

## Student-led podcast boosts confidence and strengthens culture at Innisfail Middle School

A new, student run podcast at Innisfail Middle School is helping to strengthen school culture. The idea for the podcast came from Julia Price, a Youth Empowerment and Success (YES) Coach.

***“It’s been amazing,” says Julia Price, IMS YES Coach. “There are a number of students who participate consistently and really get into it, and are excited about it. I’ve seen their confidence grow. The feedback has also been amazing.”***

***“The IMS podcast has been an amazing addition to our school student culture at Innisfail Middle School,” says Kirsten Strand, Vice Principal, Innisfail Middle School.***

***Strand says, “Students are so proud to take ownership of this project and are learning so much through the process about public speaking, professionalism, organization, problem solving and the positive impact of community involvement and leadership. Having the students as the voice to celebrate our core values of Mustang Pride in Self, Pride in Others and Pride in Community has truly helped bring those values to life.”***



Julia Price, Youth Empowerment and Success (YES) Coach with Innisfail Middle School students who have started a podcast

Price says the idea for the podcast came from knowing about all the opportunities available to students in school and in the community, but realizing that students weren’t always aware of the opportunities.

In addition to the information about opportunities for students, the podcast includes interviews with teachers and students, interesting facts, as well as jokes of the week which are submitted by students from throughout the school. Price offers a prize for the winning joke, which also attracts more listeners because students want to know what joke was selected.

***“The podcast was one way we could build that awareness, while also giving students a voice, building their skills and confidence,” says Price.***

Noah Ripley, a Grade 7 IMS student, says, ***“I like talking. [Being involved in the podcast] is the closest thing to making YouTube videos while I am still in school. I just like seeing everything come together from everyone and there is a great result.”***

Alice Hoar, a Grade 5 IMS student says, ***“I like interviewing teachers and friends.”***

Connor Prestlien, a Grade 6 IMS student agrees, saying that when he interviews someone for the podcast, ***“you get to know someone you didn’t know before. I like getting to know the teachers and understand them better.”***

Ripley says he hopes to do enough episodes that ***“most people in the school will be involved. I want to keep it fair and have fun.”***

***“I am proud of this group,” says Price. “They are doing such a good job. I’m excited to work with them to keep this podcast going all year long.”***

For more information about the Youth Empowerment and Support (YES) program, please visit the Chinook’s Edge website, [here](#).

## Educators from five Central Alberta School Divisions collaborate to cultivate leadership excellence

Educators from five Central Alberta school divisions gathered in Chinook’s Edge last week. The 60 individuals from Chinook’s Edge School Division, Wolf Creek Public Schools, Wild Rose School Division, Red Deer Public Schools and Clearview Public Schools gathered to focus on leadership skills.

***“The group is impressive, and is a one-of-a-kind in the province,” says Mike Garrow, Associate Superintendent, Chinook’s Edge School Division. “Many school divisions create opportunities for aspiring leaders to grow in their skills. What makes this unique is that we gather together to collaborate. We benefit from the ideas we share together about leadership.”***

Garrow says the group typically gathers once every two years and usually in Red Deer. This is the first time Chinook’s Edge has hosted the event.



The purpose of the gathering is to give educators who are interested in leadership a chance to consider and grow their skills in specific competencies that are in [Alberta’s Leadership Quality Standard](#) such as Fostering Effective Relationships, Embodying Visionary Leadership, Leading a Learning Community, Developing Leadership Capacity, and Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context.







In the morning, Superintendent Kurt Sacher shared his presentation, “Leading Without a Name Tag”. The presentation summarizes seven pieces of wisdom important to Sacher in his 39 year career as an educator. The presentation included stories and personal insights, as well as opportunities for leaders to discuss and reflect on their own experiences, so that participants left empowered and encouraged.

In the afternoon, each school division’s participants were able to gather with each other to continue to build their leadership skills.

***“We are grateful to have so many strong educators interested in becoming leaders in Chinook’s Edge, and throughout Central Alberta,” says Garrow.***

