



Connections

Newsletter

Showcase on Career & Work Exploration Program

The Career and Work Exploration (CWEX) program is a class that provides students the opportunity to earn up to four high school credits (10, 20, A30, B30) for a combination of classroom work and hands-on learning with a business or organization in the community.

The course requires students to complete an on-the-job module ranging from 30-80 hours depending on the credit. During the in-class component, students learn about workers' rights, occupational health and safety, resumes, cover letters, among other things. Typically, students will complete those modules prior to beginning their work placements. As much as possible, students choose the business or organization where they would like to work. Teachers spend a lot of time before or after school, or at lunch hours, to secure placements. Whether it be trades, health care, agriculture, education, sports and recreation, hospitality, retail, business, or engineering, students' interests can often be matched up with a business or organization so that everyone can benefit.

At the start of the placement, employers complete a job interview and an evaluation, along with a couple of performance evaluations during the placement. All of these become part of students' marks. Teachers are also required to visit the work site during the placements to monitor student progress and ensure things are running smoothly.



There are numerous advantages of the program for students. They get real-life experience doing real work at a real business. For some students, CWEX is one of the things keeping them in school. Students with special needs are great candidates for CWEX, because they can acquire specific job skills that are often best learned on the job. Perhaps the greatest benefit is that students get to try out a job to see if that kind of work is something they would like to do. For some, CWEX can be the gateway to an apprenticeship in a skilled trade, or a part-time job. Nearly all students learn transferrable skills they can take anywhere to any job. They also develop employable attitudes and work habits, apply skills and knowledge in real work situations, and if all goes well, most get a great job reference.


Many businesses are looking for employees, and they can test out potential employees who may be hired after the work placement is finished. Numerous students each year are hired by the business where they did their work placement, or they acquire skills that allow them to be hired elsewhere. Schools benefit by building relationships with businesses and communities in general and by keeping up to date on current business trends.




Quotes from CWEX students:
"This has been the best experience because I was able to meet new people and face the challenges of a new and different workplace. This experience pushed me to know, with certainty, that I want to pursue becoming an ag mechanic. I have just signed a job offer to work part time while I finish school. After I graduate, I will begin my apprenticeship."
"At the beginning of the year, although I had some idea of what we wanted to do, I wasn't 100% sure. My CWEX experience allowed me to see, firsthand, what power engineering was all about. I have been accepted to Medicine Hat College for Power Engineering. After discussion with my CWEX placement supervisors, they assured me I was able to come home to do my work placements for the program."



MORTLACH SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

 @mortlachschoo

 @SchoolMortlach



Mortlach School, home to the Mortlach Mustangs, is located on Treaty 4 Territory. We are a rural K-12 school located in the heart of Mortlach, just 40 km from Moose Jaw. Our VISION is to be a learning community where everyone feels safe and valued. Every day we strive to cultivate a learning community that nurtures belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity. These words mean so much to us. At the beginning of the year, we meet together as a school to not only discuss our VISION, but we imagine it! We share our ideas on what will it look like when we've cultivated our learning community.

If you're looking for hands-on opportunities in the great outdoors, Mortlach School is where it's at! Last year, through joint school and community involvement, we created a garden on school grounds. We hosted a "Stone Soup" event; garden produce and donations from the community made for a delicious meal that was shared throughout the school. Our garden will feed our students (literally and figuratively) for years to come!

Gym classes are outside whenever possible; you'll see our kids bike-riding and snow-shoeing around the neighborhood, canoeing and kayaking in Moose Jaw, as well as skating at the local seasonal ice rink. Additionally, our Grade 4-8 students spend time in Outdoor Education — learning about fire building and camping and playing games like Human-Tracker in the Mortlach Orchard and the Mortlach Historic Afforestation Project (a planted forest approximately 2 km from Mortlach that we affectionally call the "Tree Farm"). Last year the Grade 4-8 students put their skills to the test, camping overnight in Wakamow Park.

Inside the school, our focus is on bringing students together. We meet as Reading Buddies (older and younger children reading together), as well as weekly Clubs — mixed grade meetings to explore gaming, crochet, literature study —whatever their hearts desire! We also meet every Monday morning in the gym for announcements, yoga, joke of the day, singing and more. Mortlach School IS community.

Our senior science classes get to see science in action — whether lighting magnesium on fire, shooting lasers through paper, making elephant toothpaste, playing with static electricity, melting gummy bears with potassium or making the perfect paper airplane, science is fun at Mortlach.

You'll often find students working on their projects throughout the school, from our grown-up furniture in the foyer to our cozy/comfy library furniture, there's a space for everyone.

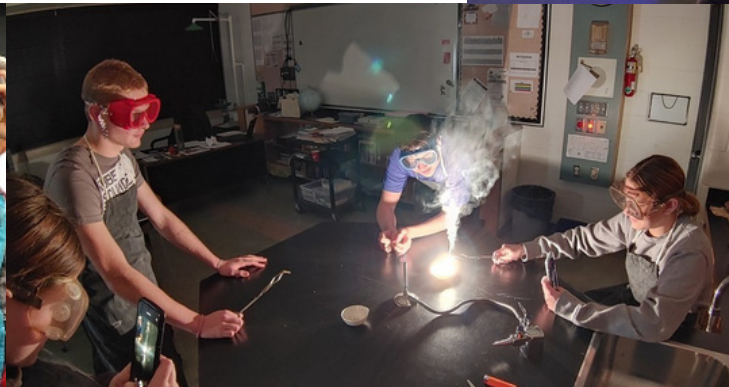




We are so proud of our Track and Field, Cross-Country, Badminton, Basketball, Volleyball and Curling teams, and especially proud of the Senior CO-OP programs with the Riverview Royals. Having a smaller number of students means pulling up students from younger grades to play for our extra-curricular teams, providing learning opportunities for our younger teammates and coaching opportunities for our older ones. When it comes to Mortlach sports, these kids show their fortitude and courage at every game!

Every year the school participates in a Reading Challenge led by our self-proclaimed world's loudest librarian. Each year, we track the number of books, genres, and pages read. All participants in the challenge receive a special treat, with the top reader in each classroom earning a book of their choice supplied by our fabulous SCC.

This year our kitchen servery is under construction because we are getting a kitchen classroom! With several individual kitchens in the new classroom, our students will be whipping up culinary delights in no time! The classroom is expected to be ready for next September.



Get to Know Our Staff



Mavis Evans moved to Moose Jaw at the age of 5 and attended Prince Arthur, Ross, Empire and Peacock. Mavis met her husband David at Prince Arthur and they reconnected at Peacock and married 33 years ago. Together they have two sons, Cole, and Brett, three daughters-in-law Kerstin, Rachel, and Kirsten and one granddaughter Ella. Mavis enjoys reading, board/card games, game shows and tv shows.

She loves to cook and bake – but she will not eat cooked fruit of any kind like pies, crisps, jams, etc. She became a nutrition coordinator and uses it in her job with Prairie South. She enjoys playing but mostly watching sports – including baseball, basketball, football, and hockey. She loves to vacation anywhere her camping trailer will go. Mavis claims she's a natural born klutz and her mom registered her in many activities in hopes she'd become more graceful, such as jazz and Highland Dance, bowling and fastball. Mavis started working as an Educational Assistant at William Grayson in 2002 and has continued working there until this day, while doing many other jobs along the way. In January 2005 she started the breakfast nutrition program at William Grayson and lunch nutrition program at Peacock. She also ran a lunch nutrition program at John Chisholm and worked in the concession at Riverview and after school program at Empire. William Grayson is more than just a school to Mavis. The atmosphere is one of a kind. Staff becomes family and there is nothing else like it. Mavis has worked with many different classrooms and age groups, and she's come to realize that the only difference in kids is the size of their hugs. The work is hard, but the results make it so worth the effort. There is nothing like seeing former students and hearing, "Hey, Mrs. Evans ..." It truly makes her day!



Lee Behrns grew up in Abernethy, Saskatchewan and attended school at Abernethy Elementary and Balcarres High School. Lee started his teaching career in Moose Jaw at Cornerstone Christian School, where he remains today. He is in his 25th year teaching math and was also a vice-principal. Lee has been married for almost 25 years and his wife is the Administrative Assistant at Cornerstone. They have a daughter who is 19 and in her first year of Education at the U of R majoring in General Science. Their son is in grade 10 at CCS and majoring in video games! 😊 Lee is a small engine mechanic on the side – a nice, quiet activity after being around people all day – just Lee and his garage. Lee plays old-timer hockey, farms with his dad and brother, coaches volleyball and is addicted to collecting hockey cards. Lee has been to Las Vegas too many times to count – he doesn't gamble or drink but loves to take in the shows, pools and NHL hockey games.



Aaron Hesjedal was born and raised in Bengough with his parents, brother Regan and sister Brittany. He attended Bengough School for K-12 then went on to the University of Saskatchewan, Minot State, where he received his Elementary Education Degree, and then to Concordia University in Portland obtaining his Masters Degree in Curriculum Instruction with a Reading Focus. Aaron's first job was at Kyle Composite School in the morning teaching grades 3, 4, 5 and at Kyle Colony School in the afternoon (K-9). He has worked for Prairie South since 2010 – first at Rose Valley Colony School from 2010-2014 teaching K-9 and is currently the Principal at Assiniboia Seventh Avenue School where he has been since 2014. Aaron spends a lot of time in Saskatoon on the weekends and over holidays with his girlfriend, Shelby who is a Social Worker up there. They like to spend lots of time outdoors on bikes, snowshoeing, camping, etc. Aaron is the third generation of teachers in his family – his mom and grandma were both teachers. Aaron loves going to the mountains, especially Canmore and Golden, where he enjoys biking and camping trips with Shelby or groups of friends. His other hobbies include playing guitar, tinkering on his car and going to car shows with his dad, and listening to his ever-growing collection of records! Aaron enjoys going to new places and trying to get the local experience.

Upcoming Events

February 2: Nominations close for the Board of Education By-Election in Subdivision No. 6 (City of Moose Jaw) at 4:00 pm.

February 7: Regular Board Meeting starting at 1:00 pm.

February 9: School-based Administrators' Meeting

February 12-18: Staff Appreciation Week. Check out the Weekly Communication for more information on Staff Shout-Outs!

February 15: Pink Shirt Day

February 20-24: No School

February 27: Advance Poll for By-Election for Subdivision No. 6 (City of Moose Jaw) from 2-7 pm



Prairie South was excited to participate in the Friendly City Optimist Club's "Fix the Field - Name that Tune" fundraiser on January 24, 2023. We competed against six other teams and we came away with first place! Congratulations to Leigh Patterson and Valerie Brennan on a job well done!

Spotlight Staff Member



Imagine being in school for 78 years! Well, that is about how long our substitute teacher, Mrs. Gloria McKechnie has been in school—not even lying! Gloria will be 84 years young in February, and she still comes into Mossbank School to sub and volunteer! Gloria grew up on a farm north of Crane Valley. She attended school at Currie Country School and then finished her grade 11 and 12 at the then new Crane Valley School. She had always wanted to be a teacher, so following graduation, she attended Teacher's College in Moose Jaw (one year teacher's training in those days). She had three job offers at the end of the year and chose Spring Valley. She also taught at Centre Ridge and Ardill. She married her sweetheart Herb in 1959, and their first child, Cheryl, was born in 1961. In 1962, she had decided to "quit teaching for good" to raise a family. They later added children Gregg and Gerry to their fold. Life for Gloria and Herb consisted of doing all the things farm parents of that era did: farm, raise their children and be involved in their events, and be involved in the community, church, Sunday school, and 4-H. During this time, she also subbed at Mossbank School and took university classes whenever the right ones were offered in Moose Jaw, Assiniboia, Gravelbourg and Regina to earn her degree just in time for her to return to full time teaching at Mossbank in 1984. This was also the year their first grandchild was born! Over the years, Gloria taught every grade in the school from K to grade 12 (but not every subject). Gloria officially retired from teaching in June of 2000. Since that time, Gloria has been the most reliable sub and has even had occasional temporary contracts when we have needed her. The students don't dare disrespect Mrs. McKechnie—it would be like disrespecting your grandma! Although Gloria's life-long love, Herb, has passed on, she still has a growing family with 9 grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren with one more due in June. Many people talk about being a teacher as "not just a job," but "who we are." It is a passion we really can't even explain. This is our Gloria!



Lindale School



Westmount School



Westmount School



Ecole Gravelbourg School



Coronach School



Riverview Collegiate



Central Collegiate



Cornerstone Christian School



Central Collegiate



Assiniboia Composite High



Coronach School



Mossbank School



Central Butte School



Avonlea School



Kincaid Central School



Lafleche Central School



Avonlea School



Kincaid Central School



Coronach School



Avonlea School