

Chinook's Edge School Division: School Impact Stories

This year I had a grade 12 student return to our school after attending a couple of other schools in Alberta during the last 2 years. When I was timetabling her she insisted that she had no interest in post-secondary education. Graduating high school was her goal and then get out!! (she had had a stressful family situation) She did mention, however, that maybe ONE day she would like to be a flight attendant or be in the travel industry. I explained about the great programs we had at Olds College for this industry and she expressed no interest in post-secondary. Then, when you forwarded the dual credit hospitality and tourism information, I gave her the info, she enrolled, and she LOVES it! She is FOR SURE attending college, either Olds or SAIT (probably Olds!). I am absolutely certain that this would not have happened without the dual credit program. She feels successful with a college class, has way more confidence, and is looking forward to next year! She just stopped in for scholarship information.....

Ruth Dougherty

Teacher/Academic Advisor

Cremona School

I think the most powerful statement about dual credit is that twice I have been asked by parents to pose with their student for their graduation photos because of my role connecting students to dual credit. Both of the student's parents told me that their son would never have graduated from high school had it not been for dual credit. Both students are now journeymen and one owns his own successful business.

Doug Shaw

Olds High School Off-Campus and Shop Teacher

Erran, Chase, and Bailey come to mind and represent how these experiences impact students. Erran and Chase have really excelled in school since their experience and improvement in the dual credit welding program. Both students then understood what was needed academically in the trades and now see the purpose in school. They are very excited about the future. Bailey has been able to envision a future career in the agriculture industry because of her involvement in the dual credit program. Bailey has a bright future, and is very thankful to have the opportunity to be involved in the dual credit program. We see this type of change in nearly all students who experience dual credit. These experiences show students what past-secondary learning is really like and they become more focused on their high school success to better prepare for their future.

Kent Lorenz, OHS Vice Principal

The students in our school who have had opportunity to participate in dual credit opportunities have really done well. Many have gone on to careers in the particular area of study, and some have been employed right out of high school to continue an apprenticeship. One student who was at risk completed the Meat Processing Certificate and is employed in the industry today. We also had one student who took a dual credit fashion design course several years back who received a scholarship to a school in Calgary. She is studying at Kent State University and is now in Italy as part of their fashion program. Dual Credit sure meets the need of our small school and sets students up well into their life after high school.

Dwayne Brown – Principal of Olds Koinonia

Dual Credit opportunities in our schools allow us to provide trade-related opportunities to our students that we would otherwise be entirely unable to provide. As we are essentially "one room schools", we can't offer our students really anything in terms of hands-on shop experiences, and dual credit opportunities give them that chance. Additionally, dual credit opportunities can be used as motivation for some of our struggling students, in particular the ones who don't necessarily have great attendance. Because we have made it a priority to offer these courses to students who are engaged in their studies, sometimes that is motivation for them to attend school and continue working towards their diploma. Carter is one such student I see every day because that is the deal we made with him and his parents in September if he wanted to be part of dual credit. He needed to be at school at least one hour every day and he is doing this. Although one of our students, Curtis, didn't end up attending Pre-employment in the end because he did not complete the needed requirement, he did still graduate last spring which was a great accomplishment. His mom sent us a really lovely letter thanking us for pushing Curtis to keep going when he regularly wanted to drop out. Even though he gave up the opportunity in the end, dual credit welding was the carrot that convinced him to come to Career High instead of being a high school dropout. He's a high school graduate and fully employed this year because of the work we did even getting him ready to try for dual credit. It helped him see what he needed to do to be successful beyond high school. Amy Jesse – Teacher Didsbury Career High

For Hugh Sutherland School, dual credit welding has been a "game changer" for our students. Each student that took part in the program last Spring benefited immensely. The amount of learning and maturity demonstrated by these students was impressive. For many of the students, they experienced the greatest amount of success in their school year in the dual credit welding program. Both the students and parents recognised this success and growth as well.

When the second cohort went through the program, I had the chance to drive a couple of the boys to Olds. Each trip, they would spend the entire time talking about welding and Olds College. We know these conversations continued as the vast majority of these students have started a path to the trades (RAP, Work Experience, etc.).

Though each of our students experienced success, Austin stands out to me. Austin came to HSS in grade 10. He had struggled in the past. In his grade 11 year, we were able to get him on track, caught up on missed courses, and start on a career path. Austin's participation in welding played a HUGE role in this success. He was hooked on welding and knew it was an important skill to develop. The dual credit experience gave him the confidence to pursue a trade. This fall, Austin has started RAP as an Automotive Service Technician.

We are pleased our students have dual credit opportunities to explore different career paths, build their confidence, and to be exposed to the post-secondary environment.

Kevin Hronek, Career Councillor and HSS Admin

With dual credit we have watched students go from not really caring about their studies to smiling ear to ear because they are loving what they are doing. It turns around their efforts in their other high school courses. These dual credit opportunities build confidence and self-esteem as students start to experience career pathways they are thinking about. Dual Credit is an exceptional opportunity that is opening doors that students may otherwise not have or just not see how they get there. These courses are making a difference.

Colleen Wilson – Career Councillor Penhold Crossing

Dual Credit opportunities have opened up new doors for rural students and helped bridge the gap between smaller high schools and larger more intimidating post-secondary schools. While the learning opportunities are obvious, the hidden factors for post-secondary exposure have become my most appreciated component. An example of this would be a student who participated on his own in the Welding 1167 and then followed up with the Welding 2167 only to return to the high school and push to change his programming path from the -3 stream towards a more marketable stream. In this case, he was able to complete 30 level courses and then re-start math and science in Grade 12 with the hopes of going into Agriculture Management upon graduation. He took it upon himself to take on this difficult route as a result of his exposure to the Olds College campus. This example demonstrates how students can strive for more when exposure to the next level is realized.

The ability to reduce hurdles in transportation and course instruction costs are immeasurable and unmatched from the K-12 Instructional budget. Having these accessible with other funds is invaluable for our students. As an organization, we must find a way to keep funding these opportunities if we believe our goals around HS completion and transition are important. I cannot think of any other single programming opportunity presented to students that can provide the depth in these areas that we hope to achieve.

Jay Steeves – Principal of Spruce View

As a teacher I feel extremely honored to be able to introduce my students to the world of dual credit programming. It has allowed students to explore a variety of career avenues and experience the ultimate goal of learning, finding passion and a career path.

Some of the impact that we have witnessed firsthand at Sundre High School have been:

- increased attendance
- increase in school marks
- increased motivation to do well
- growth and maturity
- reinforcement in a career choice
- employability

Seeing firsthand what the college has to offer and touring the facilities has been an eye opener for many of our students. It has made them realize the importance of this opportunity. Students have expressed that they enjoy the ability to do more and learn more on their own. Being able to attend the Olds College has impacted students, as they experience firsthand what college life is like, they love being on the campus and being treated as an adult, being able to call the teachers by their first name and of course the food.

At times, students did find the work to be overwhelming, but again realized this is college life. At times students did struggle to keep up with both school and dual credit courses, but also this assisted them to be better learners and to dig in. Dual credit has offered students opportunities, that on their own most likely would not have happened such as apprenticeships at dealerships. Our student Madi, who completed the Health Care Aide Certificate while she was in Grade 11, was hired on by Mountain View Senior's Center shortly after completion of her program. She finished Grade 12 being employed and for her this is a stepping stone that will move into a career in nursing. She loved the course and the lifelong friendships she was able to make due to this opportunity. For many of our students, not only were they impacted by learning and reinforcing a career choice, but the aspect of making friends along the way.

Other students who had the opportunity to take online courses have also pursued or are planning to pursue this as a career. Haylee, took Health Care Aide courses through Lakeland College, she is now working in this profession. Kacey, took Play courses and plans to pursue this and work in a play school. The ripple effect of the dual credit courses has been phenomenal. It gives me great satisfaction to see many of our students pursue their careers after starting out in dual credit. It very much has life affirming choices and impact on our students.

Lisa Wilson – Sundre High Career Councillor

Elliot was not doing well in our school the year before he entered the SWAC program. He would be the first one to admit his social life took priority and he was not motivated to change. His concerned mother registered Elliot in a different school division hoping he would focus on his school academics, away from friends. Later he discovered it wasn't the 'where' that led to his success, it was the 'what'. What got Elliot motivated was the prospect of working with cars. When the staff at Gasoline Alley Career High heard about the opportunity for students to go into the SWAC program, they thought of Elliot. Elliot loves vehicles; he drove an amazing purple Challenger that was the envy of his peers while at Career High. On December 6th. 2017, we informed Elliot about the opportunity SWAC could provide, BUT there would be a lot to do to qualify WOW! A new Elliot appeared at our doors. From Dec 13th to Feb 2nd of 2018, Elliot completed English and Social 30-2 in less than two months! We are so proud of Elliot and his accomplishments. Elliot Breitzkreuz graduated with Gasoline Alley Career High in June 2018. Elliot was also a bronze medal winner at the regional Skills Competition for Pre-employment AST dual credit program and was selected to receive the *Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board CTS Scholarship!*Sue Fox – Teacher at Gasoline Alley Career High

The positive impact of the RDC SWAC program has been most evident upon the four students that have been involved in this initiative to date. Additionally, the Dual Credit opportunities offered previously have afforded our students the chance to take hands-on learning instructions in off-site locations. Without a doubt, our DCS learning environment has been enhanced by being involved in these two important CESD approved learning strategies.

Delburne Centralized School leapt at the chance to be a part of the Student Within A School (SWAC) program the year it was announced. Our two students enjoyed the fulltime aspect of being both a high school and a College student at the same time. This led to an increase in maturity for both participants, as demonstrated in their final grades and the fact that they both participated in the SKILLS competition in Edmonton as the Red Deer SWAC representatives. Their pride at this accomplishment was more than evident.

One unexpected outcome of the SWAC program was the trickledown effect upon the younger grades. We had two grade ten students that followed the success of the first grade 12 participants closely, resulting in a drive to be able to enter this journey themselves. These two students worked extremely hard in grade 11 in order to have the best possible chance of being accepted into the program during their last year of high school. Both of these young men did indeed join the SAWC program, both enjoyed success in terms of lifelong learning, and both have repeatedly stated that they would recommend this type of educational path to anyone interested in the trades as a possible career route upon completion of high school.

Another alternative site strategy that has yielded positive results here at DCS has been the dual credit opportunity in the area of the single trades courses like welding at Olds College. There have been times in the past few years where a shop teacher has not been able to be timetabled into the high school options. As a result of this situation, our students were not able to have onsite instruction in the CTS Fabrication pathways. The chance to send high school students to Olds College for welding was a major benefit not only in terms of exposure to CTS options but helped ensure that DCS provided as many programs as possible to our student population. Those that attended Olds College found the instruction to be challenging but not overwhelming; highlighting what post-secondary apprenticeship training really looks like in the Alberta Apprenticeship Trades. Delburne Centralized School students have most certainly benefited from having dual credit made available to them. We look forward to being able to participate in these important initiatives for years to come.

Delburne School Admin Team

Dual Credit opportunities provide very valuable experience for students who may not be finding high school the best fit for where they hope to go after high school. Last year one of our students, Brett, was in the Meat Processing Certificate program and learned a very valuable trade that he is taking beyond graduation. Upon returning after the Certificate was completed, Brett translated his success at Olds College to success in completing his high school program.

Innisfail High School has been fortunate to have numerous students in Pre-Employment Welding, Automotive Service Technician, Agriculture Equipment Technician, single Trades courses, and Health Care Aide Certificate who have worked hard to put themselves on the path towards success in a trade. All of these students worked hard to push themselves in their high school classes and improve in areas like math and science to better position themselves for the academics of the trades. We see that these dual credit opportunities make a difference in changing the focus, engagement and career pathways for students.

Wayne Pineau – Principal of Innisfail High School

The dual credit program has had a huge impact on my son, Liam. To be frank, Liam does not enjoy school. He is tactile, mechanically inclined; he enjoys working with his hands. At home, he has taken it upon himself to repair and resurrect such things as a lawnmower, a small motor bike, a lawn tractor and has done well at it. He has been quite impressed with these accomplishments. Unfortunately, the school that he attends does not have any shop classes. What a wonderful surprise it was to learn of the dual credit program! As Liam began his welding classes, the dark cloud began to lift. He looked forward to each and every welding class, and was always prepared. It has done wonders for his self-esteem, to see success at school, doing something that he enjoys. The fact that he now has college credits, and with high marks, has been a huge source of pride for him. Last summer, Liam was also able to use his welding skills working in a machine shop in Calgary. We heard from his employer on more than one occasion, how pleased they were with his work. After seeing his welding job on one project, one of the men that he worked with, even brought something from home for Liam to repair. Again, this has been a great encouragement for my son!

I cannot imagine what he must be like for kids like Liam, day after day, year after year, going to school, spending your entire day doing things that do not interest you. The dual credit program has given him hope, not just for school, but for life; that he can look forward to spending his days doing something at which he is gifted. How many Liam's are sitting in our classrooms, who've not had the opportunity to find out that they are mechanically inclined, gifted with their hands? My concern is that without the wonderful opportunity offered by the dual credit program, there are kids who simply think that they are not smart enough, that because they may not be doing well in the academic courses, they think that they do not have what it takes to pursue a post-secondary education in the trades. After seeing the huge difference that the dual credit program has made in Liam's life, we would like to thank everyone that has made that possible and to encourage all involved to do all you can to make these opportunities available to as many kids as possible. This program has had a great impact on Liam in high school, and I'm sure that we will continue to see its benefits in his life through the years to come.

Again, thank you so much,

Linda Pogoda

Experience of a Lifetime: A Dream Career Maker!

The Dual Credit Agricultural Equipment Technician semester that our son Andrew took the 2017-18 school year has opened his dream career wide open. Prior to the opportunity, our son had struggled his whole school career. Learning was difficult and he often failed to see the relevance and/or correlation of anything academic to what he wanted from his life. Well, this program seriously turned everything around for him.

After having an interview and being accepted in the dual credit program his confidence soared. He had better motivation to power through his twelfth year of school and decided to enroll at Olds College for fall attendance to the Agricultural Equipment Technician Diploma. He got accepted conditionally, if he graduated and successfully passed his Math 20-2 course, that he had previously failed. With this desired goal in mind, he focused diligently on his last semester of high school. Andrew redid Math 20-2 at the Sundre Community Learning Center and passed!

Once he got going in the dual credit course we saw a motivation to learn from Andrew that we have never seen before. It was evident after only a couple weeks that our son had found something he truly loved. For the first time ever, he became a motivated and interested learner. Just goes to show that when you are passionate about something and truly enjoy it, you become a better learner! He had a new found happiness and contentment!

Later in the dual credit course, Andrew received the opportunity to have an interview to receive a work-experience position related to his dual credit program. After an interview at Olds John Deere, he received an opportunity to go a few afternoons a week and job shadow journeymen. Wow, what a dream for our son! Andrew enjoyed this adventure so much, that he took an absolute risk and told his boss that if they were looking for a summer student to hire he would absolutely love the adventure. So that's what happened! Andrew worked at John Deere this past summer continuing with his plan to go to Olds College this past fall.

As fall approached his best friend and cousin Bryce (that also had this same dual credit opportunity) got on as an apprentice with Future Ag in Olds. Bryce was torn because he and Andrew had plans to go to Olds College to take the agricultural equipment technician diploma together. Andrew assured Bryce that he should do the apprenticeship and that he would be fine going to college on his own. This was a huge action for our son whom previously lacked confidence and the ability to take risks. This program definitely helped him with HUGE confidence to be his own person!

One night Andrew said to his dad and I that he sure wished he could get an apprenticeship too. My husband asked our son, "Well did you ask your boss at John Deere if they might consider you to do an apprenticeship with them?" To which he replied, "NO!" We told Andrew well you don't know what they will say if you don't ask and the worst that could happen is they will say no.

Andrew asked immediately the next day and before he knew it he was taken on as an apprentice at John Deere. Wow, so young to find true happiness in a career. All parents wish for is their children to be happy and find an career area they want to take on. All these events would have never presented themselves without Andrew's dual credit experience at Olds College. It's helped our son thrive! When one is lucky enough to find something for work they love, they can earn a living without having felt like they have worked a day in their life. When schooling is powerful it leads new adults to not only school success but life success! Well, that's what has happened here! We will all be forever grateful for the dual credit experience, Jackie Taylor's expertise and go-getter attitude, and what it has blossomed into for Andrew. Andrew needed encouragement and someone else other than family to believe in him and what great things he was capable of. This was the best opportunity for him.

Rhonda Cottrell – Parent at Sundre High

Hey there!

Carter had a great experience up at the Provincial Skills Canada Competition last week. While he was very nervous going in, the mentor/instructors were fantastic and he learned and experienced so much! We are truly thankful for the experience!

At the finish of the completion, Carter was sure that he had placed poorly as he asked a lot of questions and took a lot of guidance from the mentors over the two days. In the end he finished 11th out of 21 High School Competitors, and ahead of some that he thought would place well as they were so independent and confident. I think one of the best lessons he learned up there was that in real life; questions, curiosity and constant learning are encouraged!

It was a fantastic, well run event with incredible industry and school support! Carter is very proud to have attended and thankful to have been a part of such a great experience!

Thank you,

Jody – Parent Sundre High School