharing a day like this is special. ***"When I was here there wasn't this celebration or a tipi - but now there is. It has become a part of the school culture and that's exciting."*** Butterfly said he believes days like this counteract racism with accurate and positive information.

In the afternoon students got to enjoy performances from Indigenous dancers and drummers.

"I enjoyed all of the beautiful regalia as the dancers danced. I especially liked the male fancy dancers because it was so twirly and colorful and so intriguing to watch," said Grade 5 student, Jaimie.

"It was really interesting and fun to learn the Cree language," said Grade 4 student, Boyd.

"I learned a lot and enjoyed when Mr. Butterfly talked about the 13 tipi poles and the meaning of them. I enjoyed all the questions people asked," said Maverick, a Grade 5 student.





“My favorite part of today was when Mr. Sinclair was telling us stories and singing songs with his drum. Indigenous Celebration day was so much fun,” said Jordyn, a Grade 5 student.

“I liked the way the beat of the drum filled the whole school, not just the gym,” said Russell, a Grade 5 student.

Often schools host similar days in June, either on or before June 21 which is National Indigenous Peoples Day. C.P. Blakely School likes to place its annual celebration in April because presenters are available and in the school schedule there is time to focus on the day and the knowledge and understanding that flows from it.

“We can celebrate Indigenous culture at any time in the year,” said Anne Frey, Principal of C.P. Blakely School.



“Our learning and culture goes beyond a single day. It’s about infusing what we are learning on this day throughout the year.”

Frey said, “Thank you to everyone who contributed to our day. We are grateful for the knowledge, wisdom and insights that were shared, and that increased our understanding.”



Hugh Sutherland School Council recognized provincially for successful transformation

The Hugh Sutherland School (HSS) Council is being recognized for success. Council representatives have been invited to give a presentation at the annual conference of the Alberta School Councils' Association, later this month. They'll speak about the journey the council has been on, the increased effectiveness of the council and its strengthened relationship with the school.

"I'm excited to think that perhaps our presentation might help someone else," said Margie Steingart, Chair of the HSS School Council, and parent of three students attending the school. "I hope that by sharing our journey, there are others who see a path forward. We hope other school councils can flourish too."

The beginning of the journey for the current school council began in 2022, with a desire from parents and from school administration to strengthen relationships and communication between families and the school.

"We needed to figure out what we were going to do as a school council," said Steingart.

"Parents at that time were expressing a desire to be more involved and have a say in their children's school experiences," said Tracy Brown Ewert, a HSS school council member. "We needed to learn how to do that in the right way."

The first steps involved researching what a school council does. The HSS school council connected with resources available through the Alberta School Councils Association, and moved through three modules called "Creating school council plans to engage school communities". Steingart and other parents said all three modules were very good, but the second module was the most important.

"It felt ground breaking and revolutionary to us," said Steingart. "The module had us focus on what makes our school unique. Our goals flowed out of that conversation and really gave us direction."

The school council's goals are to:

1. Engage with parents
2. Connect with classrooms
3. Enhance school culture

School council members say a significant positive impact from the discussion they've had with the school administration is increased communication. An example is parents wanting to know their child's teacher and expectations before parent teacher interviews. A discussion between the council and school administration resulted in the school asking teachers to send home letters of introduction at the start of a semester.





“I love that teachers send these,” said Brown Ewert. “I am grateful they let us into their world.”

“In all lanes of communication to parents there has been a huge improvement,” said Steingart.

HSS Principal Dean Nielsen appreciates the increased communication as well. He likes meeting with school council leaders two weeks before upcoming meetings.

“It keeps the open dialogue going, and I value that kind of honest communication,” said Nielsen. “The openness we have is important. When you have challenges, and you work through them together, even through tough conversations, building understanding of each other always gets better results.”

Parents say another shift that has happened since working through the ASCA modules is that meetings are more meaningful. The school council chair develops a detailed agenda, includes all the stakeholders, and at the meeting, leaves time for a roundtable where parents can raise items for discussion. Also, fundraising isn't the focus of the council's work.

“Fundraising isn't who we are,” said Steingart. “Certainly that is a portion of what we do, but we understand our full role now. We also believe we have roles to play in advising the school and in communicating. We understand what our legislated role is and where the lines are between what school councils do and what staff do.”

The council has also focused on building a student component of their meetings.

“We are not a parent council. We are a school council,” said Brown Ewert, pointing out that the legislated name - 'school council' - implies a wider involvement than parents.

“We wanted the student perspective,” said Steingart. “We invited high school students into our meeting so we can acknowledge what they are doing, and it's been really positive.”

Steingart and Brown Ewert both point out that although there have been positive results from the work their school council has done together, the journey isn't over.

“It's not like we've reached our ultimate goal,” said Brown Ewert, “but we have learned we can get through bumps with humility, a commitment to listen, and hard work.”

Steingart said the most valuable result of the work is a strengthened relationship between parents and the school. ***“There isn't a shortcut to a strong relationship,” she said. “You have to do the work and get in the trenches together.”***

“Parents are key stakeholders in education. Feedback and dialogue is helpful and meaningful,” said Nielsen. “I am glad that the school and our school council are on a path to getting it right,” said Nielsen. “We're on the same path together, and that is powerful.”

To learn more about the journey of the HSS school council, visit the council's tab on the school website: <https://www.hughsutherlandschool.ca/about/council>

