

CAREER EDUCATION IN ALBERTA

Career Education Task Force - Final Report
March 2023



Prepared by Leger Marketing Alberta Inc.



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FORWARD

MESSAGE FROM THE TASK FORCE CHAIR

The Honourable Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Education,

On behalf of the Career Education Task Force (the Task Force), I am pleased to submit our final report for your review, and implementation of the recommendations.

This report provides recommendations that will ensure students can access practical and greatly improved foundational learning opportunities while helping build a qualified, educated and engaged workforce to support Alberta's diversified economy and economic prosperity.

As part of this report, I am also pleased to present a framework for career education in Alberta that is intended to guide policy, programming, planning and decision making over the long term.

The purpose of the Task Force was to review career education programming and provide strategic advice and recommendations to strengthen connections between schools and careers. The Terms of Reference for the Task Force provided guidance as we evaluated Alberta's grades 7-12 career education system.

We considered research on best practices and sought input from a large representation of education stakeholders that included parents, students, teachers, business, and school boards. The career education framework and our recommendations were created using this important input.

Four sub-groups were created within the Task Force to look at credentialing and resourcing; student programming and credentialing; industry pathways and requirements; and funding and infrastructure. All sub-group recommendations were shared between all task force members and reviewed to identify common themes. Four themes emerged:

1. Elevating career education programming to be a high priority, accessible to all students
2. Providing non-financial resources for career education, including staff training, quality staff and tools
3. Ensuring the delivery of sufficient financial resources for career education
4. Enhancing collaboration and alignment between career education partners

The 17 members of the Task Force are varied in their backgrounds and experiences, and those different perspectives led to thoughtful analysis and discussion that supported the development of the framework and recommendations. I thank each of the Task Force members for their dedication and candor which facilitated the completion of this important work.

On behalf of the Task Force, I would also like to thank the Albertans that provided their input through the surveys and discussions that were held across the province. Their insights and shared experiences were valuable and informative in helping the Task Force develop our recommendations.

I am proud and appreciative of the opportunity to have led this important work and look forward to seeing the impact of an improved approach to career education on students, industry and Alberta's prosperity as a whole.

MLA Shane Getson, Task Force Chair

CURRENT CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAMMING IN ALBERTA

OVERVIEW

Career education gives students practical and foundational hands-on learning opportunities to transition into a chosen career pathway, through post-secondary education and/or into the workplace. Career education can help fill critical employment gaps by matching high school students with employers seeking workforce-ready talent. At the same time, it can help students improve their long-term employability when they develop lasting relationships with potential employers.

Current K-12 career education programming is outlined below:

- Career and Technology Foundations (CTF) optional courses provide students in grades 5-9 opportunities to explore interests, passions and skills while making personal connections to career possibilities. Career exploration occurs as meaningful learning experiences are made possible through engaging challenges based on the occupational areas.
- Career and Technology Studies (CTS) optional courses provide students with opportunities to explore interests and career options. CTS students develop practical skills that enrich their personal lives while enhancing their employability and/or post-secondary prospects.
- Career and Life Management (CALM), a mandatory course for students in grades 10-12, develops behaviours and attitudes for making well-informed career, life and health choices that contribute to the well-being of self and others.
- Dual credit optional courses, for students in grades 10-12, provide opportunities to discover career passions and interests while earning high school and post-secondary credits at the same time. Credits can count towards a post-secondary diploma, degree, or journey person certificate.
- Off-campus education programming provides optional courses that encourage students to investigate a variety of occupation-based opportunities in contexts that assist them in making informed decisions concerning education, training, and employment upon completion of high school. Off-campus programming includes:
 - Career Internship 10 - students discover career interests in meaningful work activities, situated in community-based work sites in either the trade, technology or service sectors.
 - Green Certificate Program - students develop the knowledge and skills to enter a variety of agriculture-related programs that may lead to further study in agribusiness.
 - Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) - students develop trade specific skills while earning high school credit and on-the-job training hours towards an apprenticeship.
 - Work Experience - students discover career interests in meaningful paid, or volunteer work-integrated learning environments under the supervision of an off-campus teacher.

- Work Study – students in junior and senior high school apply the knowledge and skills gained from other subjects (e.g., Science 9, Biology 30) to real-life situations through a school-community partnership arrangement.
- Knowledge and Employability Occupational Courses - provide on and off-campus opportunities to develop employability skills that assist students in becoming active and responsible citizens, improving quality of life for themselves and their families and positively impacting their communities.

CAREER EDUCATION TASK FORCE

The Career Education Task Force (CETF, the task force) was established to review career education in Alberta and provide recommendations and a provincial framework to guide future career education programming. The focus of this review was on grades 7 to 12.

The task force included leaders from business and industry, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) education, and post-secondary institutions (PSIs). Members include:

- Shane Getson, task force chair, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Lac Ste Anne-Lakeland, and parliamentary secretary for Economic Corridors, Government of Alberta
- Marilyn Dennis, president, Alberta School Boards Association
- Jess Thomson, director of stakeholder and government relations, Women Building Futures
- Shauna Feth, president and CEO, Alberta Chamber of Commerce
- Stefan Rutkowski, operations director, CAREERS: The Next Generation
- Stephan De Loof, directeur exécutif opérations, infrastructure et transport, Le Conseil scolaire FrancoSud
- Kurtis Leinweber, vice president, The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools and deputy superintendent and COO, Foundations for the Future Charter Academy
- John Jagersma, executive director, Association of Independent Schools & Colleges in Alberta
- Scott Morrison, president, College of Alberta School Superintendents
- David Price, director, Sunterra Group
- Holly Bilton, trustee, Chinook's Edge School Division
- Patricia Nelson, manager, external training, Skills Canada Alberta
- Darren Roth, teacher, Black Gold School Division
- Raymond Massey, chair, Alberta Board of Skilled Trades
- Jeannette LaBrie, associate dean, Northern Alberta Institute of Technology
- Diana Ionescu, engineering manager, MacEwan University
- Gerald Bartels, co-founder, executive team, member of board of directors, Nexus Space

The task force has developed a career education framework and recommendations for government. These have been designed to ensure students receive better access to practical, foundational learning opportunities. This will help to build a qualified, educated and engaged workforce that supports Alberta’s economic prosperity. To guide the development of its recommendations, the task force engaged with Albertans, the education system and industry on career education.

METHODOLOGY

The Career Education Task Force began in September 2022 and met approximately biweekly until March 2023. They formed four working groups, each with different themes:

1. Teacher Credentialing and Resourcing;
2. Student Programming and Credentialing;
3. Industry Pathways; and
4. Funding and Infrastructure.

CETF members in each of the working groups discussed these themes, and developed draft recommendations based on the engagement results and their discussions. The draft recommendations from all working groups were then shared, discussed and refined with the entire task force membership to determine the final recommendations.

ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The task force engaged with Albertans and education stakeholders across Alberta to gather feedback on grades 7-12 career education programming through:

1. Online surveys;
2. In-person and online public engagement sessions held across the province; and
3. Discussions with stakeholders including industry, K-12 educators, PSIs, and grade 7-12 students.

Overall, the task force heard from over 4,700 Albertans.

1. ONLINE SURVEYS

Alberta Education conducted two online surveys, one with the Alberta public and the other targeted to Alberta students in grades 7 to 12, from November 21 to December 15, 2022. Respondents were given the choice to complete the surveys in English or French. The surveys were developed by Alberta Education in conjunction with the task force. Alberta Education contracted Leger Marketing Alberta Inc., to conduct the engagement sessions and prepare an Interim Report and this Final Report.

2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

Leger conducted 14 engagement sessions from November 21 to December 13, 2022, that Alberta Education advertised broadly to the Alberta public. These included five (5) sessions that were conducted in person and nine (9) sessions that were conducted online.

The sessions were led by Leger facilitators using a discussion guide that was developed by Leger with review and input from the task force. Representatives from the task force also attended the sessions to provide information to the participants about the task force and its mandate and asked follow-up questions as part of the discussion.

3. TARGETED STAKEHOLDER SESSIONS

Leger conducted four (4) online sessions with targeted stakeholders, including representatives of Kindergarten to Grade 12 school systems (K-12 educators), PSIs, and industry. Similar to the public engagement sessions, the sessions were led by Leger facilitators using a discussion guide, with members of the task force also attending to share information and ask follow-up questions. Participants were also invited to share additional information by email.

4. DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to the public and stakeholder engagement sessions, input was obtained from various stakeholder groups to gain further insight into career education in Alberta. This input was collected through meetings and written submissions that were sent to the task force by email. The following stakeholder groups provided input:

- The Minister's Youth Council shared their views on career education at their October 16, 2022 and February 11, 2023 meetings.
- The Alberta School Boards Association held a virtual engagement session with representatives of school boards across the province on November 30, 2022. Participants included board chairs and members from the College of Alberta School Superintendents. Following the session, eleven (11) school systems provided written submissions to the task force by email.
- The Minister's Parent Advisory Council provided input at their December 10, 2022 meeting.
- The Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer Dual credit Sub-committee presented to the task force on January 25, 2023.
- The Alberta Teachers' Association provided thoughts and insight on career education at a meeting held on January 31, 2023.

PART 1: CAREER EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

The Career Education Task Force (CETF) has provided this Career Education Framework to support Alberta Education, school systems, post-secondary institutions (PSIs) and industry in delivering meaningful and productive career planning and development opportunities for Alberta students, now and into the future.

The Framework addresses how to prepare Alberta students for their transition into post-secondary studies or employment, focusing primarily on career education for grades 7 to 12. The discussion in this document centers around the principles and desired outcomes for career education in the province.

Career education is essential for student success in existing and future opportunities involving Alberta's growing and diversifying economy. A key overarching element of the Framework is the strengthening of connections between educators, employers, and PSIs. These education stakeholders should work together to support each student to feel confident, fulfilled and successful in their career choice, thereby becoming valued contributors to their community and ensuring the economic prosperity of Alberta.

Current career programming at the time of writing includes Career and Technology Foundations (CTF), Career and Technology Studies (CTS), Career and Life Management (CALM), Dual credit, Career Internships, the Green Certificate Program, the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP), Work Experience, Work Study, and Employability and Occupational Courses. While it is possible that specific programming approaches may change, the intention is that this Framework will continue to apply to grades 7 to 12 education in Alberta and guide policy and programming for years to come.

This Framework sets out to guide career education for Albertans into the future. It provides a longstanding vision for career education. While the framework was created for the K-12 education system, all partners in career education (post-secondary, employers, and the community) are encouraged to use the framework for the benefit of all Alberta's students.

The Framework presents a high-level overview of career education implementation. This document provides a guide that may be used to develop career education with specific recommendations to policies, programming and procedures over the short and medium term as a means of achieving the desired outcomes. Progress on the desired outcomes should be measured and evaluated to assess the impact of the actions that are taken to achieve the vision and goals of the Framework.

VISION

Engaging students in career education pathways that provide the relevant and timely support they need to prepare for fulfilling careers.

MISSION

Engaging students, educators, parents and industry with practical, foundational learning opportunities that inform and provide a path forward for meaningful, sustainable careers. Building a qualified, educated and engaged workforce, responsive to the needs of the employer, for Alberta's prosperity.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Career development policy and programming in Alberta will be guided by the following principles:



Equitable opportunities for access to career education. All students should have access to the same opportunities regardless of where they live in the province and the school they attend. This includes focus on recruitment and retention of traditionally under-represented groups, such as females with respect to trades.

Awareness of career opportunities for all Alberta students. All students need to be made aware of a breadth of career opportunities and pathways that are available to them, beyond the careers that are highly visible to the public. Educators and parents also need to be made aware of a variety of career options given the key roles they have in sharing knowledge and advice with students.

Sustainable, committed and dedicated funding for career education. Funding dedicated to career education is necessary to ensure the right resources are available to all students. Schools need the ability, resources and knowledge to access career education opportunities for their students. Students who start a career path of interest need to be able to continue to the end of the program, allowing them to be fully prepared for successful transition to career-related post-secondary education or employment.

Relevant and meaningful career education opportunities aligned to student interests, aspirations, and potential. A variety of career opportunities involving real-world experience need to be matched to students' interests.

Support Alberta students engaging in the next step on their career pathway. Students should be supported along their chosen career pathway, including when they may choose a different pathway to a career that they believe is a better fit for them.

Prepare Alberta students with transferable skills to ensure success in the jobs of today and tomorrow. Students need to develop soft skills, such as collaboration, problem solving, communication and critical thinking to help prepare them for the world of work now and in the future. Educators and industry should partner to become more responsive and agile to changing learning experiences and form improved transitions between school and entering the workforce.

Support the workforce demand of Alberta employers to meet the needs of current and future economy. Career education needs to prepare students for the careers of today and tomorrow, helping them develop relevant skills for successful entry to the workforce, as an employee or entrepreneur.

Collaborative partnerships to support alignment between education and industry/employers. Partnerships between K-12 education, post-secondary, and industry/employers will help ensure students have access to infrastructure, training and future career employment opportunities.

Professional learning for educators. Training and professional development is required for the recruitment and retention of guidance counselors and qualified, experienced industry professionals. This could be achieved through collaboration with faculties of education, additional qualified service providers and professional organizations representing trades and industry professionals.

Parity of esteem for all career pathways. Educators need to work with each student to ensure they understand that every successful career contributes to Alberta's communities and economy. The student should be proud of their choice regardless of education type, career path, or industry. There should be strong messaging to address career biases.

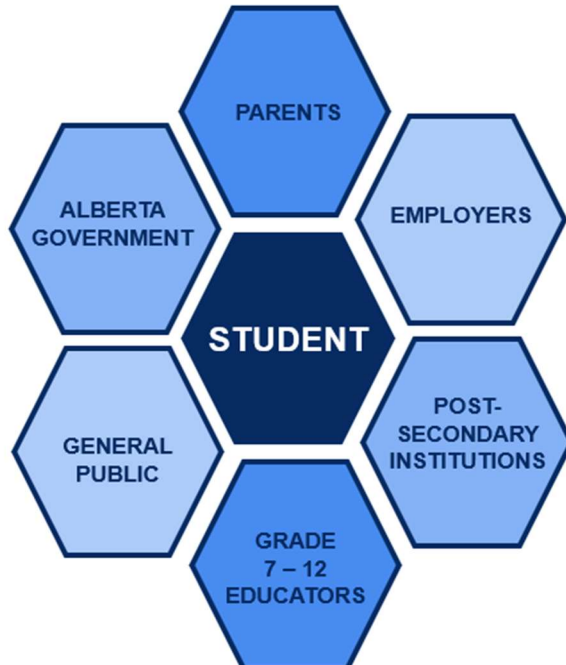
Simplified delivery of career education, without barriers or duplication. Career education programming should not be restrictive, complicated or confusing. Clearly defined programming and career options need to be available for students, parents and educators.

Communication of career education and options available. Students require access to current, understandable information involving career requirements, options and availability.

The right kinds of career education and support provided at the right time. Generally, the focus in grades 7-9 should be on creating awareness of, and exposure to a range of existing and developing careers to help students find career options of interest. As students progress through grades 10-12 more emphasis should be placed on learning knowledge and skills related to careers of interest, including a more in-depth understanding of the jobs and opportunities for hands-on, interactive learning. Different students may have different career needs at different times, so flexibility is needed. Flexibility is also important for students who change their minds about their career options or path and need to adjust.

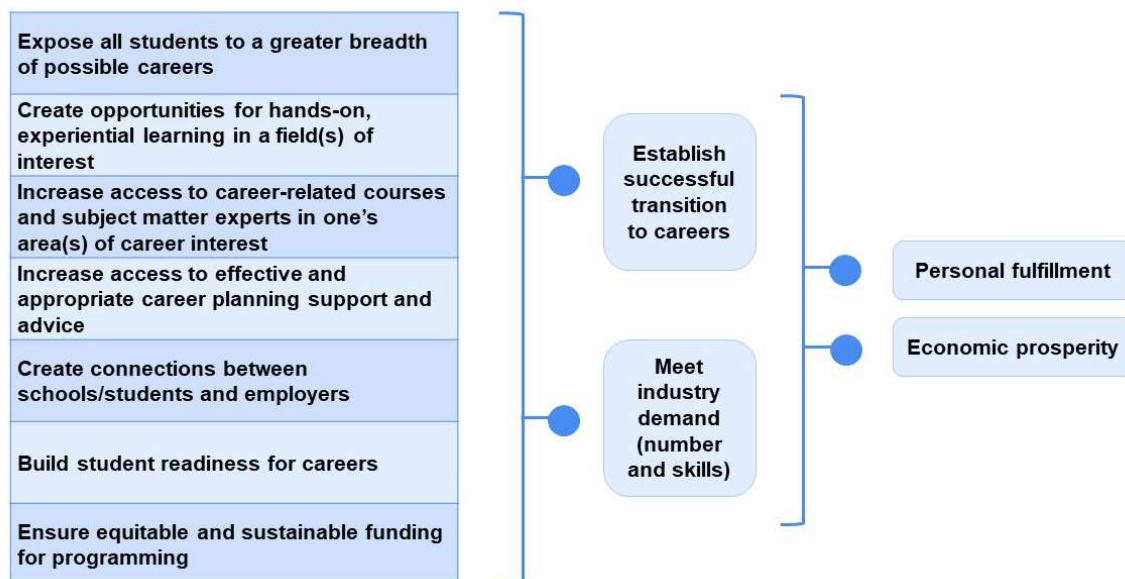
WHO IS INVOLVED

Career education is a collaborative effort among diverse partners, all working together to help support students' career journeys. Student success, personal fulfillment and eventual economic prosperity for Alberta is the responsibility of all Albertans including parents, the Alberta government, grade 7-12 educators, employers (including professional and trades associations), and PSIs - all working to centre the student experience.



OUTCOMES

This framework reflects a commitment to strengthen the provision of career education with students in Alberta schools. The ultimate goals for the framework are to have students achieve personal fulfillment in their chosen career paths, with accessible pathways and support for them to be fully prepared and able to successfully fill the opportunities in Alberta and contribute to our economic prosperity. These ultimate goals and the more detailed outcomes for achieving them are organized as follows:



ACHIEVING DESIRED OUTCOMES

Expose students to a greater breadth of possible careers

Students should be exposed to careers through academic subjects as well as dedicated career education courses. Additional opportunities are through career counselling and visits to and from employers and PSIs. The range of careers students are exposed to should be broad enough to find areas of interest to them, and go beyond occupations that are highly visible in the community and what members of their family are involved in. Expanding students' depth of knowledge about different careers will also increase understanding of opportunities that may be of interest to them, but they might not have investigated due to not being aware of a career, misunderstanding, or parity of esteem issues.

Create opportunities for hands-on, experiential learning in a field(s) of interest

Opportunities for hands-on, experiential learning is important as students develop the technical and soft skills required in their career journey. Strong and diverse partnerships between K-12 education, PSIs and industry will help to ensure appropriate resources (space, equipment, instruction, modes of delivery) can be made available for all students.

Increase access to career-related courses and subject matter experts in one's area(s) of career interest

Students across the province should have access to career education courses that relate to the careers in which they are interested, to provide them with pathways to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to progress to relevant post-secondary education and work experience.

Increase access to effective and appropriate career planning support and advice

Increased access to career programming and counselling support, including qualified staff and user-friendly tools, is essential to help students choose their career pathway. Students need information on different career options and descriptions, employer demand, requirements, and pathways that lead to those careers. Students should have the opportunity to change their path if it they find it is not the right fit for them.

Create connections between schools, students, post-secondary institutions and employers

Collaboration and partnerships between K-12 education, PSIs and employers are essential to ensure students have access to the training and resources they need to develop the skills to meet the employment demands of industry. Provincial, regional and local directories of employers that are available to help provide these kinds of opportunities is one example of how these connections can be made and communicated.

Build student readiness for careers

Students need access to coursework and skill development for success in their careers and post-secondary studies. They also need resources to help them visualize their career pathways and their futures, the steps needed to plan their pathways, and to build credentials and experiences to enhance their career choices. Career education teachers should be equipped with the professional knowledge that they need to deliver high-quality career education experiences to all students.

Ensure equitable and sustainable funding for programming

Each student needs the opportunity to access career education and explore careers of interest. This means providing access to resources for students in both urban and rural areas, in all parts of the province, and in all types and sizes of schools. This requires sustainable funding for the student over the length of their program and pathway, as well as to ensure each student has the opportunity for meaningful, experiential education in an area of interest to them.

MEASUREMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Oversight is required for continuous, effective application of the framework. A steering committee should be created and maintained, with responsibility for developing and managing metrics to assess the degree of success in achieving the desired outcomes specified in the framework. Both personal and global success measures should be considered.

Some possible examples of measurement and accountability tools include:

- Post-secondary enrollment rates;
- Career readiness assessment data (measuring skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, communication and leadership);
- Employer satisfaction with high school graduates;
- Student satisfaction with career education; and
- The employment rate among high school graduates after a period of time has passed.

A data audit would identify relevant information that is already being collected as well as any gaps where measurement needs to be done. Possible sources include:

- Surveys of students, graduates, employers and educators;
- Tracking of outcomes; and
- Performance-based assessments of skills.

The measurement and evaluation process could include examination for any differences in equity between groups, to ensure any systemic barriers are being addressed.

DELIVERY OF CAREER EDUCATION

Career education can be delivered through courses dedicated specifically to this purpose as well as being embedded within courses in other subject areas. Opportunities can be on and off-campus, providing access to all of the resources that are needed for students to develop knowledge and skills that further their career path.

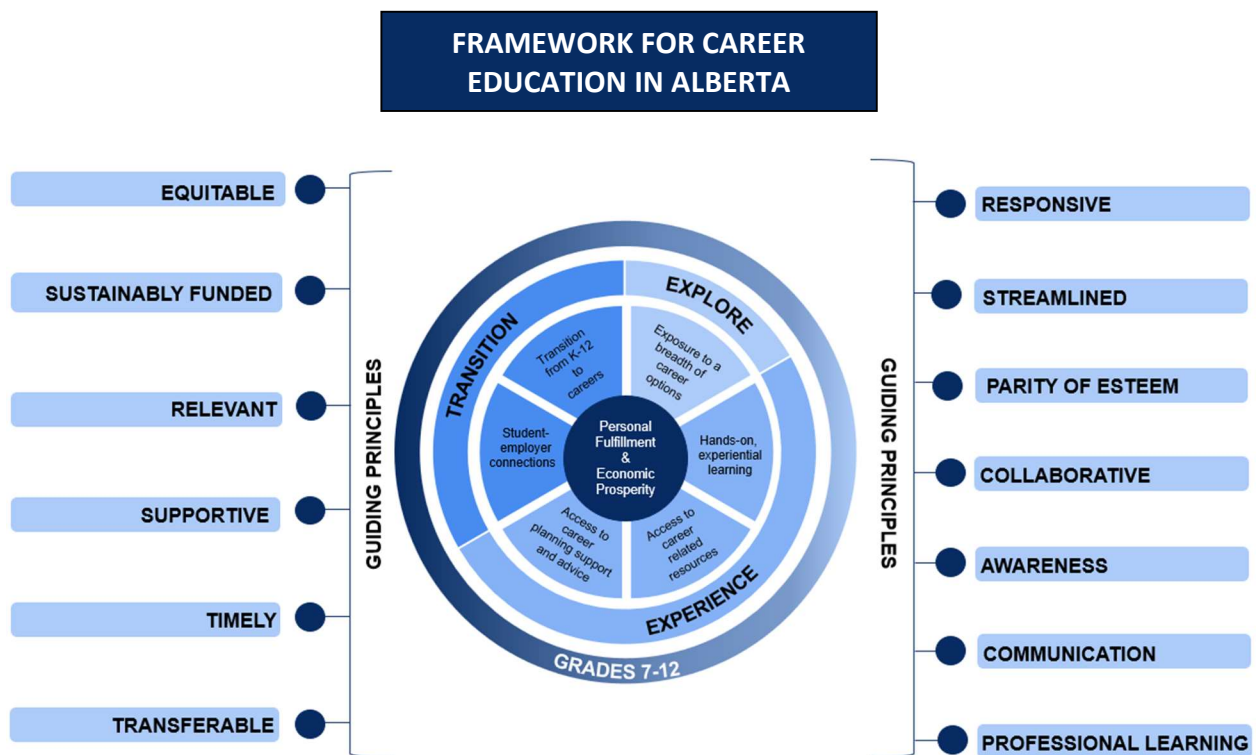
In grades 7-9, and earlier, the focus needs to be on career exploration. As students learn about careers that interest them, it becomes more important to develop general knowledge and skills, through hands-on experience related to a career(s) of interest. Experience becomes more of the focus by grades 10-12. Students should be well prepared for the transition to post-secondary or the workplace.

As students develop their understanding of careers, changing interests need to be supported.

FRAMEWORK

The framework is designed and intended to endure, with the recognition that the K-12 education system and all partners need to be responsive to changes in technology, economy, environment, and the political landscape. Through planning and action, the system needs to consistently and effectively serve the student with accountability to the principles and outcomes of this framework.

A visual representation of the framework has been developed to summarize the ultimate outcomes and principles to be addressed throughout grade 7-12 career education. The career education system must have flexibility for students to follow their own path throughout their career education. Pathways are not necessarily as simple as exploration leading to experience and then to transition to a career. For example, a student may begin with exploring different careers, then acquiring some experience related to a career of interest, exploring more different careers, and then gaining experience in another career. While a career is an ultimate goal, after leaving the K-12 education system students may go on to further studies at the post-secondary level as further preparation.



PART 2: RECOMMENDATIONS

As the task force reviewed the engagement findings, four themes emerged (presented in no particular order):

1. Career Education Programming;
2. Resources for Delivery of Career Education;
3. Equitable Financial Resources for Career Education; and
4. Collaboration between Education Partners.

Each of these themes is discussed in turn, including the recommendations and a summary of related input heard in the engagement.

THEME 1: CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

The first of the themes the CETF Working Group explored is career education programming. Based on their work and findings from the province-wide engagements, four recommendations were made. This section provides a summary of overall feedback regarding career education programming and discusses specific feedback pertaining to each of the recommendations.

Engagement participants and survey respondents consistently indicated that career education is important and should be considered a high priority. Careers are essential for people to fulfill their vocations. Career education should be available, equitable and accessible across all regions and within all schools in the province. Engagement participants emphasized that students need more access to opportunities to gain hands-on, real-world experience early in their education.

A pathway for progress emerged for career education that includes career exploration, experiential learning and support for transition to careers. All students need to be presented with a wide variety of career options, opportunities to experience careers within different courses, off-campus opportunities and the ability to gain post-secondary credentials for completing career education programming that is considered and recognized as important by PSIs and employers.

The current career education offerings (CALM, CTF, CTS and Dual credit) are seen as a strong foundational base for career education. Dual credit needs further funding and flexibility for its programming to be provided equitably and sustainably. CALM, CTF, CTS may need a greater breadth of options, and further awareness of their availability and benefits.

Overall, career education programming should be further prioritized and valued in schools. Students should be provided with more hands-on, real-world experiences and soft skills in order to successfully transition to careers.

THEME ONE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1.1

ACCESS TO OFF-CAMPUS EDUCATION

Through the engagement sessions and surveys, it was clear that students need increased opportunities for off-campus education opportunities. Other suggestions were made to simplify off-campus education and reduce the amount of red tape involved. Engagement participants also expressed that there appears to be inconsistent delivery of career education (between rural and urban, different school boards).

Recommendation: Increase ease of access to off-campus education for all Alberta youth regardless of public, independent, charter or homeschool education.

- Simplify the Off-campus Education Handbook and remove barriers, including but not limited to:
 - supervision requirements (e.g., certified teachers)
 - safety inspection reports (e.g., sharing of)
 - access for all students (e.g., home education)
 - WCB coverage for all Alberta students

RECOMMENDATION 1.2

DUAL CREDIT PROGRAMMING REVIEW

Overall, Dual credit was seen as a successful program being implemented by many school authorities. Concerns about Dual credit include not having sufficient and sustainable funding; too much red tape to access programming, credit and transferability issues; and a lack of information and awareness about its program opportunities. In addition, Dual credit opportunities need to align with the high school calendar, as they currently present scheduling issues and high workloads for some students.

Recommendation: Review of Dual credit programming to remove:

Financial barriers:

- Increased cost of offering relative to other courses – eliminate financial barriers of subscription to program
- Maintain grants for creation and enhancement of new Dual credit

Accessibility barriers:

- Explore memorandum of agreements as they are with school authority (vs. provincial opportunity)
- Reduce red tape to access programming
- Examine course offerings to increase transferability

Awareness barriers:

- Provide list of available Dual credit with course description and PSI

RECOMMENDATION 1.3

CAREER PROGRAMMING IMPLEMENTATION

With regards to the current programming available, participants stated that CALM outcomes should be offered in junior high, as well as high school. A lack of curriculum content awareness in CALM suggests the delivery of CALM may need to be improved and more consistently applied. Survey respondents noted they would like to see a greater breadth or emphasis of CALM delivery including job shadowing, interview preparation, and job planning. CTS and CTF programming could similarly have more awareness and emphasis in the curriculum. Engagement participants feel that CALM, CTS and CTF are ways that students can explore their careers.

Recommendation: Improve implementation and management in Career Education (e.g., CALM, CTF, CTS and Career Internship), including a review of:

- Consistency of delivery.
- Incorporating CALM outcomes in junior high.
- Increasing breadth of CTF.
- Instructional capacity.
- Changing the word “optional” when referring to career education programs.
- Improving integration into the overall curriculum.
- Increased credit value(s) related to work-integrated learning, so that it is equal to RAP.

RECOMMENDATION 1.4

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Engagement participants suggested that a greater amount of career education should be required for graduation. Survey respondents noted that they would like to see special recognition on graduates’ diplomas for completing career education courses or programs. This recognition could be given if students have a combination of credits (e.g., 10) in any of the following:

- Career and Technology Studies (CTS) courses
- Fine arts courses
- Second languages courses
- Physical education courses
- Knowledge and employability courses
- Registered Apprenticeship Program courses
- Locally developed/acquired and authorized courses in CTS, fine arts, second languages or knowledge and employability occupational courses

Recommendation: In conjunction with Advanced Education and Skilled Trades and Professions, reconsider graduation and PSI entrance requirements, such as:

- Students' requirement to have credits within Off-campus Education (Knowledge and Employability Work Readiness, Work Experience, Green Certificate Program, and RAP), Dual credit, CTF, and CTS apprenticeship courses.
- The complement of required academic courses for graduation, to allow students to more fully explore career interests.
- Collaborate with PSIs to recognize the importance of career education courses. The goal is to encourage PSIs to re-evaluate their entrance requirements from high school graduates and provide students the time to take more career education.

THEME 2: RESOURCES FOR DELIVERY OF CAREER EDUCATION

The second theme the CETF Working Group explored is resources for the delivery of career education. Based on their work and findings from the province-wide engagements, five recommendations were made. This section provides a summary of overall feedback regarding delivery of career education, and then discusses specific feedback pertaining to each of the recommendations.

Engagement participants emphasized career education needs specific, dedicated resources in order to be successful. They stated that more time and resources need to be available for career education. Various supports should be implemented to accomplish streamlining the bridging program and industry teaching certification, access to online tools for career planning, labs and learning spaces, time, transportation, mobile facilities, dedicated career education training for educators, and career development practitioners or guidance counsellors in each school.

THEME TWO RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 2.1

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS

Engagement participants consistently indicated career education needs specific, dedicated resources to be successful. One suggestion was to have a dedicated career development counsellor, or practitioner in each school. Students responding to the survey emphasized that educator and guidance councillor mentorship creates confidence in their preparation for their careers.

Recommendation: Require and fund a minimum of one qualified FTE Career Development Practitioner (CCDP) for every school division (ratio of CCDP to students to be determined). Criteria for qualification will need to be defined to ensure quality career development services are provided to students. CCDPs will coordinate regionally to provide area specific career opportunities and guidance.

RECOMMENDATION 2.2

ONLINE STUDENT CAREER PLANNING TOOLS

Engagement participants frequently cited the need for an online career planning tool resource for students. Two examples, Alberta Learning Information System (alis) and myBlueprint, were cited as being used, with myBlueprint being preferred but having a cost. Using a tool with the functionality of myBlueprint should be embedded into the grade 7-12 curriculum so that students can explore more of the options available to them. There were also suggestions to build a provincially supported interactive career software that would be accessible for many grade levels, provide the ability to explore career pathways related to individual interests, enable building a portfolio; and connect academics to career experiences.

Recommendation: Fully fund an interactive online student career planning tool (equivalent or better than myBlueprint), to ensure Alberta students have access during and after grade school.

RECOMMENDATION 2.3

INDUSTRY TEACHERS

Engagement participants suggested that various supports could be implemented to allow industry experts to teach at the secondary level. Current bridging programs should be streamlined and allow more flexibility in terms of course requirements for the teachers of these programs. Engagement participants advocated to make it easier for members of industry to become career educators so knowledgeable instructors will be available to students in their fields of interest. This also addresses the need for certified staff to teach career education and reduce the need for K-12 educators to engage in substantially more training and professional development. Easing the path into teaching for industry experts was expressed by nearly all stakeholder groups – particularly industry, post-secondary, and educators.

Recommendation: Streamline and expand the use of a Letter of Authority to allow industry experts to teach in their areas of expertise.

- Develop additional alternative pathways for experts from industry to become certified teachers (e.g., Bridge to Teacher Certification Program).
- Consider developing alternative designations for Letters of Authority so that they do not have to bridge to pursue teacher certification.

RECOMMENDATION 2.4

CTS/CTF TEACHER TRAINING

One challenge that engagement participants noted is K-12 educators often do not have the knowledge or expertise to teach career education to students. Engagement participants expressed the need for additional training and professional development for educators so career education can be successfully delivered.

Recommendation: Develop and fund opportunities for CTS/CTF teacher training (e.g., regional in-service training, summer institutes, two-day workshops or technical training schools).

RECOMMENDATION 2.5

TEACHING CRITERIA

Engagement participants suggested that teaching certification could be revisited to include polytechnical education in education years on the payment grid. Engagement participants shared that it needs to be easier for members of industry to become educators, addressing the need for certified staff and additional professional development for educators.

Recommendation: Expand criteria for teaching qualification service (e.g., technical education counts towards years on the grid, credentialing, certification) beyond what is used for the trades (i.e., professionally recognized credentials).

THEME 3: EQUITABLE FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR CAREER EDUCATION

The third theme the CETF Working Group explored is equitable financial resources for career education. Based on their work and findings from the province-wide engagements, seven recommendations were made. This section provides a summary of overall feedback regarding equitable financial resources, and then discusses specific feedback pertaining to each of the recommendations.

A consistent idea among engagement participants was that career education should be available, accessible and equitable for all students. Engagement participants identified the resource and operational barriers that currently impact career education, such as limited funding for schools and partners, transportation, space, insurance barriers, and inequalities among students. They also indicated that, despite the region or school board, students needed equitable delivery and access to resources.

THEME 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 3.1

SUSTAINABLE CAREER EDUCATION FUNDING

Engagement participants noted the need for accessible and equitable career education for all students, which requires sustainable resourcing and funding. Funding is needed to expand career education partnerships with industry, the community, and PSIs. Dual credit programming also requires increased and dedicated funding. Industry needs to see the benefits and return on investment of career education in order to maintain and strengthen partnerships with school authorities.

There were suggestions to revise the overall structure of base-level funding for students to account for increasing costs of career education, consider multi-year granting cycles, and enable upgrades to shop facilities. Insurance was noted as a barrier, in terms of the cost of providing insurance to students and due to specific workforce regulations for those 18 years of age and younger.

Recommendation: Provide sustainable and additional career education (e.g., CTS, Dual credit, Off-campus education, top up funding, tied to more expensive courses, envelope funding) funding options to education partners.

RECOMMENDATION 3.2

FOURTH AND FIFTH YEAR STUDENTS

Engagement participants expressed that fourth and fifth year students should receive equitable opportunities and funding so they may choose to pursue career education.

Recommendation: Fully fund 4th and 5th optional years in high school for students enrolled in Dual credit and Off-campus education.

RECOMMENDATION 3.3

DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS

Engagement participants suggested employers, PSI and K-12 could share some of the costs of implementing career education, as each stakeholder benefits from students who are more career ready. This includes industry providing lab space, workplace opportunities or instructor hours, and PSI providing lab space and spaces available for students in courses. In order for this to be implemented successfully, industry and PSI have to see the return on investment of career education and ensure that it is a mutually beneficial partnership.

Recommendation: Develop and fund career education partnerships (K-12, PSI, industry or partners) that provide career education opportunities for all Alberta students.

RECOMMENDATION 3.4

POST-SECONDARY COSTS

Engagement participants advised that high school students should not face extra costs for pre-employment opportunities when compared to post-secondary students.

Recommendation: Align the pre-employment program costs for students in the 7-12 system with those incurred by post-secondary students.

RECOMMENDATION 3.5

EQUITABLE STUDENT FUNDING

Engagement participants stated that affordability can be a challenge for students, which should not impact their career education (e.g., Dual credit, fourth and fifth year costs). Some access points for career education would be to ensure consideration of regional differences when developing programs policies and education, funding fourth and fifth year students to pursue career education, and providing financial aid and scholarships to students engaging in career education.

Recommendation: Develop and promote career education scholarships for students.

RECOMMENDATION 3.6

OPERATIONAL RESOURCES

Engagement participants, particularly K-12 educators, noted that funding for career education, particularly off-campus, needs to be dedicated and sustainable. This includes funding for both personnel and operational resources including sufficient and safe space for hands-on learning, labs and access to equipment. There were also suggestions to change the structure of base-level funding for students to address transportation cost barriers for off-campus education. Engagement participants shared ideas on how operational funding and resources should be considered to help the advancement and success of career education.

Recommendation: Review the School Capital Manual to address:

- Challenges for CTF/CTS lab space presenting learning limitations, e.g., size of space versus numbers of students
- Size challenges for CTF/CTS lab space and numbers of students that may be putting students' safety at risk
- Infrastructure formula
- School calendar and scheduling
- Increase/support/create mobile CTS/CTF labs to support rural boards

RECOMMENDATION 3.7

PHYSICAL RESOURCES

Engagement participants expressed that there are physical resource barriers to accessing career education. These include the costs of materials or need for lab space, as well as transportation to and from off-campus opportunities. Students engaging in career education need access to work experience materials and equipment, which industry partners can help provide, or which funding for industry or students could assist with. With regards to transportation, this could be due to limited transportation available in each school or inflexibility with timetables. With further access to transportation more off-campus opportunities could be presented to students, and more lab space and materials can lead to more career education overall.

Recommendation: Eliminate barriers such as transportation, cost of small tools, equipment, Personal Protective Equipment, and materials that limit students accessing career education and off-campus opportunities (e.g., RAP, Work experience, Dual credit).

THEME 4: COLLABORATION BETWEEN EDUCATION PARTNERS

The final theme the CETF Working Group explored is collaboration between education partners.

Based on their work and findings from the province-wide engagements, five recommendations were made. This section provides a summary of overall feedback regarding collaboration between partners, and then discusses specific feedback pertaining to each of the recommendations.

Engagement participants identified the need for further collaboration among all career education partners. The CETF spoke to a variety of stakeholder groups, but all stated that career education should not be a siloed endeavor. School authority partnerships with industry, the community, and PSIs are mutually beneficial and vital to the success of career education. Partnerships and collaborations present great opportunities for career education. Engagement participants offered many ideas for such opportunities, including dedicated resource and knowledge sharing, enhancing the parity of esteem for all careers, and monitoring the success of career education, to enhance equity and ensure success.

THEME 4 RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 4.1

CAREER EDUCATION INTERACTIVE HUB

One suggestion common to engagement participants was the lack of knowledge about career education programming. More success is seen when there are dedicated career resources or personnel that liaise with key stakeholders (i.e., students, industry, post-secondary, educators, parents). More events, resource sharing and knowledge can and should occur between stakeholder groups so students are able to explore their career options.

Recommendation: Create an online interactive hub between K-12 education, PSIs, industry and local government to communicate, create connections and share collaborative ideas, materials, Dual credit opportunities, safety inspections, and career videos.

RECOMMENDATION 4.2

CAREER EDUCATION AWARENESS

Engagement participants noted there is a parity of esteem issue (i.e., some careers not being perceived to have equal value) amongst career opportunities that impact students' awareness and consideration for some career options, notably in the trades. They also stated there is limited knowledge among students and parents about the diverse range of available career options and career education programming. Participants indicated that this was a regional issue as well, where rural schools tend towards the trades whereas urban schools favor academics, but both are equally important. All Albertans play a critical role in enhancing the parity of esteem for all careers, and key messaging is important to communicate this message.

Recommendation: Develop a communication plan to enhance the parity of esteem amongst careers and promote career pathways for all Albertans.

- Prepare materials to increase awareness of Career Education and options available to students
- Share success stories

RECOMMENDATION 4.3

MEASURE AND MONITOR CAREER EDUCATION RESULTS

Engagement participants stated that there is a need to track and monitor the success of career education. This could be achieved through a dedicated policy framework and achieving the recommendations laid out by the CETF.

Recommendation: Reconvene the CETF as a standing provincial steering committee to monitor assurance of the CETF recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION 4.4

CAREER EDUCATION ASSURANCE

Adding career education questions to the Alberta Assurance Survey would act as one way to measure and monitor the success of career education in Alberta.

Recommendation: Add Career Education questions to the Alberta Assurance Survey.

RECOMMENDATION 4.5

CAREER EDUCATION DATA

Engagement participants advocated that further data must be collected and analyzed on the success of career education. This could include improved data systems or creating surveys that monitor students career pathways through graduation and into the work force. Engagement participants noted the need for the sharing of information among stakeholders involved in career education. Accessing and creating career data was viewed as key to determining the success of career education.

Recommendation: Explore ways to evaluate career education programming efficacy, including aggregating information and data across the Government of Alberta.

CONCLUSION

The Career Education Framework and Recommendations will provide direction for future career education development and implementation.

The Framework establishes a vision, mission, guiding principles and outcomes for career education in Alberta. Stemming from this framework the CETF has presented twenty-one recommendations across four distinct themes (Career Education Programming, Resources for Delivery of Career Education, Equitable Financial Resources for Career Education, and Collaboration Between Education Partners) to serve as actionable ways to advance career education.

Strengthening career education in Alberta will benefit students, employers, PSIs and the community, allowing students to be more personally fulfilled and leading to economic prosperity for Alberta.