

# Career Development “Promising Practices” in Manitoba Schools

## Mystery Lake School Division

### Youthbuild Program - R.D. Parker Collegiate

*Youthbuild* is a unique off-campus educational program at R.D. Parker. Its primary objective is to re-engage students and young adults into either the secondary school system, or other education / training / employment paths.

*Youthbuild* focuses on youth who are chronically unemployed or underemployed, not attending school and are at risk of becoming a serious challenge to themselves and/or the community. With *Youthbuild*, students *have* the opportunity to achieve individual educational goals, obtain high school credits and acquire a broad scope of essential / employability skills that are highly valued in any number of career paths.

“Hands-on” engagement strategies are particularly important with this student group.- implemented through work experience placements in the carpentry trade, combined with trade and secondary school courses delivered off-campus. Students are taught in a flexible, responsive, supportive and caring environment - with student advisors and support staff on-site.

*Youthbuild* is an authentic partnership between the School District of Mystery Lake, employment partners, the Boys and Girls Club of Thompson as well as social service agencies. Referrals to the program originate from a broad scope of community-based organizations.

### Spirit Wolf Learning Centre - R.D. Parker Collegiate

At the time of writing, this program is still in the proposal stage. Like *Youthbuild*, *Spirit Wolf's* ultimate goal is to re-engage students (primarily grades nine and ten, as well as young adults) into the education / training system - providing the “essential skills” (using the federal HRSDC *Essential Skills* model) they need to be successful, contributing members of society.

The Centre has a strong Aboriginal cultural foundation, with its emphasis on the traditional “Seven Sacred Teachings”, and the “Circle of Courage” - providing an appropriate, important context for the Centre’s goals. A small pupil-to-teacher ratio would support individualized mentoring and counseling – an ideal scenario for exploring talent identification and enrichment opportunities. Kelsey’s *FastForward Literacy Intervention Program* would be available to students who need this type of support. Individual Education Plans would also outline behavioural expectations.

Primary courses would focus on fulfillment of compulsory high school requirements, through a flexible, adapted curriculum. Classes would be largely taught off-site. Student engagement would be enhanced through experiential learning - via personalized technical-vocational programming, and work placements with local employers.

The Centre’s Advisory Committee includes community partners, educational stakeholders and elders.

## **Brandon School Division**

### **Crocus Plains / Vincent Massey Secondary Schools**

Crocus Plains provides compulsory Career Development education to all its students from Grades 9 – 12. As a vocational school, many of Crocus Plains' students receive excellent career exposure through its many "hands-on" programs". These programs include direct work experience, "job shadowing", informational interviews and encouraged access to the school's Career Centre. Vincent Massey School also offers extensive career education for all of its Grades 9 – 12 students.

Both Crocus Plains and Vincent Massey offer a two-credit Career Preparation Program for its Grade 11 and 12 students. The purpose of this course is to provide students with first-hand experiences in the realities of today's world. In doing so, students will be able to make more informed decisions about post-secondary planning and careers as well as learn about and develop employability skills that are key to workplace success.

This program is a mix of classroom instruction and a five-week block of work experience. Classroom topics include: Workplace health and safety, confidentiality, work ethics and attitudes, employability skills, career exploration, portfolio/resume development, interview skills as well as insights into financing post-secondary education.

A key underlying principle: With more career information and experience, students will acquire increased motivation, enhanced self-confidence / self-knowledge, as well as a clearer sense of direction and personal responsibility.

The general outcomes from this program were adapted from the Department's 1995 document, *New Directions, A Foundation for Excellence*. The specific outcomes are grade-level specific to reflect skill growth and development. Aside from the above structured program, Vincent Massey provides students access to Department resources such as Career Cruising, and has a "Take Your Kids to Work" program. As well, the school offers career counselling to students on an individual basis. Vincent Massey's school website offers direct links to a number of specific career-related sites.

## **Frontier School Division**

The Frontier Career Studies Program (CSP) was established in 1993 to teach students workplace and life skills. 27 of Frontier's schools participate in the four-year program. Results of the survey seem to indicate that this program has had a significant impact on the Division's schools and students, based on the northern area's responses to the survey's questions.

CSP helps students make a successful transition to employment through course curricula, portfolios, focused career sessions and work experience sessions. Students explore careers and build self-confidence while they develop appropriate workplace skills and attitudes – helping students plan for the future. Frontier school division creates these opportunities through more than 300 business partnerships.

The program also holds Spring Career Studies sessions for Grade 11 and 12 students during Spring Break. These sessions include areas such as Law and Law Enforcement, Social services, Recreation and Health, Medicine and Science, Business and Entrepreneurship, Introduction to Trades (mechanics, aerospace and technology, engineering, video and media production, fine arts) or general work experience. Co-operative post-secondary information sessions are also arranged through the Division.

Frontier provides teachers and students involved in the program with comprehensive resources intended to support student success in their work experience placements. Frontier's Career Studies curriculum is comprehensive and well-thought out.

Frontier Division's Gillam, D.R. Hamilton and Duck Bay Schools

Career Studies is integrated into all grade levels at these schools. Activities include visits to job sites, courses on money management / business basics, career days and work safety. Guest speakers are invited to do school presentations. Grade 8 and 9 students do one-week work placements.

Notably, Gillam School partners with Manitoba Hydro to provide work experience in a variety of trade-related occupations. This initiative provides students with the opportunity for fulltime work after they complete their technical and practical training. As well, these schools also are both aware of and use Manitoba Education resources such as Career Cruising and the Self-Managed Career Portfolio Guide.

**Louis Riel School Division**

George McDowell School (K-9)

The George McDowell School is involved in a unique career education initiative called the Career Education Outline (CEO). The CEO initiative was developed with the following considerations in mind:

- An Ontario HRSDC study indicated that while 70% of Grade 12 students and 80% of their parents stated intentions to attend post-secondary programs, in fact only 32% did enter such programs, with a significant dropout from those programs.
- A 1997 Gallup poll found that 62% of Canadians would not choose their current type of work, if they could "do it all again"

The CEO Program hopes to prepare students to become better informed about the scope of career possibilities through an increased level of self-knowledge. This program's objectives based upon the "critical skills" identified in the Conference Board of Canada's Employability Skills Profile. During this three-year program (Grades 7-9) students examine their own growth and experience in common theme areas. This self-assessment is accomplished by student engagement in the following activities:

- An autobiography
- Interest inventories
- Curricular connections between students studies and their career aspirations
- Researching of potential careers
- Understand and build employability skills
- Reflect on existing goals, and setting new ones

By the end of Grade 9, students will have developed an employment portfolio, which includes research on potential career choices, as well as the educational and experiential path necessary to achieve their career goals. A key activity at this point involves the review of students' resumes by community business leaders, who then visit the school and do "one-on-one" job interviews with each Grade 9 student.

### Louis Riel Arts and Technology Centre (Middle Years / Secondary)

While information provided by the school was somewhat limited, Louis Riel appears to have significant career development programming which includes:

- In-depth, semester-long vocational programming via the school's Arts and Technology Centre.
- The active and innovative use of student portfolios, in association with program outcomes
- A "Career Internship Program" in association with Windsor Park Collegiate
- Compulsory "Practical Arts" programming at the Grade 7/8 level

On the basis of the information provided, followup is warranted to learn more detail of Louis Riel's career development programming.

### Windsor Park Collegiate (Secondary)

Windsor Park's *WOW (World of Work) Program* is a comprehensive, well-designed secondary-school program that has three main goals:

- Academic Development – intended to provide an enriched level of fundamental literacy / numeracy skills and overall general knowledge;
- Job Exploration - Intended to provide direct experience and guidance in the work world. This includes developing attitudes and skills necessary to seek, find and hold employment
- Personal Development - Intended to enhance experience with the work world, develop skills and attitudes for responsible adulthood, and provide the insight to achieve "life / work balance".

Career Education is a compulsory course in the *WOW Program*. Students have the option of taking a wide array of skills-based courses that include technology programs, arts/media production, outdoor education and family studies (to name a few). Course options are described in detail, with a "core" and optional course structure. Each course description includes sections on content and assessment criteria. The submitted program description elaborates on various post-secondary options, including potential articulation with Red River College's related programs.

## **Pembina Trails School Division**

### Oak Park and Shaftesbury Secondary Schools

The Pembina Trails Division has developed the *Bridge Employment / Education Partnership Program* intended for youth between the ages of 17 – 21. *Bridge* was designed to provide participants with career / education planning and on-the job training, so that students can acquire key employability skills. This transition program consists of two components:

- A 5-week in-class Employability Skills Certification Program (ESCP), which includes the completion of a portfolio. ESCP is designed to teach the following skills: Employment acquisition, personal management, effective communication and workplace wellness.

- A 10-week full-time on-the-job training program, with 4 days in the workplace and one day in the classroom. This training program covers a broad range of occupational areas, developed in partnership with over 200 Winnipeg employers.

Coordinating teachers also serve as liaison between students and employers. The staff of Bridge encourages participants to further their training and education at post-secondary institutions upon completion of the program.

### **Prairie Rose & Prairie Spirit School Divisions**

Participating schools: Carman Collegiate, Treherne Collegiate, Colony Schools, Elm Creek School, Miami Collegiate, St. Laurent School, St. Paul's Collegiate

The Career and Technology Studies Program (delivered jointly by Prairie Rose and Prairie Spirit School Divisions) provides an alternative to the traditional University Entrance program. The program incorporates career development coursework / career exploration resources, technology education as well as structured career internships in the community. In exploring their career aspirations, students have the opportunity to follow a choice of flexible course streams. The CTS course streams include Human Service Technology, Industrial Technology, Business / Computer Education, Information Technology Systems and the Senior Years Apprenticeship Option (offered through Manitoba Competitiveness Training and Trade's Apprenticeship Branch). The two divisions are also participating in the *Technical Vocational Initiative Demonstration Project*, a provincial program intended to promote and enhance trade / vocational education at the secondary level.

The CTS Program works closely with a wide variety of community employers in implementing its career internships. The divisions have also developed parameters for integrating technology education at the community level - using the criteria of work experience, inter-institutional articulation, curriculum development, fostering a learning culture with industry partners and alternative program delivery.

The Prairie Rose Division also maintains an excellent website ([www.prsdmb.ca/cts](http://www.prsdmb.ca/cts)) that provides a background on the CTS program, course descriptions, as well as resource links for internship sponsors, teachers and students.

### **Swan Valley School Division**

Minitonas Early Years School

Swan Valley developed its Career Education Framework (CEF) in 1995, and was recently updated in 2004. The goal of the Framework is to help students become self-reliant citizens who can manage ongoing life transitions while maintaining a balance between life and work. The document also acknowledges the increasing need for citizens to be more flexible and entrepreneurial, while embracing all forms of education and training. To this end, Swan Valley's Framework advocates that career development education programming should integrate the following objectives:

- Facilitate students' self-knowledge as it applies to career exploration and choice
- Provide knowledge and awareness about the scope of available careers
- Provide students with career research and decision-making skills
- Encourage a "lifelong learner" orientation
- Provide students of aboriginal descent with planned activities for career awareness and exploration

Swan Valley's plan uses "Blueprint for Life/Work Designs" concepts as the basis for organizing outcomes and activities for use at respective grade levels. To this end, the plan includes an excellent, comprehensive range of activities for K-8 classes that integrate entrepreneurial skills and the Blueprint's three major areas of competence (Personal Management, Learning and Work Exploration, Life/Work building). Activities range from simulating the creation of a small business to job shadowing in local businesses. These activities are integrated within existing curriculum areas. Portfolio development starts in the early years. Each student portfolio is "passed on" from one grade to the next.

The Conference Board's Employability Skills Profile also serves as an important reference for career education planning. Swan Valley's program also uses "The Real Game" and "Career Cruising" resources throughout the various grade levels.

### **Rolling River School Division**

The Rolling River Division offers a *Career Preparation and Exploration Program* for its Grade 9 – 12 students. Over the course of four years, the program integrates a number of innovative career development concepts and tools (e.g., Employability Skills Portfolio / Checklists, work experience, counselling and mentorship as well as a "Multiple Intelligences Portfolio") that provides students with a strong foundation for self-directed career planning for their future. Key areas of Rolling River's program include:

#### *Program Vision / Goal:*

- Working in partnership with parents and community, to graduate students who are academically and vocationally prepared – providing a broad spectrum of skills that facilitate students' transition into a rapidly changing world;

#### *Rationale:*

- Public education should provide opportunities to assist students in becoming contributing members of local and broader society.
- The majority of students enter the workforce directly after high school.
- Traditional course offerings in the high school curriculum have been tailored to students going on to attend post-secondary education.
- Since work is directly tied to a person's economic well being and a person's self-esteem, students need to have a realistic understanding of their personal strengths.
- Students from small rural schools require more diverse opportunities due to location and school size. Therefore, there is a need to provide explorative opportunities in a more diverse setting.

#### *Student Learning Outcomes:*

Learning outcomes are outlined in considerable detail in Rolling River's Career Exploration and Preparation course. In terms of General Learning Outcomes, students participating in the Program will:

- develop "Employability Skills" identified by the Conference Board of Canada;
- produce a related "Employability Skills Portfolio" by Grade 12 graduation;
- have the opportunity to engage in career exploration through direct practical experience;
- develop awareness of requirements for post-secondary training;

- become competent in the use of information technology for occupational research, and
- assess their own personal characteristics and develop an action plan for further developing their employability skills

*Instructional Strategies / Resources:*

Instructional strategies are outlined in considerable detail and include the following:

- Researching and summarizing available career development material
- Co-operative group assignments and projects
- Case studies
- Onsite visits / meetings / tours / networking
- Mentoring with resource people
- Portfolio development and maintenance

A number of instructional resources are used in the program. These include BRIDGES, Career Start, The Real Game, STEMS and Manitoba Education's Employability Skills Portfolio.

*Assessment:*

Assessment and evaluation methods include portfolio assessment, use of an Employability Skills Checklist, employer evaluations and peer assessment

**Winnipeg School Division:**

The Winnipeg School Division (WSD) has developed a highly comprehensive approach toward career development education, referred to in Division material as *The School-to-Work Transition Initiative*.

The purpose of the *Transition Initiative* is to:

*"... prepare students to be healthy, self-reliant citizens able to maintain a balance between work, family, relationships and leisure as they handle the many transitions they will face throughout their lives. School-to-Work Transition Education provides students with the skills and the information to make informed and appropriate decisions regarding their future in the workforce, regardless of the path they choose".*

These overall objectives are remarkably congruent to components of Manitoba's Career Development Initiative Framework.

WSD's projects, programs and strategies are detailed in five categories: *World of Work Awareness, Acquisition of Employability Skills, Volunteerism and Service Learning*, as well as *Promoting Teacher and Community Awareness*. These initiatives are diverse in nature and have been implemented to serve a wide variety of student populations.

*World of Work Awareness* is a compilation of career development programs, tools and resources available at the divisional, provincial and national level that facilitate the career exploration process. These include: the Blueprint for *Life/Work Designs, Bridges.com, Canada Prospects, the Rotary Career Symposium, The Real Game Series*, WSD's Career Education courses, Career Trek along with the Game of Life. This section also details the scope of World of Work Awareness activities that are currently being delivered in WSD's schools.

Initiatives relating to the “*Acquisition of Employability Skills*” cover a broad range of programs delivered in WSD’s secondary schools. Examples of these numerous programs include:

- *Business Game Challenge*, a one-day event that introduces events to the process of marketing a product and making decisions that will directly influence the profit or loss of a company;
- *Workplace Entry Program*, that provides education and opportunities for 18-29 year-olds who receive income assistance to develop employability skills that will facilitate the transition to full-time employment. This program consists of a four-week class segment that helps students familiarize themselves with their abilities, develop goals and explore the world of work. It also involves a structured on-the-job experience that reinforces the acquisition of employability skills;
- *Career Internship Program*, that places students in 5-month internship programs with established companies such as the Royal Bank, Manitoba Hydro and Arnold Brothers Transport. Students are offered summer employment upon successful completion of the program, and
- *License to the Future*, a program that provides driver training to at-risk students. This initiative is based on the assumption that students who receive a driver’s license have increased feelings of self-worth, and provide improved employment opportunities. This initiative continues to be a cornerstone of the Pre-Employment Program at St. John’s High School.

WSD’s “*Volunteerism and Service Learning*” initiatives provide middle and senior years students with opportunities to develop career-related skills through volunteer activities. One example is the *Grade 8 Volunteer Program*, that provides students with opportunities to develop employability skills, as well as a better appreciation of how school programs apply to the world of work.

In addition, a number of WSD’s schools have initiated programs intended to promote teacher and community awareness of career development. One example is the *Portfolio Program: People, Place and Process-Community Awareness* – a project that develops student awareness of the community and its businesses. This encourages students to understand the scope of education and skills that are required for various occupations.

The *Career Exploration Partnership Project* (developed by the Winnipeg Division and Service Canada) is another important initiative. This program provides current labour market information to students in twelve of the Division’s high schools. In doing so, the goal of this project is to ultimately increase the number of youth who enter the labour market or post-secondary training/education.

To make the above-described programs more accessible to the broader audience of career development professionals, WSD has developed a *Best Practices Inventory*. This inventory describes the scope of career development-related programs that the Division’s schools have implemented.

The Division has also made a significant commitment toward professional development in career education. To this end, WSD offers a resource guide that suggests how teachers can integrate career development concepts into daily classroom activities and various subject areas. The Division also offers workshops on a variety of topics which include:

- Planning a “Take Our Kids to Work” day
- Career Cruising
- Orientation on Department programs/resources (Career Development curricula, The Real Game: Next Generation, Career Trek Day)
- School-to-Work Council Meetings
- Awareness Session: School-to-Work Transition



WSD has also developed and distributed an excellent publication *Planning a Career Fair: A Resource Guide for Elementary Schools*, along with a *Planning Your Future* poster, intended for N–6 classrooms. This well-designed poster incorporates many key career development concepts, modeled on the Conference Board of Canada’s Employability Skills. The poster is intended to serve as a practical resource in helping teachers develop and deliver relevant School-To-Work activities in the classroom. The support materials accompanying the poster suggest a number of excellent activities that support career development education at these grade levels.

In addition to the “Promising Practice” material submitted by the Division, several WSD schools also shared extensive background on their approach to career development education. Here are some examples:

*Winnipeg School Division: King Edward Community School (N-6)*

King Edward follows WSD’s *School to Work Program*, and has developed some innovative adaptations. These include:

- A 6-week Business Education partnership with Canada Post. This partnership exposes Grade 6 students to the organization’s workplace so that to see they are able to see how the academic skills they learn at school are used in the workplace. At the same time, students become aware of the broad scope of careers available with large organizations.
- Grade 6 students participate in *Empty Bowls*, a “hands-on” fundraising project for needy families. This project exposes students to tasks associated with the service sector.
- Grade 5 students organize a “Career Gallery Walk” for students in other grades, families and staff. The students research a specific job or career of their choice and develop related presentations for the invited audience. Students discover the education level that’s required for these jobs, along with other skills that are key to ensuring career success.

King Edward’s *School to Work Program* is part of the school’s overall “community school model” established through Manitoba Education’s Community Schools Partnership Initiative. The school career education programming that utilizes this model strengthens parental involvement with their children’s education, while enhancing families’ employability skills. This is particularly important to inner city school such as King Edward, where there are generational barriers such as poverty, isolation and lack of exposure to positive parenting skills.

King Edward’s submission also includes a summary of other related community school programming that enhances career education.

*R.B. Russell Vocational High School*

As an inner city vocational school, R.B. Russell acknowledges that high school completion and successful workplace / career transitions for students from challenged backgrounds can be enhanced through alternative ways of learning and establishing connections to students’ inner city community.

To this end, R.B. Russell provides its teaching staff with an *Employability Plan Resource Guide*. Its purpose is consistent with the school’s Mission Statement:

*“Preparing students for employment or further education / training”*

The *Resource Guide*'s content includes a variety of excellent activities, "conversation prompts" and resources available through the school's Employability Centre that can be used to engage students in career exploration. The Guide is structured as a 3-stage process for each school year summarized as follows:

- *Stage 1: Who am I?* - Through daily conversations and planned activities, teachers can encourage students to build an awareness of self and understand its influence on their life and work
- *Stage 2: What's Out There?* - This step provides teachers with a structured approach for students to explore possible career paths. This could involve classroom activities or going out into the community – opening students to the scope of possibilities for their future. In this stage, the *Resource Guide* provides a current labour market context. With the imminent retirement of the "baby boomer" demographic, more than a million openings are forecasted over the next five years, with skilled professionals in high demand.
- *Stage 3: Where Do I Fit?* - During this stage students focus on developing possible individual career choices, based on the activities of the two prior stages. At this point, students actively engage in diverse career experiences through a variety of activities such as community-based work placements, job shadowing and volunteering. During this stage students also discuss their career-related experiences with other students, helping them build their awareness of their future options.

By facilitating conversations at each of these stages, this process encourages students to understand how their skills and interests can contribute to the larger community. A detailed list of the above career development activities is outlined in the *Resource Guide*.

### Other Promising Practices

#### Career Development at the Elementary Level - Missouri Center for Career Guidance

Career Development Guidance Lessons are designed for grades K-5. These guidance lessons and units from the Missouri Center for Career Guidance address topics and issues that are relevant to elementary school students and their parents. The Comprehensive Guidance Program curriculum framework is organized around three Strands: Personal and Social Development, Academic Development and Career Development. <<http://Missouricareereducation.org>>

#### Career Guidance: A Curriculum Guide for Middle Years Students

The Middle Level Career Guidance Curriculum is based on the belief that all students, including those with challenging needs, have the right to benefit from effective instruction to ensure optimal development. Although the abilities of students will vary, there should be an expectation for participation, partially or independently, in activities at home, in the school and the community. The main purpose of the Middle Level Career Guidance Program should be to empower all students to reach their fullest potential. <[www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/midcareer/introduct.html](http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/midcareer/introduct.html)>