

New aviation career pathway elevates opportunities for students

Six Chinook's Edge students are letting their dreams take flight. The high school students are participating in a new career pathway opportunity available, through a partnership between Chinook's Edge School Division and Skywings Aviation.

"We are incredibly happy to provide this opportunity for students," said Brianne Fletcher, Chinook's Edge Career Connections Coordinator.

"This course has caught the imagination of students, and that's what we want to see. We know that as students are able to explore possible careers it gives them direction as they transition out of high school, and it also helps them become more engaged and successful at school," said Fletcher.



Back row (L to R): Caleb Leismeister (Penhold Crossing School - Gr. 12), Dane Nielsen (Didsbury High School - Gr. 12), James Ellingsgaard (Olds Koinonia Christian School - Gr. 12), Owen Hillman (Spruce View School - Gr. 12)

Front row: Maxine Bates (Didsbury High School - Gr. 10), Brooke Rosevear (Sundre High School - Gr. 11).

Participating aviation students are enrolled in ground school training at Skywings Aviation, near the Red Deer Regional Airport. Students cover the cost of their books, while Skywings Aviation is sponsoring the full cost of the ground school training for each student.

The program began April 9 and will wrap up by the end of the month, with students attending the facility three times each week, during evenings and weekends. Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools also has six students attending the program. There is already a wait list for future sessions.

Current students were recommended to the program by staff at their schools. To be admitted students need to be on track for graduation, and have an interest in aviation. Each had an entry interview with Fletcher.



Students from Chinook's Edge attend ground school, along with other students, for the first time at Skywings Aviation at the Red Deer airport

Owen Hillman, a Grade 12 student from Spruce View School, was at work when he got the interview call from Fletcher. ***"I told my supervisor 'hey, I've got an interview for becoming a pilot' and he said 'ok!'"***

Hillman said he has a number of family members that have a private pilot's license. ***"I figured this would be a good opportunity to learn and decide if I want to do it."***

James Ellingsgaard, a Grade 12 student from Olds Koinonia Christian School said, ***"I've always been interested in airplanes. I thought maybe I want to do this as a job, so why not try it first."***

Brooke Rosevear, a Grade 11 student from Sundre High, said, ***"I had no idea what I wanted to do for a career. A counselor at my school said 'how about aviation'? And I thought - hey that could actually be cool."***

Maxine Bates, a Grade 10 student from Didsbury High School, said, ***"I thought this would be a great experience. I'm starting this journey to see if I want to go into aviation."***

Students completing ground school training can choose to take a next step, if they'd like, by enrolling to obtain their private pilot's license (not part of the Chinook's Edge aviation career pathway), or exploring other career opportunities within the aviation industry.



Indigenous students enjoy learning about their culture at special conference



Grade 8 Indigenous students from Chinook's Edge enjoyed attending a conference called 'Inspiring Student Success' prior to spring break. The conference was planned by - and welcomed students from - Chinook's Edge, Red Deer Public Schools, Red Deer Catholic Schools, Wolf Creek School Division and Star Catholic Schools.

The purpose of the third annual event was to bring Indigenous students together, to meet new friends and learn about Indigenous culture.

The event was underway on April 11 and was held at Red Deer Polytechnic so students could see what a post-secondary education might be like, and so students feel inspired about their own futures.

Students were able to participate in a wide range of sessions including tipi teachings, smudging, metis finger weaving, medicine wheel wellness, Cree language, a tour of the campus, and more.

"I was really excited to go and learn about my culture and catch up with old friends and learn some things such as the full meaning of the medicine wheel and the importance of it," said Bella Stoutenberg, a Spruce View School student.

Spruce View student, Greyson Johnson said, ***"I really didn't want to go, but it turns out the people were nice and the presentations were cool!"***

Wyatt Fredette, a Spruce View School student, said, ***"It was fun and we got to learn a lot about our culture, and the food was REALLLY good!"***



Spruce View School students on their way to the conference.

