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Education Week kicks off at Riverview

Education Minister takes part in event as PSSD Practical and Applied Arts partnerships celebrated

Calder Peterson is determined to pursue a career in welding.



Times-Herald photo by Nathan Liewicki

Education Minister Don Morgan listens to students discuss their work in the Magnet Program at Riverview Collegiate on Monday. The students, from Glentworth, Kincaid Central and Mankota Schools, are all in various Practical and Applied Arts program courses based out of Mankota.

Part of that is because Peterson's cousin, who is a welder, told him all the money he'd make if he decided to become a welder.

"I'm getting the hang of it so far," the Grade 12 Glentworth School student said Monday. "It's pretty easy."

Fellow Grade 12 welding students Phillip Dyck (Kincaid Central School) and Kenton Hanson (Mankota School) agreed that the first six weeks of their welding class has not been overly difficult for them, "except for oxyacetylene welding," said Hanson.

The three boys, along with three students enrolled in both cosmetology and commercial cooking — all from Kincaid, Mankota and Glentworth Schools, and known as the Magnet Program — were at Riverview Collegiate on Monday afternoon for the Prairie South School Division's (PSSD) Practical and Applied Arts (PAA) Partnership Celebration.

The event, which recognized 14 partnerships PSSD has made since the program was embarked upon since 2012, also served as the official kickoff to Education Week in Saskatchewan and was attended by Education Minister Don Morgan.

"This is the type of opportunity that kids get to go out and experience something in the real world — make different types of career choices," Morgan told reporters. "We have a labour shortage in our province and this is just the type of thing that brings all the right people together."

Other PAA programs include accounting, power engineering, cow/calf production, and energy and mines.

Saskatoon has an industry and employment council that has taken students directly and linked them up with businesses, but PSSD is the only Saskatchewan school division that has adopted the PAA program. Nonetheless, Morgan would approve if other provincial school divisions followed the PSSD lead.

"I'm hoping and expecting that they'll be certainly talking amongst themselves and we may well see it across the province," he said. "We'd certainly encourage it."

As for the prospect of provincial money being given to further enhance the PAA program Morgan was non-committal. He explained that if PSSD came to the ministry with a financial request, "we'd see what was available within their budget and our budget."

Morgan did, however, leave the door open, noting that the ministry will "certainly look at the successes and see whether there's more that we should do."

PAA programming is just getting off the ground, but Mike Sherven, administrator for the RM of Mankota, described the academic offerings for students in the Magnet Program as "a home run in terms of good bang for the buck of students and the community."

The RM of Mankota provided the space for students in the Magnet Program to do their course work at no cost to PSSD. Sherven admitted that it was a slight inconvenience, but the RM was happy to do it so the students would benefit.

"We see a real need for this type of student. A lot of the work in our area will involve welding and more industrial-type students, so it just fits us in every way," he said. "I think a lot of these kids will take a trade and this is going to tell them whether they're suited to trade work."

While Peterson has a plan to become a welder, Brody Zak — a Grade 10 student also attending Glentworth, but enrolled in commercial cooking — has yet to commit to a future in the kitchen.

"The course seems really intense, but I like food and (cooking) is a good skill to have," he said.

Even though Zak and all of the other boys enrolled in the class have accidentally burned themselves cooking, he is still determined to make the perfect eggs benedict.

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